

**VENTURA RIVER WATER DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 15, 2023**

The director's present were: Jack Curtis, Bruce Kuebler, Laurie Lary, Ed Lee, and Peggy Wiles. Also present were the District's legal counsel, Stuart Nielson; Technical Advisor, Bert Rapp; General Manager, Alma Quezada; and Office Manager, Emily Arnbrister; Public Present: Kurt Schultzel, Marbe Manzano.

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** - President Ed Lee called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M. Flag salute led by Bert Rapp.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT (FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)** – None.
3. **CONSENT AGENDA:**
  - A. **MINUTES OCTOBER 18, 2023**
  - B. **MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OCTOBER 26, 2023**
  - C. **PAYMENTS & CHECKS FOR OCTOBER**

Bruce Kuebler moved for approval of the consent agenda seconded by Peggy Wiles and the motion carried 4-0; abstained Director Curtis.
4. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE GENERAL MANAGER:** The final employment agreement with the General Manager was presented with an annual salary of \$155,580. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Approve the final draft of the employment agreement with Alma Quezada as General Manager for the District with minor edits to text in section 1.1. Bruce Kuebler moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Peggy Wiles and the motion carried 5-0.
5. **METER BILLING ERROR: WAIVE BACK CHARGES:** In June of 2020 a meter in the 800 block of Cambon Circle was changed out and incorrectly set with the wrong meter multiplier in the billing system. This resulted in underbilling the customer a total of \$1,158. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Waive charges in the amount of \$1,158 for the 3-year period covering June 2020 through September 2023. Laurie Lary moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Peggy Wiles and the motion carried 5-0.
6. **RESOLUTION 2023-362: AUTHORIZE INCOMING GENERAL MANAGER AS SIGNER ON FINANCIAL ACCOUNT AND TO TAKE OTHER ACTIONS RELATED TO DISTRICT ACCOUNTS AND FINANCES:** A resolution is required to ensure transition of financial responsibility with the new General Manager, Alma Quezada. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Approve resolution 2023-362, to authorize Alma Quezada as the signer on the District's accounts and take other actions related to the District's accounts and finances. Laurie Lary moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Bruce Kuebler and the motion carried 5-0.
7. **RESOLUTION 2023-363: AUTHORIZING THE GRANT APPLICATION, ACCEPTANCE, AND EXECUTION FOR THE CASITAS MUTUAL WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND DROUGHT RESILIENCY PROJECT:** The Department of Water Resources recommends that the District assume oversight of a grant that was secured by Casitas Mutual Water Company (CMWC). There is still \$800,000 remaining in grant funds for CMWC to use. This grant is separate from the Consolidation process, and there is no grant matching requirement. The only potential cost is staff time for grant administration. There was general board discussion regarding the consolidation process and the status of CMWC. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Adopt Resolution 2023-363 authorizing the General Manager or their designee to execute the funding agreement with the Department of Water Resources and any amendments thereto, and submit any required documents, invoices, and reports required to obtain grant funding. Peggy Wiles moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Laurie Lary and the motion carried 5-0.

