

**VENTURA RIVER WATER DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING JULY 20, 2022**

Directors present via Zoom video were: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler and Nathan Rosser. Directors present in person: Ed Lee and Peggy Wiles, Also present were: Attorney Lindsey Nielson, General Manager/Board Secretary Bert Rapp, Office Manager Emily Arnbrister. Public Present: Jonathan Turner of Phoenix Civil Engineering, Clara Nagy of Ventura Energy, Christy Cooper of Harris & Associates, and Alma Quezada.

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER-** President Peggy Wiles called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.
2. **CONSENT AGENDA:**
 - A. **MINUTES JUNE 15, 2022**
 - B. **ONLINE PAYMENTS & CHECKS FOR JUNE 2022**
 - C. **REIMBURSEMENT DISCLOSURE FYE 2022**
 - D. **CONFIRMATION OF RESOLUTION 2021-335 REMOTE MEETINGS**

Ed Lee moved for approval of the Consent Agenda, seconded Jack Curtis and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA) –** None.
4. **SOLAR PRELIMINARY DESIGN REPORT:** The Engineering report for the solar projects is completed. The Feasibility Assessment was prepared by Ventura Energy. The analysis shows that the installation of a solar system is economical for the District, with a payback timeline of 10.7 years. The solar system is sized for 2013 usage to accommodate for non-drought conditions. There was general board discussion regarding Southern California Edison Rates, as well as any switch gear limitations if solar system ever needed to be upgraded. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Approve the Engineering report of Solar Projects. Jack Curtis moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Bruce Kuebler and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)
5. **PARKER TANK DESIGN & BALDWIN CARPORTS:** There are two available tank heights for the Parker tank site. The new Parker tank needs to hold the same depth of water as the existing tank, but the freeboard needs to be increased to be compliant with new standards. The two options are a 25.5ft tank or 22.5 ft tank. The 22.5ft tank is \$125,000 more expensive. To prevent displeasing aesthetics to the neighbors, the General Manager suggests painting the tank dark green, to blend into the natural habitat. The District has already planted trees to try to make the tank less conspicuous. There was General Board discussion about wanting to minimize visual impact on surrounding neighbors. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Select the 25.5 high tank for the 2nd Parker Tank with a dark green paint on the north and west sides.

Jack Curtis moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Ed Lee and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)

CARPORTS: Solar panels could be installed on the office roof and on carports near the office. The District Office was last re-roofed in 2007, and there are some rotting fascia boards needing to be replaced. Creating additional carports will allow for increased Solar Panel capacity. An equipment carport could be built for solar panels that would provide cover for the backhoe, and work trucks. Another carport could be installed over the concrete slab on the north side of the office and the existing small carport moved to cover other office vehicles next to Well #3. These carports would provide shelter for vehicles and support solar panels. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** 1. Re-roof the office building and install two carports next fiscal year in preparation of future solar system. Ed Lee moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Bruce Kuebler and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)

- 6. APPROVAL OF SOLAR GRANT APPLICATION, RESOLUTION 2022-344:** The District has been working with Harris and Associates to prepare a grant application to submit to the United States Bureau of Reclamation for their WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grant. The grant will provide 50% funding for Solar systems, energy efficiency and smart meters. The current application includes: Solar at Baldwin and Parker, Pump improvements at Baldwin and Parker to reduce solar need, SCADA system upgrade to maximize solar usage, and smart meters installed over a 3 year period. There was general board discussion regarding the application process and expected timeline. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 2022-344 approving the grant application and designating the authorized representative.
Jack Curtis moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Ed Lee and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)
- 7. DWR GRANT APPLICATION- CASITAS SPRINGS DROUGHT BOOSTER PUMP RESOLUTION 2022-343:** The low water levels in Lake Casitas causes a drop in water pressure to the Casitas Springs neighborhood. The low pressure has reduced the fire flow from hydrants in the area. The booster pump will provide increased pressure and flow to the Casitas Springs neighborhood to restore fire flow. The Department of Water Resources Small Community Drought Relief funding grant would pay 100% of the purchase and installation of the pump. The District would be responsible for the up-front engineering costs. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** 1. Approve Resolution 2022-343 authorizing the grant application, acceptance, and execution for the Casitas Springs Booster Pump. Nathan Rosser moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Jack Curtis and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)
- 8. DROUGHT BANNERS FOR SUMMER 2022:** The Ad-Hoc committee for banner approval reviewed 30 original banners and chose banners shown as 1-5 for full board member review. The banners were created by local students. There was General Board discussion regarding which banners to select. The board unanimously liked banners number 1, 2, and 3. **Public Comment:** None. Ed Lee moved to select banners #1, #2, and #3 to be printed and award a \$50 gift card to Toppers Pizza to the artist of each banner. Seconded Nathan Rosser and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)
- 9. WATER WASTE PENALTY UPDATE:** The District currently imposes a \$1 per unit Water Waste Penalty when customers exceed their water budgets. 14% of residential customers are exceeding their water budgets each month. An increase in the penalty to \$5 per unit will help get the attention of users who are significantly exceeding their water budget. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** 1. Increase the Water Waste Penalty from \$1 per unit to \$5 per unit effective August 15, 2022. Ed Lee moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Bruce Kuebler and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)
- 10. AWARD OF TASK ORDER SCADA RADIO UPGRADE:** Current SCADA radios are not communicating effectively. The SCADA system radios are critical for enabling the control of the wells and booster pumps. In addition to upgrading the radios the antennas at Alto and Parker also need to be relocated to improve connections between the radios. There are two radio options based on throughput levels for radio frequencies.
Public Comment: None. **Recommended Action:** 1. Authorize the General Manager to issue Task Order #8 in the amount of \$28,012 for Option A. Ed Lee moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Nathan Rosser and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)
- 11. AWARD OF CONTRACT 2023 WATER PROJECTS POTHOLING PROJECT:** The District received 6 bids for the 2023 Water Projects Potholing project. The recommended low bid was \$102,485 from Elite Engineering Inc. The apparent low bidder Cedro Construction was deemed non-responsive

