

**A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
SAN GABRIEL BASIN WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY
MAY 22, 2024 AT 12:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER	The Chairman called the regular meeting of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority to order and reviewed the actions anticipated on the agenda for the meeting.
REMOTE PARTICIPATION DECLARATION – AB 2449	None.
ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS	Mark Paulson, Lynda Noriega, Valerie Munoz, Robert Gonzales, Bob Kuhn, Ed Chavez, and Robert DiPrimio
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT	None.
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Randy, Schoellerman, Executive Director; Stephanie Moreno, Executive Assistant/Outreach Coordinator; Dan Colby, Assistant Executive Director/Senior Project Manager; Mary Saenz, Director of Finance; Jackie Montgomery, Admin/Accounting Assistant; Richard Padilla, Legal Counsel
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT	Gabriel Monares, The Monares Group; Dr. Richard Shope, EcoVoices; Travis Tibbetts, West Covina Police Department
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT PARTICIPATED VIA ONLINE/TELECONFERENCE	Mike Phillips, Cal American Water Company; Michelle Sanchez
PUBLIC COMMENT	None.
ITEMS TOO LATE TO BE AGENDIZED	None.
PUBLIC HEARING	
<i>Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025</i>	Mr. Paulson opened the public hearing to receive comments on the draft budget for fiscal year 2024/2025. There being none the public hearing was closed.
CONSENT CALENDAR	Mr. Kuhn moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Mr. Gonzales seconded the motion, and it was approved with the following abstentions: Ms. Noriega abstained from Project Demand No. E92238. Mr. DiPrimio abstained from Project Demand No. E92239.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislative/Public Information Committee Report

Discussion/Action Regarding EcoVoices Proposal

- *Approve EcoVoices Proposal*
- *Approve Demand No. E92240*

Mr. Schoellerman reported that the minutes for the committee meeting were enclosed for review.

Ms. Moreno reported that for the past eight years WQA has participated in a Summer Youth Outreach Program with EcoVoices to target a segment of the community that is difficult to reach, the youth of our communities. She noted that the program is delivered in a dynamic and theatrical way that helps students relate and retain what is taught. The program reaches an estimated 1,000 youth within the region. She indicated that the Legislative/Public Information Committee reviewed the proposal and advised the proposal be amended and eliminate the production of videos and place more emphasis on the live workshops. She noted that the Committee recommended continuing our partnership with EcoVoices for the summer program for the budgeted \$20,000.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Gonzales moved to approve the EcoVoices proposal and to approve Demand No. E92240. Ms. Munoz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Action Regarding Proposed Services Provided by Civic Publications

- *Approve Public Outreach Proposal*
- *Approval Annual Report Proposal*

Ms. Moreno reported that Civic Publications has submitted two proposals, one for public outreach advertorials in the amount of \$115,174 and the other for WQA's annual report in the amount of \$13,275. She indicated that both proposals were the same amount as the previous year. She noted that the Legislative/Publication Committee reviewed the two proposals and recommended that both proposals go to the full Board for approval.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Kuhn moved to approve the two proposals that have been submitted by Civic Publications for the Public Outreach and the Annual Report. Ms. Munoz seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Administrative/Finance Committee Report

Discussion/Action Regarding Employee Reclassification

Mr. Schoellerman reported that the minutes for the committee meeting were enclosed for review.

Mr. Schoellerman reported that Conor Consulting was retained to conduct an organizational review of the agency. Several recommendations were made regarding staffing levels and job descriptions.

