

**MID-KINGS RIVER GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019**

Chair McCutcheon called the regular meeting to order at approximately 1:00 p.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Art Brieno; Steven P. Dias, Barry McCutcheon, Chair;
Michael Murray, Vice-Chair

DIRECTORS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Dennis Mills, GM and Board Secretary Bill Tos
Ray Carlson, Legal Counsel Shawn Corley, LIWD
Mary Lou Silveira John Doyel, City of Hanford
Karen Ornsby, Grand Jury Julianne Phillips, Kings County
Trent Sherman, DWR Darren Avila, Anthony's Laser
Bill Giacomazzi Leveling
Michael LaSalle

ESTABLISH QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present at the meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 15, 2018 MEETING

Chair McCutcheon asked if there was a motion regarding the minutes circulated in this month's Board packets. Director Dias made a motion to approve the January 15, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. Director Brieno seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved the meeting minutes of January 15, 2019. The vote for all of the Directors was as follows:

AYES: Art Brieno, Steven P. Dias, Barry McCutcheon, Michael Murray

NOES: None

ABSTAINED: None

ABSENT: None

COMMUNICATIONS

Manager Mills reported that he had received a request for information from a Michael Robert, a University student from Massachusetts. He reported that given his available time it was not possible to address this communication this month.

GSP DEVELOPMENT

Water Supply Update and KCWD Efforts

Manager Mills reported on the wetter than normal conditions as well as the efforts of Kings CWD to maximize delivery of floodwaters in the Apex Ranch Groundwater Bank, the Old River Channel and other District basins. Michael LaSalle added that he had noticed that China Peak was reporting a very large snowpack, potentially larger than in 2017, which was surprising.

GSP Grant Administration

Manager Mills reported the second reimbursement request to DWR had cleared the Fresno office on February 26. This should mean that the MKR GSA will receive that reimbursement check around April 15. After paying the Wood (GSP Development) Invoices this month there is still sufficient funding for next month's Wood Invoices, so the financial picture is stable. Related to the MKR GSA JPA party invoices sent out since last meeting, the MKR GSA had received payments from the County and KCWD.

Update from recent Tulare Lake GSA Parties Meetings

Manager Mills reported that at in February the Tulare Lake GSA parties had met on the 8th and the 28th. The focuses for these meetings were coordinating efforts for stakeholder outreach, updates on the subbasin groundwater model and development of sustainable management criteria. A concern about schedule was brought up by the South Fork Kings GSA. The current schedule shows the GSP public draft becoming available in August and there was concern about the planned public review window and having sufficient time to address comments before the Boards approve the GSP in December or January. That is being looked at and will likely be discussed at the coming meeting.

In the February 28 meeting, the El Rico representative said that they were going to share the Boswell groundwater model in order to explain their comments on the Basin Setting. In conversations with Wood last week, that did occur. Based on what the El Rico modeler (Halligan) relayed, Wood developed a change order to incorporate the newly available data into the Tulare Lake subbasin model. They estimate that incorporating the data, evaluating the fifty year projections again and revising the Basin Setting chapter will cost an addition twenty to thirty thousand dollars. The GSA Parties have a cost sharing agreement for the development of the GSP, but the timeframe for sharing this data is of El Rico's choosing and the parties will likely discuss how to address the costs and the next meeting. The Board discussed the matter and relayed that they viewed the costs should be borne by the El Rico GSA if grant funding is not sufficient to cover total GSP Development expenses.

Draft Basin Setting Chapter Review and Comments

Manager Mills reported on his review of the draft Basin Setting chapter. He relayed that generally the chapter is well written. The major topic that he provided comment on was the water balance and the surface water deliveries attributed to the ditch companies in our area. Unfortunately, the draft water budget accounted for only half of the Last Chance Ditch system diversions because of an erroneous assumption by the consultant. The amount accounted for in the Peoples Ditch system was also less than it should have been given the estimating method. The only other significant categorical comment relayed was that on the topic of subsidence, The chapter needed to more clearly lay out a view of cause and effect. The current description was just too vague. Following this report the Board and the public discussed a variety of related topics with Manager Mills.