because they failed to list a licensed land surveyor as part of their bid. Tico Mutual will be reimbursing the district for their cost of the potholing work. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** 1. Approve budget transfer #1 to create a new account #13099 SRF Construction Potholing and transfer \$120,000 from the CIP Reserves 2. Award the 2023 Water Projects Potholing project to Elite General Engineering Inc. in the amount of \$102,485 and authorize the General Manager change order authority on the contract of \$15,000. 3. Direct the General Manager to notify the State of the aware of the contract utilizing online form PWC 100. Bruce Kuebler moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded Jack Curtis and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)

- 12. BOARD REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED & UPDATE ON THE UPPER VENTURA RIVER GROUNDWATER AGENCY (UVRGA)- BRUCE KUEBLER:** UVRGA recently elected their new Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. The Well Ordinance was approved requiring well metering. The draft monitoring plan to fill data gaps is receiving comments from environmental groups and agencies. The issue of the City of Ojai joining UVRGA must receive a unanimous approval from each member agency, a long process in anticipated. UVRGA approved working with VRWD to calculate when to turn on Well #6 for optimization of water use during drought.
- 13. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT ON WATER & DISTRICT STATUS:** The static aquifer level at Well #2 on July 1, 2022, was at elevation 519.7, dropping 4.5 feet since the first of last month. The aquifer is currently 7.0 feet below the 30-year average for July 1st. Well #1 is pumping 980 GPM, down 72 GPM from last month. Well #2, #3, #4 & #6 were not online in June. Well #7 is pumping 763 GPM, down 18 GPM from last month. No supplemental water was purchased from Casitas. Sales dollars billed on June 30, 2022, amounted to \$237,432, under budget by \$44,204 for June. Water sold in June 2022 amounted to 32,948 HCF, a decrease of 44% below the 58,444 HCF sold in June 2013. On July 1, 2022, Lake Casitas level was at 33.5% of full capacity at an elevation of 486.12 feet. The lake has decreased 0.6% since last month. New pumps were installed on Wells #2 and #3, they are expected to be online in September or October. The district participated in lead and copper monitoring tests, all returned at levels below threshold.
- 14. REVIEW GENERAL MANAGER COMPENSATION:** The General Manager last received a merit raise in 2017, at request of the Board of Directors this item was placed on the agenda. The Board of Directors recognizes the wonderful job Bert Rapp has done and continues to do for the district. They unanimously recommend a merit increase to a yearly salary of \$180,000, that is retroactive to July 1, 2022. **Public Comment:** None. Jack Curtis moved to increase the General Manager salary to \$180,000 annually effective July 1, 2022, seconded Ed Lee and carried 5-0. (AYES: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Nathan Rosser, and Peggy Wiles. NOES: None.)
- 15. OLD & NEW BUSINESS:** Ron Hoeppel experienced a leak last month and wanted the item addressed on this month's agenda, instead he accepted the leak relief provided by the General Manager. The Juneteenth holiday is a federally recognized Holiday that is in the personnel handbook for VRWD staff to observe.
- 16. EXECUTIVE SESSION –** Peggy Wiles moved the meeting into executive session at 4:44 pm to discuss personnel matters regarding General Manager and Assistant General Manager. Peggy Wiles brought the Board out of executive session at 4:47pm. No action was taken in the Executive Session.

Meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm.

Attested:

Bert J. Rapp, Secretary