

UPPER VENTURA RIVER GROUNDWATER AGENCY MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

A. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Upper Ventura River Groundwater Agency was held at the Ventura River Water District Meeting Room, 409 Old Baldwin Road, Ojai, CA on Thursday, September 11, 2025. Vice Chair Kuebler called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director Kentosh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. ROLL CALL

Directors Present:

Bruce Kuebler, Vice Chair
Jenny Tribo, Secretary
Jim Kentosh, Director
Jeff Palmer, Director (arrived at 1:28 p.m.)
Vivon Sedgwick, Director
Mike Flood, Alternate Director

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala

Staff Present:

Bryan Bondy, Executive Director
Keth Lemieux, Agency Counsel
Maureen Tucker, Administrative Assistant (on-line)

Identified Members of the Public:

In Person: Burt Handy, Kiernan Brtalik, Justin Martinez, and Alma Quezada

Online: Kelley Dyer, John Demers, E. Storey, "Liam's Phone," Desert Weeks, Sarah Mulder, Hayley Luna, and Raya Nour

D. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Kuebler asked for any proposed changes to the agenda. Executive Director Bondy introduced Kiernan Brtalik of Rincon Consultants, Inc. and requested that Item 6A be heard after the Consent Calendar, so Mr. Brtalik does not have to wait until the end of the meeting for the item.

Director Sedgwick moved approval of the agenda with the requested change. Seconded by Director Kentosh.

Vote: M. Flood - Y J. Kentosh – Y V.Sedgwick - Y
B. Kuebler – Y J. Tribo – Y

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala and Jeff Palmer.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Kuebler asked for public comments on items not appearing on the agenda. No comments were offered.

REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

1. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a) Approve Minutes of July 10, 2025 Regular Board Meeting
- b) Approve Financial Report for July 2025
- c) Approve Financial Report August 2025
- d) Approve Fiscal Year 2024-2025 4th Quarter Budget Report

Vice Chair Kuebler asked if any Director wanted to pull any items off the consent calendar for discussion. No requests were made. Director Sedgwick moved approval of the consent calendar items. Seconded by Director Tribo.

Vote: M. Flood - Y J. Kentosh – Y V. Sedgwick - Y
B. Kuebler – Y J. Tribo – Y

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala and Jeff Palmer.

6. GSP IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

a. Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems Monitoring Plan Amendments

Executive Director Bondy reintroduced Kiernan Btralik of Rincon Consultants, Inc, who was present to address questions on the item.

Executive Director Bondy summarized the proposed modifications to the monitoring workplans for aquatic groundwater dependent ecosystems in the Confluence Aquatic Habitat Area and Foster Park Aquatic Habitat Area. The board approved a first round of workplan amendments in 2024 following the first two years of monitoring. A second round of workplan amendments are proposed after the third year of monitoring, reflecting ongoing experience gained. The goal of the proposed workplan amendments is to further focus monitoring on low flow conditions, which are most relevant to GSP implementation. Doing so may reduce monitoring costs by avoiding data collection during higher flow periods. The proposed amendments include the addition of focused surface water quality monitoring in potential refuge areas during low flow conditions.

Director Sedgwick asked about the monitoring locations. Executive Director Bondy reviewed the locations on a map.

Director Kuebler inquired about the establishment of a minimum threshold for the Confluence Area. Executive Director Bondy responded that there is insufficient data to make that determination thus far because river flows have been too high to evaluate whether depletion of interconnected surface water causes fish stranding.

Director Sedgwick asked if the workplan amendments would reduce the amount of monitoring effort. Executive Director Bondy explained that the goal is to reduce data collection during periods of higher surface water flow because that data is not particularly relevant to GSP implementation.

Public comments:

Justin Martinez asked if the amended workplans are consistent with the monitoring contract. Executive Director Bondy said the approved monitoring contract budget assumed that the amendments would be approved.

