

# 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, MAY 9, 2024

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

Matt Qassis	LADWP
Chris Castillo	City of South Gate
Matt Tryon	Pico Water District
Henry Barrientos	Pico Water District
Jim Markman	RWG Law
Jackie Ramirez	Water Replenishment District (Secretary)
Esther Rojas	Water Replenishment District
Asha Kreiling	Water Replenishment District
Aimee Zhao	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 Vice Chair Falagan and seconded by Panel Member Lenton

The motion for item 4a was approved by a unanimous voice vote of 6 ayes, 0 abstention, and 0 no's (6-0-0) on item 4b voice vote of 4 ayes, 2 abstentions from

Panel Member Figueroa and Mueller due to being absent from prior meeting and 0 no's.

## **5. CENTRAL BASIN WATER RIGHTS PANEL ELECTION**

Chair Moore (Golden State Water Company) presented an overview of this item.

The Term of the following three members of the Water Rights Panel expires on June 30, 2024:

1. A Member of the Panel elected by Parties with Allowed Pumping Allocation (APA) of less than 5,000 acre feet who is not a member of the Small Water Producers Group;
2. A Member of the Panel elected by Parties with APA of at least 5,000 acre feet, but less than 10,000 acre feet; and
3. A Member of the Panel elected by all Parties holding APA.

At the March meeting the Panel approved the Water Replenishment District to assist in election and tally the votes from the Central Basin Water Rights Panel. At this meeting, the Panel approved three (3) election tellers to conduct the election and tally the votes received from Central Basin water rights holders. The election tellers were Jackie Ramirez (Water Replenishment District), Asha Kreiling (Water Replenishment District), and Aimee Zhao (Water Replenishment District).

Ballots were mailed out to all Central Basin water rights holders and were accepted up to the start of the Panel's May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. The election tellers and Panel secretary conducted the election and tallied the votes received to fill three (3) seats for a four-year term through June 30, 2024. The following are the results of the count of the received ballots:

### Official Results

1. City of Whittier– 13,907.03 APA votes were elected by Parties with APA of less than 5,000 acre feet who is not a member of the Small Water Producers Group.
2. City of Lakewood – 38,851.00 APA votes were elected by Parties with APA of at least 5,000 acre feet, but less than 10,000 acre feet.
3. City of Vernon – 93,596.33 APA votes were elected by all Parties holding APA.

Vice Chair Falagan requested that the election process be improved next time. Adding a form for nomination and then an election ballot will help simplify the process. There was a lot of confusion among water right holders regarding interest in running for the Panel seat. Having a standalone nomination form will allow for Water Right Holders to show their interest in a Panel seat as well as advising other Water Right Holders who are interested in participating on the Panel.

The resolution with new members will be voted for at the July meeting.

## **6. 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, 2023, to April 18, 2024. As of April 18, payments totaling \$35,803.49 were processed leaving a balance of \$645,044.14.

The CBWRP summary tables showed payments broken down into four types of services: Administrative Services, Meter Testing, Legal Services, and Miscellaneous. For the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year, the February and March payments totaled \$18,772.02, bringing the overall 2023-2024 Fiscal Year expenditures to \$62,457.09; the current account balance is \$89,442.91 approximately 58.9% of the total budget.

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

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

## **7. ADMINISTRATIVE BODY REPORT**

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

### 2023 – 2024 Groundwater Pumping

For Administrative Year (AY) 2023-24 through the end of March, Central Basin groundwater pumping was 115,333.78 acre-feet (af), which is 6.6% less than the same period in the previous AY. The decrease can be attributed to the increase in precipitation and storage withdrawals.

### 2023 – 2024 Water Rights Activity

For AY 2023-24 through May 1<sup>st</sup>, there were 34 leases processed transferring 17,528.60 af of rights, of which 28 leases are with flex and 6 leases without flex.

There were 3 sale transactions transferring a total of 117.00 af in AY 2023-24.

### 2023– 2024 Storage Activity

For Administrative Year (AY) 2023-24 a total of 23,438.40 af have been withdrawn from storage.

### Watermaster Budget

Staff mailed the 2024-25 Administrative Body Budget letters on March 26<sup>th</sup>. There was an increase to the labor category of 2.5% resulting in in the total budget increase of 2.3%. In addition, the category of "postage" is now included under "office expenses." The total budget is \$263,922. Active pumpers, entities that pumped in

the past 2 years and the current year, will pay a flat fee of \$20 plus a proportion of \$1.23 per acre-foot based on their APA. Water rights holders had until April 19th to submit any objections in writing. No objections were received. Staff recommends the Administrative Body is approved. Consolidated invoices are expected to be mailed in early June once the Panel approves their budget and assessment.

