

AGENDA ITEM 4A

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CENTRAL BASIN WATERMASTER WATER RIGHTS PANEL

PROGRESS PARK, BOARD ROOM
15500 DOWNEY AVE PARAMOUNT CA

1:30 P.M, THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2023

Chair Moore called the meeting of the Central Basin Watermaster Water Rights Panel to order at 1:39 pm.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Moore led the pledge of allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL

Panel Members

Steve Lenton	Bellflower-Somerset Mutual Water Company
Dan Mueller	City of Downey
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood
Anatole Falagan	City of Long Beach
Adriana Figueroa	City of Paramount
Thomas Bekele	City of Signal Hill (Absent)
Toby Moore	Golden State Water Company

Also Present

Alberto Corrales	South Montebello Irrigation District
Matt Robertson	City of Downey
Matt Qassis	LADWP
Jim Markman	RWG Law
Yvette Stevenson-Rodriguez	Orchard Dale Water District
Jackie Ramirez	Water Replenishment District (Secretary)
Esther Rojas	Water Replenishment District
Asha Kreiling	Water Replenishment District

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

Chair Moore entertained a motion to approve Item 4. The motion was made by Panel Member Mueller and seconded by Panel Member Lenton.

The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote of 5 ayes, 1 abstention, and 0 no's (5-1-0).

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Nguyen presented the Treasurer's Report.

The Water Replenishment District's summary reports showed the activities from Fiscal Year from July 1, 2022, to February 21, 2023. As of February 21, payments totaling \$48,221.04 were processed leaving a balance of \$704,937.91.

The CBWRP summary tables showed payments broken down into four types of services: Administrative Services, Meter Testing, Legal Services, and Miscellaneous. For the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year, the December and January payments totaled \$17,571.02, bringing the overall 2022-2023 Fiscal Year expenditures to \$35,788.76; the current account balance is \$116,111.24 approximately 76.4% of the total budget.

Chair Moore mentioned establishing an ad-hoc committee to prepare the Water Rights Panel proposed budget and assessment for the 2023-2024 AY and bring forth to the May meeting.

Panel Member Mueller and Panel Member Figueroa volunteered to be part of the ad-hoc committee and Admin Body staff will assist as needed.

Chair Moore entertained a motion to receive and file the Treasurer's Report. The motion was made by Panel Member Figueroa and seconded by Vice Chair Falagan.

The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote of 6 ayes, 0 abstentions, and 0 no's (6-0-0).

6. ADMINISTRATIVE BODY REPORT

Esther Rojas provided an update on the status of the Administrative Body.

2022 – 2023 Groundwater Pumping

For Administrative Year (AY) 2022-23 through the end of January, Central Basin groundwater pumping was 84,643.98 acre-feet (af), which is 13.7% less than the same period in the previous AY. The decrease can be attributed to the increase in precipitation and storage withdrawals.

2022 – 2023 Water Rights Activity

For AY 2022-23 through March 1st, there were 34 leases processed transferring 16,812.07 af of rights, of which 21 leases are with flex and 9 leases without flex.

There were 3 sale transactions transferring a total of 702.50 af in AY 2022-23.

2022 – 2023 Storage Activity

For Administrative Year (AY) 2022-23 a total of 15,031.77 af have been withdrawn from storage.

Watermaster Budget

Staff will prepare a tentative budget for the Watermaster Administrative Body Assessment for the AY 2023-24 and will mail notices before April 1st. Once the Panel decides on their Panel Assessment and reviews/approves the Administrative Assessment in May, the Admin body staff will mail out a consolidated invoice in early June.

Other Announcements

WRD Staff held a Watermaster 101 Workshop on March 1st. The workshop was successful, and positive feedback was received. Many were able to attend and for anyone that was not able to attend, you may request workshop materials from staff.

Esther addressed that many pumpers have been having issues with well permits through the Division of Drinking Water (DDW). WRD would like to initiate the conversation and have pumpers develop a coalition to address the ongoing issues. Many pumpers do not have resources to push the issues with DDW and believe if everyone is on the same page with what the challenges are, they can be addressed collectively to gain more attention. Esther requested that whoever is interested in joining this discussion should contact her. She will put together a general email to send to all pumpers and stakeholders asking if anyone is interested in being part of the DDW well permitting challenges conversation.

All Panel Members were interested in joining the conversation as they have all faced dilemmas with DDW.

Panel Member Nguyen stated that it would be great to have this collaborative effort. He also explained that it is very difficult to find someone who is easy to work with at DDW and have encountered challenges such as having to provide NSF certification for materials used in well construction. He believes a lot of the processes are not required and have made it difficult to get wells permitted. He named two DDW employees, Demetri and Curtis who may be good contacts for the current issues pumpers are facing.

Panel Member Mueller stated that it took years to get drilling plans for a well to be approved. And, expressed that it depends on what individual you are working with at DDW that will determine if your plans will be approved in a timely manner.

Vice Chair Falagan stated that Long Beach has reached out to upper management at DDW and has not had any luck with improving the permit approval process.

Chair Moore stated that Golden State covers all of California and has had many experiences depending on the engineer you are assigned, so they would be happy to join the conversation.

7. ATTORNEY’S REPORT

Attorney Markman reported that the Governor decreed and declared that no one can replace, fix, or drill a new well in an area subject to SGMA, a groundwater authority, or sustainability authority before going through approval from those agencies to start the project. The decree applies to any stressed or severely stressed basin.

Markman provided an example from Beverly Hills, a city he represents regarding an incident with Hillcrest Country Club who built two new wells to replace two existing wells, which they did not receive approvals from the Santa Monica Groundwater Sustainability Agency that resulted in a lawsuit. And, once they attempted to get the proper approvals and permitting, they are having a difficult time with various agencies.

Chair Moore stated that because the Central Basin is adjudicated and the order does not apply, but LA County is the permitting agency and will take this change into consideration.

8. SECRETARY’S REPORT

Secretary Ramirez had nothing to report.

9. WATER METER TESTING

Secretary Ramirez presented the meter testing report summaries for December 2022 and January 2023. During this period, 38 meters were tested, and 31 meters were determined to be within the acceptable margin of error. The owners of the wells that did not pass were notified.

10. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE MAY 11, 2023 WATER RIGHTS PANEL MEETING

The Panel draft budget discussion will be added as agenda item number 10.

12. WATER RIGHTS PANEL MEMBER COMMENTS

Regular Meeting was adjourned at 2:02 pm.

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

Jackie Ramirez

SECRETARY