Alternate Director Flood moved approval of the proposed amendments to the aquatic groundwater dependent ecosystems monitoring workplans for the Confluence Aquatic Habitat Area and the Foster Park Aquatics Habitat Area as presented. Director Tribo seconded the motion.

Vote:	M. Flood - Y	J. Kentosh – Y	V. Sedgwick - Y
	B. Kuebler – Y	J. Tribo – Y	

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala and Jeff Palmer.

2. DIRECTOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice Chair Kuebler called for Director announcements.

Director Flood:	No report
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Director Kentosh:	No report
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Director Kuebler:	Provided a brief update on the Ventura Watershed Resiliency Program.
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Director Tribo:	Reported that the City's Foster Park extraction facilities were recently turned off when flow in the Ventura River declined to 5 cubic feet per second.
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Director Sedgwick:	Provided brief updates on the Ventura Watershed Resiliency Program and Arundo removal efforts.
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Directors Absent: Emily Ayala and Jeff Palmer

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Bondy briefly reviewed the written staff report concerning Agency matters since the last Board meeting.

Director Flood complimented Executive Director Bondy on the very thoroughly written report.

Director Sedgwick expressed concerns about cost saving measures and recommended ongoing evaluation to ensure the new methods are working. She cited potential challenges with the Administrative Assistant preparing meeting minutes while attending remotely as an example.

No public comments.

4. AGENCY COUNSEL'S REPORT

Agency Counsel Lemieux provided a brief update on the status AB 1466 and AB 1413.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Director Palmer arrived at 1:28 p.m. during item 5a. Agency Counsel Lemieux swore in Director Palmer.

a. Agency Bylaw Amendment Concerning Designation of Authorized Check Signers

Executive Director Bondy explained that the bank account signers need to be updated due to the change in the County of Ventura's appointment. The Bank requires a resolution to delete and add check signers to the account.

Director Flood moved adoption of Resolution 2025-02, a Resolution modifying the Agency Bylaws Section 72 updating the Agency's authorized check signers. Director Tribo seconded the motion.

No public comments.

Vote:	M. Flood - Y	J. Kentosh – Y	V.Sedgwick - Y
	B. Kuebler – Y	J. Tribo – Y	J. Palmer - Y

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala

b. Designation of Ventura County Treasury Investment Pool Authorized Signers

Executive Director Bondy explained that the Ventura County Treasury Investment Pool signers need to be updated due to the change in the County of Ventura's appointment.

Alternate Director Flood moved adoption of Resolution 2025-03. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No public comments.

Vote: M. Flood - Y J. Kentosh – Y V. Sedgwick - Y
B. Kuebler – Y J. Tribo – Y J. Palmer - Y

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala

c. Fiscal Audit Frequency Modification

Executive Director Bondy explained that the Board requested Agency Counsel examine whether the Agency can transition to biennial fiscal audits. Agency Counsel confirmed that biennial fiscal audits are permissible if the Board votes unanimously to approve the change. Resolution No. 2025-04 would be necessary to implement this change. Executive Director Bondy explained that switching to biennial fiscal audits with the current audit contractor would save approximately \$2,400 over the next two years.

Alternate Director Flood moved adoption of Resolution No. 2025-04, a resolution to change the Agency's fiscal audit frequency from annual to biennial. Director Palmer seconded the Motion.

No public comments.

Vote: M. Flood - Y J. Kentosh – Y V. Sedgwick - Y
B. Kuebler – Y J. Tribo – Y J. Palmer - Y

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala

d. Stakeholder Director Participation in Closed Session

Agency Counsel Lemieux gave a brief summary of his conversation with Dennis McNulty, Casitas Municipal Water District's legal counsel, concerning review of conflict of interest law pertaining to stakeholder director participation in closed session items concerning the adjudication. Agency Counsel Lemieux said that Mr. McNulty agreed with his opinion concerning the conflict of interest for the current stakeholder directors.