#### Other Announcements

Staff will email water rights worksheets to all right holders later this month. Water right holders have until August 15 to submit any lease agreements, deeds (sales), and carryover into storage requests for the 2023-24 administrative year.

Panel Member Figueroa sought clarification on the prior year's administrative body assessment and Secretary Ramirez answered with \$1.22, the assessment only increased by one cent.

Chair Moore entertained a motion to approve and file the Administrative Body Report and the Administrative Body Assessment. The motion was made by Panel Member Figueroa and seconded by Panel Member Mueller.

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

#### **8. ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Attorney Markman had nothing to report regarding the Panel, however provided insight on issues occurring with SGMA.

#### **9. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Secretary Ramirez had nothing to report.

#### **10. WATER METER TESTING**

Secretary Ramirez presented the meter testing report summaries for February and March 2024. During this period, 44 meters were tested, and 44 meters were determined to be within the acceptable margin of error.

Chair Moore entertained a motion to accept the meter testing report. The motion was made by Panel Member Lenton and seconded by Panel Member Figueroa.

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

#### **11. FY 2024-25 BUDGET AND WATER RIGHTS PANEL ASSESSMENT**

Treasurer Nguyen went over the three options that the Ad Hoc committee discussed for the Water Rights Panel Budget and Assessment. The budget criteria are to maintain a minimum budget reserve of \$100,000 and minimum reserves of \$600,000. The assessment options ranged from \$0.25 cents, \$0.35 cents, and \$0.45 cents.

The Ad Hoc Committee recommended an assessment of \$0.25 cents per acre-foot that will leave an estimated balance of \$533,543 at the end of the FY 2024-25. In prior years the Panel budgeted \$151,900, but have not nearly used half of the budgeted amount, and the Ad Hoc Committee does not expect to use that full budgeted amount next year, which would result in the carryover funds being over \$600,000

Chair Moore entertained a motion to approve the Panel Budget and Assessment. The motion was made by Panel Member Lenton 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).

## **12. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

## **13. AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE JULY 11, 2024 WATER RIGHTS PANEL MEETING**

The election certification and introduction of new members at the next Panel meeting.

## **14. WATER RIGHTS PANEL MEMBER COMMENTS**

Panel Member Figueroa thanked the Panel for being very welcoming when she took over Chris Cash's term for Paramount six years ago. She thanked everyone for having confidence in her and expressed how important the Panel's work is. Unfortunately, she has a lot going on with City of Paramount and was happy to see someone who wanted to take over the seat.

Chair Moore made a comment on the annual reports that are submitted to DWR under SGMA for adjudicated basins. The reporting is currently completed by WRD for both Central and West, however the reporting system is going to change and that will no longer allow WRD to submit one combined report. WRD and other pumpers are going to work with DWR on how to figure out how the reporting will be completed going forward.

In addition, Chair Moore spoke on well permitting issues he has been experiencing with LA County. He believed that LA County was overstepping their terms in respect to what the Panel handles. LA County now requests a letter from WRD that states they are a water rights holder before the pumper can receive a permit. The letter was provided by WRD to LA County but have not been able to move forward.

Attorney Markman mentioned litigation issues that occurred with LA County and a country club in Santa Monica Basin that did not go through the SGMA process with getting permissions. Now, they are most likely trying to take the proper precautions to ensure all boxes are checked before allowing anyone to construct a well.

Ms. Rojas stated that WRD conducted an audit on industrial wells within the basin to ensure that there isn't anyone pumping groundwater that shouldn't, also to encourage permittees to come to WRD when they need a non-consumptive water use permit issued. WRD had a discussion with LA County of what precautions the County can take when issuing well permits and mutual parties agreed that the permit applicant would request a letter from WRD stating the entity/individual is a water rights holder to provide to the County.

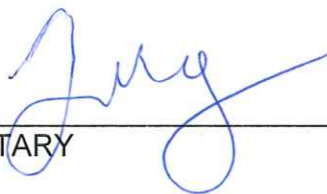
Chair Moore stated he would take the issue up to a higher level at LA County and see what they need to do to get permitted.

Ms. Rojas stated that WRD was open to feedback in other processes with the County that can ensure everyone getting a well permit in Central Basin is a water rights holder or permitted with WRD. No further discussion was had.

Regular Meeting was adjourned at 2:41 pm.

  
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CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

  
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SECRETARY