

UPPER VENTURA RIVER GROUNDWATER AGENCY

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING MAY 11, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency was held in the offices of the Ventura River Water District, 409 Old Baldwin Road, Ojai, CA 93023 Thursday, May 11, 2023. Chair Etchart called the meeting to order at 12:37 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Executive Director Bryan Bondy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Directors Present:

Mike Etchart, Chair
Bruce Kuebler, Vice Chair
Arne Anselm, Director
Mary Bergen, Alternate Director
Vivon Crawford, Director
Emily Ayala, Director
Jenny Tribo, Director (arrived during Director Announcements)

Staff Present:

Bryan Bondy, Executive Director
Keith Lemieux, District Counsel
Maureen Tucker Administrative Assistant

Identified Members of the Public:

In person: Alma Quezada (Alternate Director), Jim Kentosh (Alternate Director)

Online: Pete Kaiser (Director), Emily McCord (Rincon Consultants), Steve Howard (Rincon Consultants), Julia Aranda (Casitas MWD), Michael Flood (Casitas MWD), Kelly Dyer (Casitas MWD), and Stefani Daryanto.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Etchart asked for any proposed changes to the agenda. No changes requested.

Director Ayala moved agenda approval. Director Anselm seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: B. Kuebler – Y V. Crawford – Y A. Anselm - Y
 M. Bergen – Y M. Etchart - Y E. Ayala – Y

Director Absent: Director Jenny Tribo

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA

Chair Etchart asked for public comments on items not appearing on the agenda.

No comments were provided.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a) Approve Minutes from March 9, 2023 Regular Board Meeting
- b) Approve Financial Report for March 2023
- c) Approve Financial Report for April 2023
- d) Authorize Executive Director to Execute Agreement with Ventura County Office of Assessor for Assessor Parcel Maps and Property Records

Chair Etchart asked if any Directors wanted to pull any items off the consent calendar. No requests were made.

Director Kuebler moved approval of all consent items. Director Anselm seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: B. Kuebler – Y E. Ayala – Y A. Anselm - Y
 M. Bergen – Y V. Crawford – Y M. Etchart – Y

Director Absent: Director Jenny Tribo

7. DIRECTOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Directors may provide an oral report on items not appearing on the agenda.

Director Anselm: No report.
Director Ayala: No report.
Director Bergen: No report.
Director Crawford: Reported that OVLC took drone imagery of the Ventura River and tributaries showing the before and after results of the recent flooding. The mapping project started in 2021 with a focus on the Arundo. Executive Director Bondy will post the weblink and log-in information on the UVRGA website.
Director Etchart: No report.
Director Kuebler: No report.
Director Tribo: No report.

Director Tribo arrived during the item.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Bondy reported on Agency matters since the last Board meeting.

Director's Comments:

Chair Etchart asked how many small GSAs are there. Executive Director Bondy estimated that there are approximately two dozen.

Director Crawford asked if the grant awards are all or nothing. Executive Director Bondy said the State has the discretion to grant partial awards.

Director Kuebler mentioned a letter from Ventura River Water District staff pertaining to the Foster Park flows.

Director Crawford asked if UVRGA was involved in the adjudication. Executive Director Bondy said no.

No public comments.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a. Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Annual Budget

Executive Director Bondy summarized the draft Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget and Multi-Year Budget Projection. The Board discussed the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Annual Budget and multi-year projection and the need to schedule a public hearing to adopt the groundwater extraction fees from the fiscal year 2023/2024.

Directors Questions:

Director Ayala asked how much the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 was in GSP? Executive Director Bondy looked it up and reported that it was \$111 per acre-foot. She asked why the fee increased. Executive Director Bondy said the increase was due primarily to the increase assumed inflation from 3% in the GSP budget to 5% during last year's budgeting process and the significant decrease in actual pumping compared to assumed pumping in the GSP budget.

Director Kuebler said Ventura River Water District pumping decreased. Executive Director Bondy stated that Miners Oaks increased 10% last year and the other agencies decreased. He also explained that the private well pumping has decreased almost 50% based on entities that have begun report meter readings.