Mr. Conor reported that he conducted interviews with all of the employees to assess their workloads and responsibilities. He indicated that one of the areas that was identified for additional support was in the finance department. He reported that the department was Staffed by the Director of Finance and the Administrative/Accounting Assistant and has experienced a significant increase in workload over the past several years

due to the activities related to WQA's success in obtaining grant funding. He noted that while additional support has been provided by various consultants over the years it hasn't been effective because of the specialized nature of WQA's agency. Therefore, the addition of a full-time accountant position dedicated to assisting the Director of Finance is recommended. He indicated that this would be accomplished by converting the existing Administrative/Accounting Assistant position to a full-time accountant position. He also recommended adding a new Senior Administrative Assistant/Office Coordinator position to backfill the administrative assistant duties. This position would be responsible for office coordination activities that include record keeping, Laserfiche database administration, and IT consultant/software support. He lastly recommended reclassifying the current Executive Assistant/Public Outreach Coordinator position as the Director of Communications and Board Relations to better align with its current duties and responsibilities. In addition, this position would be supported in part by the Senior Administrative Assistant/Office Coordinator.

Mr. Schoellerman reported that the personnel Ad-Hoc committee met with Mr. Conor to review the staffing changes and directed staff to present the recommendations to the Administrative/Finance Committee along with revised job descriptions, salary ranges and organization chart for review and approval. He indicated that the committee reviewed the recommendations at its May 14th meeting and directed staff to move the item to the full board for approval.

After some discussion, Mr. Gonzales moved to approve the organizational and staffing recommendations. Ms. Noriega seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Action Regarding Board of Directors Cost of Living Adjustment ("COLA" for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Ms. Saenz reported that The FY 24-25 Board Member COLA increase was presented to the Administrative/Finance Committee meeting on April 9, 2024. During the discussion of this item, the Committee requested that staff work with the WQA attorney on revising "Administrative Procedure No. 23 Board Member Reimbursement, Compensation and Ethics Training" to remove the requirement to carry forward the deferred COLA. An amendment was drafted by the WQA attorney and has been reviewed by the Committee at the May 14, 2024, Administrative/Finance Committee meeting. She noted that if the deferred COLA is no longer carried forward, it is automatically capped at the lower of the January CPI-U or at 5% per CA Water Code Section 20202. She also noted that the Committee considered a board stipend COLA increase for FY 24/25.

Mr. Kuhn commented that he had comments regarding other parts of Procedure No. 23.

Mr. Padilla suggested that Mr. Kuhn's comments be addressed at a committee meeting where it could be agendaized for discussion.

- *Approve Amendments to Procedure No. 23*

The Chairman requested that this item go back to the Committee for discussion to address Mr. Kuhn's comments.

- *Consider Board of Directors COLA for Fiscal Year 2024-2025*

After some discussion, Mr. Kuhn moved to not receive a COLA for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Mr. Gonzales seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Action Regarding 9320 Telstar Property Access Agreement

Mr. Colby reported that WQA received a Proposition 1 Implementation Grant to expand the effectiveness of the WQA's Whitmore Street Groundwater Remediation Facility (WSGRF). He indicated that the Telstar property is a commercial building located at 9320 Telstar Ave., El Mone. In 2018, WQA was awarded a Proposition 1 Planning Grant to gather hydrogeologic data to address data gaps upgradient of the WSGRF. He noted that the proposed license agreement allows WQA to construct additional groundwater extraction and monitoring wells along with all associated raw water pipelines conveying water to the existing WSGRF. The term of the agreement is 20 years for a one-time fee of \$5,000. He also noted that the Administrative/Finance Committee has reviewed the agreement and recommended that it go to the full Board for approval.

After a brief discussion, Ms. Noriega moved to approve the agreement. Mr. Gonzales seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Discussion/Action Regarding Adoption of Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Ms. Saenz reported that staff presented the FY 24/25 draft budget v1 at two workshops during April – at the Administrative/Finance Committee meeting on April 9, 2024, and at the WQA Board Meeting on April 17, 2024. She indicated that changes were made to the budget draft after the April 17, 2024, budget workshop. She reported that this was a result of a staff reclassification project proposed to be effective June 1, 2024. She indicated that's if the Board approves the reclassification, it will increase the operating expenses for both the projected costs for FY 23/24 by \$18,675 and budget costs for FY 24/25 by \$151,350. She noted that the revised budget draft v2 incorporated these changes and was presented to the Administrative/Finance Committee meeting on May 14, 2024, where the Committee recommended that that draft budget go to the full Board for approval.