8. **RESOLUTION 2023-364: CONCURRENCE WITH VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION:** Staff presented an updated volunteer agreement for Board review. It was reported that there is no liability regarding the volunteer agreement. Resolution 2023-364 illustrates board approval of Bert Rapp to work as a volunteer at the District for tasks such as surplus rock removal and clearing of fallen oak trees. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Approve resolution 2023-364 with changes to text to refer to previous General Manager, and remove 2<sup>nd</sup> General Manager, and concur with implementation of the volunteer agreement. Peggy Wiles moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Jack Curtis and the motion carried 5-0.
9. **RESOLUTION 2023-365 AMENDING THE FEES FOR THE REQUEST OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS AND TO INCORPORATE THIS SCHEDULE INTO THE DISTRICT RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR WATER SERVICE:** Appendix III of the Rules and Regulations regarding costs associated for a Special Board of Directors Meeting Fee Schedule needs to be updated to reflect current costs to hold a special meeting. Director Wiles proposed text in the resolution to reference future increases in costs. Legal Counsel made a proposed change. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Approve resolution 2023-365 with proposed changes by legal counsel. Peggy Wiles moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Bruce Kuebler and the motion carried 5-0.
10. **IMPLEMENTATION OF WATER RATE INCREASE EFFECTIVE AS OF JANUARY 15, 2024 PER RESOLUTION 2023-353 ADOPTED MAY 10 2023:** The General Manager gave a presentation on the District's scheduled rate increase effective January 15<sup>th</sup>. The proposed rate adjustment will enable the District to meet its financial obligations. The District's wholesale cost of water from Casitas Municipal Water District is expected to increase 37% in the next calendar year. Per the District's prop 218 notice the District is able to pass the cost of the increase through the District's volumetric rates. This wholesale rate increase was not fully anticipated in the District's rate study. The cost difference is an additional 1.8% adjustment to customer rates. **Public Comment:** None. **Recommended Action:** Implement the water rate increase beginning January 15, 2024, as adopted per resolution 2023-353 and implement the Casitas pass-through beginning January 15, 2023, and Approve Appendix I of Rules & Regulations for Water service to apply the rate increase effective January 15, 2024. Bruce Kuebler moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Peggy Wiles and the motion carried 5-0.
11. **ESTABLISH AD HOC COMMITTEE: PROTEST LETTER – CASITAS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT RATE INCREASE:** Casitas Municipal Water District proposes to implement a rate increase January 1, 2024. The District has the ability to submit a protest letter. The rate structure is changing which significantly impacts the District and our ratepayers. There was general board discussion regarding what should be included in the protest letter. **Public Comment:** None. Peggy Wiles moved for appointment of Bruce Kuebler and Laurie Lary to the Ad-Hoc Committee, seconded by Ed Lee and the motion carried 5-0.
12. **CONSIDERATION OF LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT FOR ALTO TANK SITE:** The driveway to the Alto Tank site is outside of the property line for the tank site, part of the driveway is on the property of 59 Alto Dr. The anticipated cost for the lot line adjustment is \$12,000. There was general board discussion regarding this item. **Public Comment:** The property owner of recommended using a surveyor he recently used to save costs as they are familiar with his property and the tank site. He also stated that he is fine with the current encroachment as the land on the hillside is a steep hillside. **Recommended Action:** Include the Alto Tank site lot line adjustment in the draft budget for FY 2024/25. Peggy Wiles moved for approval of the recommended action, seconded by Bruce Kuebler and the motion carried 5-0.
13. **BOARD REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED:** Director Kuebler gave an oral report on the most recent UVRGA meeting.
14. **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT ON WATER & DISTRICT STATUS:** The static aquifer level at Well #2 on November 1, 2023, was at elevation 539.0 feet and decreased 3.0 feet since the first of last month. The aquifer is currently 31.0 feet above the 35-year average for November 1<sup>st</sup>. Well #1 is pumping 1,060 GPM, down 7 GPM from last month. Well #7 is pumping 790 GPM, down 8 GPM from

last month. Well #2, #3, #4 & #6 were offline in October. Supplemental Casitas water was not purchased. Sales dollars billed on October 31, 2023, amounted to \$222,870, under budget by \$20,371 for September. Water sold in October 2023 amounted to 29,275 HCF, a decrease of 42.7% below the 51,064 HCF sold in September 2013. On November 1, 2023, Lake Casitas level was at 71.3% of capacity at an elevation of 538.95 feet. The lake has decreased 0.7% since last month.

**15. OLD & NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**16. CLOSED SESSION:** Ed Lee called the Board into executive session at 3:32 pm. Executive session was adjourned at 4:15 pm. Stuart Nielson reported out of closed session regarding pending litigation and public employee performance evaluation: Technical Advisor, no action was taken on this item.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.**

Attested:

  
Alma Quezada, Secretary