Director Ayala asked how many wells were damaged or offline due to the flooding. Executive Director Bondy has heard about two wells, one that was destroyed and another where the pump was washed away. Director Tribo stated that the City of Ventura's Foster Park facilities experienced electrical damage and a pipeline was undercut.

Agency Counsel Lemieux cautioned the Board to stay on the topic of the budget.

Director Bergen moved adoption of the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget and multi-year projection. Director Kuebler seconded the motion.

Executive Director Bondy clarified whether the motion includes scheduling a public hearing at the next board meeting to adopt the groundwater extraction fees from the fiscal year 2023/2024. Director Bergen and Director Kuebler agreed.

No Public Comments.

Roll Call Vote:	B. Kuebler – Y	A. Anselm - Y	J. Tribo - Y		
	M. Bergen - Y	V. Crawford – Y	Etchart – Y	Ayala - Y	

Directors Absent: none

b. Financial Reserves Investment

Executive Director Bondy briefed the board on the Agency’s projected year end cash balance to be and recommended that the Board have an Ad Hoc Committee investigate options for investing reserves in a low-risk, liquid investment such as a high yield savings account, CD, or Treasury Bond.

Director Kuebler volunteered to research options available at the Agency’s bank.

Agency Counsel Lemieux informed the Board that they need to adopt a formal investment policy before making any investments. Executive Director Bondy proposed that Director Kuebler inquire with the bank in parallel with Agency Counsel preparing an investment policy for presentation at the next Board meeting. The Board agreed with the proposal.

No public comments.

10. GSP IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

a. Impact of Flooding on Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) and Associated Monitoring Programs

Executive Director Bondy introduced Emily McCord and Steve Howard from Rincon Consultants, Inc. who then provided a brief presentation concerning flooding impact to riparian vegetation and the Ventura River channel morphology and the associated impacts on the Agency’s GDE monitoring program. The presentation slides are attached to these minutes.

Director comments:

Director Bergen commented that floods happen periodically and everything changes, everything takes time.

Director Kuebler asked if Ms. McCord saw OVLC’s imagery? Emily McCord said yes and said the photographs were very helpful.

Chair Etchart asked if the changes in the river channel will be better or worse for steelhead. Steve Howard from Rincon stated that overall, it is probably an improvement.

Director Kuebler asked if the Arundo is coming back quickly. Director Crawford said they need to move quickly and that OVLC has secured funding to address the Foster Park area.

No public comments.

b. Well Registration Update

Executive Director Bondy provided an update on the status of well registrations. Sixty wells have been registered, fifty-four remain unregistered, and seventy-four do not require registration. Executive Director Bondy suspects that most of the unregistered wells remain unregistered due to outdated contact information. Executive Director Bondy said he requested updated contact information from the County Assessor's office in December 2022, but only recently did they follow-up with the agreement presented in Item 6(d).

No public comments.

c. Groundwater Sustainability Plan Approval

Executive Director Bondy reported to the Board that the Agency's GSP was approved by DWR on April 27, 2023.

Chair Etchart and others thanked the Executive Director for his efforts on the GSP. Executive Director Bondy said that Intera, Inc. and Rincon Consultants, Inc. also deserve credit for a successful GSP.

Executive Director Bondy reviewed the recommended corrective actions that were included in the DWR GSP approval letter. He explained that several of the recommended corrective actions are already included in the GSP, and he presented preliminary plans for addressing the others.

Director Tribo said she will reach out to Executive Director Bondy concerning DWR's recommended corrective action that deals with the Foster Park Protocols.

No public comments.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Ad Hoc Stakeholder Engagement Committee

Director Ayala said the Ad Hoc Stakeholder Engagement Committee did not meet.

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No items were requested by any Directors.

No public comments.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

The next Regular Board meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2023 at 12:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:43 p.m.

Action: _____

Motion: _____

B. Kuebler_ A. Anslem _ V. Crawford_ M. Bergen_ J. Tribo _ M. Etchart _ E. Ayala