Discussion of Monitoring Plan and Threshold Development

Manager Mills showed an aerial image of the MKR GSA area with overlays of dedicated monitor wells, indicator wells, and other current groundwater level monitoring sites to introduce a discussion of MKR GSA plans for monitoring. Manager Mills relayed that his recommendation for GSA monitoring would be to continue to use the historic sites currently in use and develop a network of 10 dedicated monitor wells throughout the MKR GSA's 98,000 acres that were capable of monitoring groundwater levels in the aquifers above and below the Corcoran Clay with level loggers as well as providing the ability to collect and analyze groundwater quality samples. His recommendation was to develop these facilities at properties that are already controlled by JPA partners, with most of them being located on Kings CWD recharge basins. There was some concern expressed by the Board about the cost to develop these facilities. Manager Mills relayed that each monitoring well was thought to cost roughly \$100,000 and that if Kings CWD's existing dedicated monitor wells can be used, the GSA might only need 7 new wells. Also he relayed that his view was that one facility per year could be developed to help spread costs out over time. The Board discussed these recommendations and generally agreed with the approach Manager Mills suggested.

Related to Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC) development, Manager Mills relayed that the GSA party staffs have been discussing how to establish these at representative monitoring locations for some time. Several approaches have been developed and reviewed. The current approach being suggested by Wood is to use groundwater levels as a surrogate for almost every measurable objective for the first 5 years of the implementation window (overdraft, water quality, subsidence). This would have to be done for both the aquifer above the Corcoran Clay and below the Corcoran Clay. The consultant recommendation involves using the Tulare Lake subbasin Groundwater model to make a forecast assuming a normal hydrologic scenario (no projects or management actions) at the representative monitoring site (RMS). From this they would create groundwater hydrographs for each RMS. They would identify the Minimum Threshold as water level trend intersects in 2040 at each RMS. The consultant would then rerun the groundwater model with scheduled projects and management strategies to estimate measurable objective landing in 2040 (with projects and management actions). The "with projects" model run would then be used to establish measurable objectives that would be targets

along the 20 year SGMA implementation period. This approach puts additional pressure on the development of how the GSAs plan to address long-term groundwater overdraft, but reduces the effort to set sustainable management criteria and determining significant and unreasonable thresholds. The Board and the public asked several questions about the proposed method during a discussion of the matter. During the discussion the Board expressed that the method didn't appear objectionable to them, but Manager Mills also added that he wasn't sure that approaching SMC development this way would be acceptable to DWR given statements at recent meetings.

Discussion of Projects and Future GSA Funding Plan

Manager Mills explained that his recommendation for MKR GSA projects and management actions included significant improvements to existing recharge and layoff basins in the service area, the development of 1,500 acres of additional new recharge basins, the previously discussed monitoring facilities for both groundwater level and quality, the requirement for meters on groundwater wells in the first three to five years of GSP implementation, a voluntary fallowing program and coordination with Kings County on well permitting efforts. The Board discussed these recommendations with Manager Mills and was generally supportive.

Manager Mills then explained his recommendation on future MKR GSA funding for these efforts. His approach included a split funding stream. One stream would cover GSA Administration, Monitoring and Reporting through a land based assessment. The thinking was that all parties in the GSA benefit from the existence of the GSA through avoided State Board involvement. Entities like the City of Hanford, Armona CSD and Home Garden CSD would be dealt with as single entities, rather than assessing individual landowners. If a Proposition 218 election were undertaken to enact something like this and funds were collected through Kings County, the earliest the GSA could receive funds would be 2021. If this the assessment collection was done in-house, a staff member would need to be added and it could be accomplished in 2020.

Manager Mills explained that the second stream of funding would relate to GSA project and program development/implementation. A groundwater pumping fee would be used to link the larger users of groundwater to project and program development/implementation. Again, entities like the City of Hanford, Armona CSD and Home Garden CSD would be dealt with as single entities. Manager Mills suggested that groundwater extractions could be monitored quarterly followed by invoices from the GSA. Manager Mills also noted that this method partially acknowledges the benefit of surface water deliveries to the area (no fees on using surface water). The Board and a few members of the public asked a few questions related to potential implementation issues, but generally the discussion was supportive of the recommendations.

Discussion of Outreach through this Spring-Summer

Manager Mills briefly noted that there was a scheduled joint committee meeting for the County Ag Committee and Water Commission on March 25 and that he had been asked to

provide an update on progress toward SGMA compliance. Also, he mentioned that he planned to provide a similar update to the Kings County Farm Bureau Board on Tuesday April 16.

UPDATE ON ONGOING EFFORTS

None

SET NEXT MEETING DATE

The regular April Board of Directors meeting was set for April 9, 2019 at 1 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
Government Code Section § 54956.9(b)

Chair McCutcheon directed that the Board move into Closed Session to discuss the above listed matters. The Board, Manager Mills and Attorney Carlson proceeded into Closed Session.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Following the Closed Session, Chair McCutcheon reported that no reportable action was taken during Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:45 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Mills
MKR MIN 190312