After brief discussion, Ms. Munoz moved to adopt the draft budget for FY 2024-2025. Mr. Gonzales seconded the motion, and it was unanimously adopted.

**OTHER
ACTION/INFORMATION**

ITEMS

Discussion/Action Regarding Assessment for Fiscal Years 2024-2025

- ***Resolution No. 24-002***
- ***Resolution No. 24-003***

Mr. Schoellerman reported that Resolution No. 24-002 was to set the hearing date, time and location of the proposed prescriptive pumping right assessment for fiscal year 2024-2025. He also reported that Resolution No. 24-003 was to set the schedule of collection for the fiscal year 2024-2025 assessment.

Ms. Noriega moved to adopt both resolution Nos. 24-002 and 24-003. Ms. Munoz seconded the motion, and the resolutions were adopted by the following roll call vote:

AYES: PAULSON, NORIEGA, MUNOZ, GONZALES, KUHN, CHAVEZ, DIPRIMIO

NO: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

Discussion/Action Regarding Selection of Audit Firm for Audit Services for FY 24/25

Ms. Saenz reported that an RFP was issued for an audit firm for an audit of the financial statements and single audit for fiscal year 2023/2024. She indicated that it resulted in 5 proposals from qualified audit firms. She reported that staff evaluated all of the proposals and developed a list of the top candidates. She noted that phone interviews were conducted for the top two candidates. She reported that an Ad-Hoc Committee was created to evaluate the proposals, staff evaluations, and to make a recommendation to the Board. She indicated that the Committee determined that the proposal submitted by CJ Brown and Co. provided services that best fit the WQA's needs and recommended that it go to the full Board for approval.

After a brief discussion, Mr. DiPrimio moved to approve the proposal submitted by C.J. Brown & Company. Mr. Kuhn seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

PROJECT REPORTS

Mr. Colby provided an update on Chrome 6 contamination within the basin. He reported that out of 163 wells that have detections of Chrome 6 only 9 are above the current maximum contaminant level of 10 parts per billion. He stated that WQA's WSGRF is currently offline due to the failure of the peroxide pump failure.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Padilla Richard reported on the implications of an EPA enforcement memo regarding PFAS, including potential liabilities for water systems and ongoing legislative efforts. He also noted that there was a need for a closed session to provide the Board with an update.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

State

Mr. Monares reported that he along with Mr. Schoellerman will be attending a meeting with the San Gabriel Valley Legislative Caucus to review the language for the climate bond.

Federal

He reported that the WQA's appropriations requests for an additional \$10M for the Restoration Fund have been submitted and are waiting for the June mark-ups. He was confident that our language would stay in the bill. He also noted that Gil Cisneros requested to schedule a round table with the water entities in the San Gabriel Valley to get him up to date on the current activities. He also reported that the legislation to expand the national monument has passed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Schoellerman reported that Jack Simes, who is instrumental for the Bureau and based in the Temecula office, will retire in June. He indicated that efforts will be made to establish a good relationship with his successor. He also reported that there will not be any committee or Board meetings in the month of July unless necessary.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

FUTURE BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The next Legislative/Public Information Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

The next Administrative/Finance Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at 10 a.m.

The next WQA Board meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

*Closed Session Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)
– Conference with Legal Counsel
re: Existing Litigation - San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority v. 3M Company et al, USDC Case No. 2:23-av-55555-CIV*

The Board adjourned to closed session.

RECONVENE OPEN SESSION

The Board reconvened to open session. Mr. Padilla reported that an update was given and there was no reportable action taken.

BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS/REPORTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman asked if there were any other items of business to come before the Board, there being none, the meeting was adjourned until the next meeting on June 19, 2024.



Mark Paulson
Chairman



Valerie Munoz
Secretary