

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 11, 2023

Chair Moore called the meeting of the Central Basin Watermaster Water Rights Panel to order at 1:35 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 (Absent)
Adriana Figueroa	City of Paramount
Thomas Bekele	City of Signal Hill
Toby Moore	Golden State Water Company

Also Present

Matt Qassis	LADWP
Tildan Kim	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 Figueroa and seconded by Panel Member Mueller.

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 April 24, 2023. As of April 24, payments totaling \$61,136.04 were processed leaving a balance of \$692,237.97.

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 February and March payments totaled \$11,725, bringing the overall 2022-2023 Fiscal Year expenditures to \$47,513.76; the current account balance is \$104,386.24 approximately 68.7% of the total budget.

Chair Moore entertained a motion to receive and file the Treasurer's 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).

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 March, Central Basin groundwater pumping was 106,485.27 acre-feet (af), which is 12.4% 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 May 3rd, there were 35 leases processed transferring 17,812.07 af of rights, of which 26 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 17,076.27 af have been withdrawn from storage.

Watermaster Budget

Esther stated that there was an increase in the total budget of 2.7%. There was an increase in labor due to inflation and an increase in postage because of the rate increase for the 2023-2024 AY. The total budget is \$258,089, those parties that have been active in the past 2 years and current year will pay a flat fee of \$20 plus a proportion of \$1.22 per acre-foot based on their APA. In accordance with the Judgment, letters regarding the budget increase were mailed by April 1st and no objections were received.

Other Announcements

Esther provided an update on the conversations that WRD had with the pumpers regarding permitting with the Division of Drinking Water (DDW). WRD received 15 survey responses and from that WRD held a meeting on May 3rd to discuss the challenges gathered from the survey. The next steps are that WRD will reach out to DDW to request a workshop focusing on process and expectations when it comes to permitting. They would expect a conversation more tailored towards the Central Basin region and the goal is to get on the same page as DDW. Staff will schedule a meeting with DDW at ARC for interested pumpers. More information will be provided in the following weeks.

Panel Member Nguyen expressed his concerns regarding the discrepancy in requirements among the district offices. He provided examples of the City of Lakewood's experience. He stated that a lot of the information they require, and details, does not stem from a higher leadership position but from a staff engineering level. And it would be good to have engineers from different DDW offices to discuss their expectations and requirements and find out why they do not align.

Panel Member Mueller stated that someone will replace O'Keefe and it will be interesting to see who comes into that position.

Esther stated that many pumpers are having these issues. WRD wants to help with communication between DDW and pumpers through an educational and diplomatic process.

Yvette Stevenson stated that she agrees with Panel Member Nguyen, and it would be good to understand DDW's expectations to have more successful permitting processes going forward.

Panel Member Bekele stated that he would appreciate having a different person from who they are currently dealing with to hold conversations. He wants to express to DDW that not having wells running creates more out of pocket costs.

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

7. ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Kim had nothing to report.

8. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Ramirez had nothing to report.

9. WATER METER TESTING

Secretary Ramirez presented the meter testing report summaries for February and March 2023. During this period, 35 meters were tested, and 35 meters were determined to be within the acceptable margin of error.

10. FY 2023-2024 BUDGET AND WATER RIGHTS PANEL ASSESSMENT

Panel member Nguyen went over the various scenarios for the Water Rights Panel Budget and Assessment. He stated that at the end of the current administrative year the Panel anticipates having \$743,000 in carryover funds after accounting for the 3 months of expenses remaining. The goal of the Panel is to maintain \$600,000 in unrestricted reserves. With that, the Budget Ad-hoc committee recommended a 15-cent panel assessment per acre-foot. This would project a carryover of \$650,000 at the end of the 2023-24 administrative year.

Panel Member Bekele questioned if it was possible to have a lower assessment and Panel Member Nguyen stated that the goal of the Panel is to maintain \$600,000 in unrestricted reserves and the 15-cent panel assessment keeps the Panel in a good financial position to maintain that.

Chair Moore thanked the ad-hoc committee for their efforts in putting the budget together.

Chair Moore entertained a motion to approve the Panel budget and assessment. The motion was made by Panel Member Lenton and seconded by Panel Member Mueller.

Esther stated that we needed to go back to the Administrative Body Report, item 6 to approve the administrative body budget.

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

11. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

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

Esther requested to add an item to make an amendment to the existing administrative services agreement for the secretarial duties, specifically as it relates to the hourly rate.

13. WATER RIGHTS PANEL MEMBER COMMENTS

Panel Member Figueroa suggested skipping the July meeting, only if there are no time sensitive issues due to the fiscal year ending and many are busy. Chair Moore and the Panel Members believe there are no issues if the Panel skips the July meeting and meeting in September. However, if an urgent matter comes up, there is the potential for a July meeting.

Regular Meeting was adjourned at 2:05 pm.



CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:



SECRETARY