

**VENTURA RIVER WATER DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING APRIL 16, 2025**

1816

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Peggy Wiles called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M. at the District office at 409 Old Baldwin Road, Ojai, California 93023.
- 2) **OATH OF OFFICE** – The General Manager administered the Oath of Office to Director Craig Zwirn.
- 3) **ROLL CALL**- Glecina Reyes, Office Manager, conducted roll call.

Present: Director Bruce Kuebler, Laurel Lary, Ed Lee, Craig Zwirn, and Peggy Wiles.

Absent: None

Staff present: Alma Quezada; General Manager
Mark Albertsen; Field Supervisor
Glecina Reyes, Office Manager
Nichole Suggs; Account Administrator
Stuart Neilson, Legal Counsel

Public Present: Kathy Dawson, Alan Connell, and Jeannie Nickerson, of Tico Mutual Water Company, John Dickenson of Casitas Mutual Water, and Jonathon Turner of Phoenix Civil Engineering

Public on Zoom: Shen Huang and Steven Granados of NV5

- 4) **PUBLIC COMMENT (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)** – None
- 5) **CONSENT AGENDA:**
 - a) **MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING MARCH 19, 2025**
 - b) **PAYMENTS AND CHECKS FOR MARCH**
 - c) **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY**
 - d) **INVESTMENT REPORT**

No comments or inquiries from the Board of Directors or Public. **Action:** Director Lee motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Director Kuebler and the motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS

- 6) **TICO CONSOLIDATION – REQUEST FOR PAYMENT FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES:**
- 7) The General Manager briefed the Board of the current agreement between VRWD and Tico and informed the Board of Tico's request. The General Manager explained that the Grant Agreement is between the State and VRWD, and any cost not covered by the Grant will be the District's responsibility. Legal Counsel stated that there's no contractual obligation between VRWD and Tico for payment for project management and highlighted the importance of compliance with grant agreements and auditable processes. The Board heard a statement from Kathy Dawson and deliberated on the matter. Director Lary stated that Tico's costs cannot be passed on to VRWD's ratepayers. **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board consider and advise staff regarding Tico Mutual Water Company's request for compensation for project management. **Public Comment:** Kathy Dawson of Tico Mutual expressed Tico's concerns about transparency in the process and if future costs may be compensable. **Action:** Director Kuebler denied Tico Mutual Water Company's request for Project Management's reimbursement, seconded by Director Wiles, and the motion carried unanimously.
- 8) **TICO CONSOLIDATION – DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE AMENDMENT TO CONSOLIDATION AND WATER SERVICE AGREEMENT:** The General Manager presented the items excluded in the consolidation agreement. The District's Legal Counsel requested a written acknowledgement from Tico of their intent to cap the connection to the Casitas Municipal intertie. The Board advised that the current agreement need not be amended, and the emergency connection for outdoor irrigation be removed from the scope of work and engineering plans. The Board and General Manager discussed the next steps of the project. **Public Comment:** Alan Connell of Tico Mutual Water Company inquired about any possible issues that can cause delays of the project. **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board hear a presentation from staff and evaluate options. **Action:** No motion was required or taken.

- 9) **CASITAS MUTUAL CONSOLIDATION – ADOPTION OF PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS, AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE AND SOLICIT BIDS FOR THE PARKVIEW PIPELINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT:** The General Manager presented the scope of work and project timeline for the Casitas Mutual Consolidation. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that Board: 1) Adopt the specifications and plans for the Casitas Mutual Consolidation project 2) Authorize the advertisement and solicitation of bids for the Parkview pipeline replacement project. **Action:** Director Lary motioned for approval of the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Lee, and the motion carried unanimously.
- 10) **SOLAR PROJECT: PADRE ASSOCIATES, INC. – BIOLOGICAL MITIGATION:** The General Manager informed the Board that VRWD is required to implement biological mitigations for the 2023 as mandated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The scope of services from Padre Associates, Inc. were presented to the Board. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommends that the Board approve Task Order No. 1 for Padre Associates, Inc., in a mount to not-to-exceed \$8,500, implement the required biological mitigation measures for construction of the solar project. **Action:** Director Lary motioned for approval of the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Zwirn, and the motion carried unanimously.
- 11) **SUPPLEMENTAL ACCOUNTING SUPPORT: RAMS - CONTRACT EXTENSION:** The General Manager informed the Board that the current contract with RAMS is set to expire at the end of April. There is no monthly recurring charge and the District is only be billed for actual time. **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board approve a one-year extension for the contract with Rogers, Anderson, Malody and Scott, LLP (RAMS) for supplemental accounting support. **Action:** Director Kuebler motioned for approval of the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Lary, the motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 12) **FIRST REVIEW OF DRAFT BUDGET FOR FY 2025/26:** There was a general discussion between the Board and staff with the first draft presented. The Board requested to review some accounts and inquired about the backflow testing plan. The General Manager reported there were some unknowns and a discussion among staff is needed.

INFORMATION ITEMS - RECEIVE & FILE

- 13) **BOARD REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED:** Director Kuebler and Director Lary attended an AWA meeting in March. Director Kuebler informed the Board of an upcoming forum on April 30th sponsored by Ventura River Watershed Council to facilitate development of a watershed resilience plan.
- 14) **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – WATER & DISTRICT STATUS:** The General Manager presented the Smart Meters status: numbers installed, received, and ordered. The General Manager informed the Board of the sale of surplus assets, and the upcoming Backflow Course event that the Field Supervisor will attend. The static aquifer level at Well #2 on April 1, 2025, was at elevation 540.3 feet; and increased 1 foot since the first of last month. The aquifer is 9 feet above the 35-year average for April 1. Well #1 is pumping 1014 GPM, down 10 GPM from last month. Well #7 is pumping 760 GPM, up 18 GPM from last month, Wells #2, #3, #4 and #6 were off-line in March.
- 15) **OLD & NEW BUSINESS:** The Board requested the General Manager to bring back options for a revised PTO policy.

CLOSED SESSION – The board entered closed session at 3:37 pm.

16) CLOSED SESSION

The Board of Directors may hold a closed session to discuss the following items:

- A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-EXISTING LITIGATION

Action: No reportable action taken.

B. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:23 pm.

Attested:


Alma Quezada, Secretary