Director Sedgwick inquired about being employed by an agency vs. non-agency. Agency Counsel Lemieux explained the difference.

Alternate Director Flood said he is looking at the logical issue of Director Ayala representing a stakeholder group that is represented in mediation and being reportable to them versus the legal question concerning conflict of interest. He said the Agency needs to be careful and Casitas Municipal Water District needs to discuss this further internally before it can participate in any further UVRGA closed sessions. He also cited concerns about participating in closed sessions with the plaintiff.

No public comments.

e. Proposed Joint Powers Agreement Amendments

Executive Director Bondy explained that the Board previously requested that he work with Agency Counsel to draft proposed amendments to the Joint Powers Agreement for discussion. He reviewed the proposed changes addressing the identified topics of voting procedures, quorum, definition, stakeholder director alternates, and provisions for addressing Member Director vacancies. A detailed amendment was included in the board agenda packet, which was reviewed by the Board. The Board requested the following changes to the proposed amendments:

1. Section 9.3.2 change “of the entire Board” to “present and eligible to vote.”
2. Section 1.23.4 fix typo on number of directors; “five” should be “four” and change supermajority requirement from three to four.
3. Section 6.6:
 - a. Change 60 days to appoint a new Director to 90 days.
 - b. Provide 120 days before Member removal for failure to appoint a new Director.
4. Add language in appropriate location for vacancies to not count in terms of determining a passing vote.

The Board requested a redline of the JPA for discussion during the next Board meeting.

No public comments.

f. Review of Small Groundwater Sustainability Agencies Coalition Draft memorandum of Understanding

Executive Director Bondy explained that the Agency has been participating in a Small Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) Coalition for nearly three years. The Small GSA Coalition is a loosely structured group of approximately one dozen small GSAs that have been advocating for cost-saving measures and funding for small GSAs. This coalition is supported by an administrator and a lobbyist from the Pacific Policy Group.

To date, the GSA Coalition has received full funding from the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA). However, SCWA cannot sustain this financial support indefinitely and will cease funding the coalition at the end of 2025. Consequently, the coalition is in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to formalize its membership and secure funding for its initiatives from the participating GSAs.

The preparation of the MOU is complicated due to the number of GSAs involved. Additionally, there is a limited timeframe to finalize and execute the MOU before the current funding source expires. For these reasons, staff recommended that the Board authorize the Executive Director to collaborate with Agency Counsel to negotiate and finalize the MOU. The current draft of the MOU is included with the agenda item/staff report.

The anticipated Small GSA Coalition dues are expected to range from approximately \$4,000 to \$7,500 annually, depending on the number of participating agencies.

Director Kentosh requested that Executive Director Bondy clarify the withdrawal process. Executive Director Bondy said the current MOU draft would allow GSAs to withdraw each year before making its annual contribution.

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding the cost versus benefits of participation. Executive Director Bondy highlighted the progress the Small GSA Coalition has made thus far, including working with DWR management on potential measures to streamline SGMA reporting and language recently added to AB/SB 105 that would earmark \$3.5M for small GSAs. He reminded the Board that they would have the opportunity to reevaluate the cost-benefit each year.

Director Flood moved to authorize the Executive Director Bondy to negotiate and execute a final version of the MOU subject to Agency Counsel review. Director Tribo seconded the motion.

No public comments.

Roll Call Vote:	M. Flood - Y	J. Kentosh – Y	V.Sedgwick - Y
	B. Kuebler – Y	J. Tribo – Y	J. Palmer - Y

Directors Absent: Emily Ayala

6. (Item was heard earlier in the meeting)

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No items were requested by the Board.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Next scheduled Board meeting is Thursday, October 9, 2025.

Action: _____

Motion: _____

P. Kaiser__ J. Kentosh __ B. Kuebler __ S. Tribo __ V. Sedgwick __ J. Palmer __ E. Ayala__