

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
INDIAN WELLS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

MARCH 10, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Indian Wells Valley Water District was called to order by President Saint-Amand at 4:30 p.m. in the Board of Directors Hearing Room, 500 West Ridgecrest Boulevard, Ridgecrest, California. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ron Kicinski. **PLEDGE**

DIRECTORS PRESENT: President David C.H. Saint-Amand
Director Mallory J. Boyd
Director Ronald R. Kicinski
Director Stan G. Rajtora **ROLL CALL**

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Vice President Charles D. Griffin

STAFF PRESENT: George Croll, General Manager
Jim Worth, Attorney
Jason Lillion, Operations Manager
Renée Morquecho, Chief Engineer
Tyrell Staheli, Chief Financial Officer
Lauren Smith, Recording Secretary

AGENDA DECLARATION **AGENDA DECLARATION**
Recording Secretary, Lauren Smith, reported that the agenda for today's Regular Board Meeting was posted on Thursday, March 6, 2025.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
None.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ON CLOSED SESSION **PUBLIC COMMENTS**
None.

With no further Board or Public comments, President Saint-Amand recessed the meeting and adjourned to Closed Session at 4:32 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION **CLOSED SESSION**
The meeting was reconvened in Closed Session at 4:34 p.m.

Closed Session was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened to Open Session at 6:02 p.m.

No action was taken that requires disclosure under the Brown Act.

DIRECTORS PRESENT: President David C.H. Saint-Amand
Vice President Charles D. Griffin
Director Mallory J. Boyd
Director Ronald R. Kicinski
Director Stan G. Rajtora

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Sophia Merk, Mike Neel, and Judie Decker.

**PUBLIC
COMMENTS**

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: was made by Director Kicinski and seconded by Vice President Griffin approving the Minutes of the February 10, 2025, Regular Board Meeting, and Payment of Accounts Payable totaling \$764,587.20. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Kicinski, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

**CONSENT
CALENDAR**

John Kersey clarified the project mentioned in the Admin/Exec Report is the Nature Base Solutions project, where they are selecting three California based installations, China Lake being one of them, to find some solutions that meet some resiliency components, in this case, flooding going into the range. Mr. Kersey commented they hope to be able to work together and obtain DoD money to help support the installation as well as the community

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MANUAL

Lauren Smith explained that part of the reaccreditation process for the SDLF District of Distinction certificate is for the Board to review and adopt the recent policies and procedures Board of Directors Manual within the past year. The Board manual is updated annually, with the most recent update being in February 2025.

BoD MANUAL

MOTION: was made by Vice President Griffin and seconded by Director Boyd to accept the Board Manual 2025 version as presented by staff. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Kicinski, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

RESTRUCTURE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Staff sought approval from the Board to create a Supervisor position within the Maintenance Repair and Construction (MRC) Department, and reorganization of District's Organizational Chart to facilitate the creation of a District construction crew. This position will not add any additional staff, and immediate fiscal impact is negligible.

**RESTRUCTURE
ORG CHART**

MOTION: was made by Vice President Griffin and seconded by Director Boyd to approve the restructure of the organizational chart as presented by staff to include a supervisor position within the MRC department. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Kicinski, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

FINANCE CM
PRELIMINARY
ENGINEERING
ANALYSIS

The District requested access to the City's wastewater effluent during the last City Council meeting. Since the City still has an agreement with the IWV Groundwater Authority (IWVGA) until November, the Council directed the District to speak to the IWVGA.

Staff is looking for direction from the Board on whether to move ahead with a feasibility study and cost estimate by Krieger & Stewart or a study by Parker Groundwater on the best areas in the valley for injection and/or percolation of recycled water and other captured water.

The Board unanimously agreed to hold off on pursuing a feasibility study by K&S or Parker Groundwater until the District receives a commitment from the City.

The Board heard public comment from Judie Decker, Mike Neel, and Renee Westa-lusk.

ADMINISTRATION/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ADMIN/EXEC
CM:
DRAFT DRIVER
POLICY

Lauren Smith reported a sample driver policy was provided by our insurance carrier, Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA). The policy reflects recent requirements for changes regarding driver's licenses (SB-1100 - FEHA), which were addressed at the February Board meeting. Legal and management have reviewed the policy presented.

MOTION: was made by Director Kicinski and seconded by Director Rajtora approving the driver policy as presented by staff. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Kicinski, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

Ty Staheli commented sometimes District issued checks, go uncashed, even after attempts are made to contact the individuals, causing a liability to the District. This policy would allow the District to retain the funds, rather than transferring those uncashed check funds to the state. Anything under \$15 after one-year, can be removed from the books, anything \$15 and over requires a three-year wait time, publication through the newspaper and posting on the District's website, followed by a 45-day waiting period. This policy would satisfy state requirements.

RESO: 25-01
STALE DATED
CHECK POLICY

MOTION: was made by Director Boyd and seconded by Director Rajtora approving Resolution No. 25-01: Stale Dated Check Policy as presented by staff. Motion was carried, by the following roll call vote:

President Saint-Amand:	Aye
Vice President Griffin:	Aye
Director Kicinski:	Aye
Director Rajtora:	Aye
Director Saint-Amand:	Aye

INDIAN WELLS VALLEY GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY (IWVGA)

IWVGA

The Board discussed items on the February 12th IWVGA Board meeting agenda, including:

- Settlement agreement with Mojave Pistachios (Griffin abstained)
- Periodic Evaluation of the GSP, approval to be postponed until the March meeting to allow adequate time for public review
- WRDA-24 Letter of intent to the Army Corps of Engineers - project specific to the imported pipeline (Griffin voted nay)
- Introduction of second transient pool for discussion and comment - to be discussed further at the March IWVGA meeting
- Three amendments to contracts involving imported pipeline project change orders (Griffin voted nay)

George Croll commented the District received a request from the GA to coordinate the tie-in for their imported pipeline. The Board shared their concerns with the request, including potential costs to the District to modify their system, annual expenses, and lack of exploring other options.

Director Griffin commented he did not have a chance to review the letter recently released by the GA and posted on the City's Facebook page entitled "Searles Valley Minerals Lawsuit Aims to Distract". He also questioned if other Board members were given the chance to review it prior to posting.

The Board heard public comment from Mike Neel, Renee Westa-Lusk, and Judie Decker.

The Board directed staff to decline the request.

Jim Worth commented the GA released a proposal last month which is looking to amend the Water Code § 10726.6 with the intent to retroactively have the law changed to where a GSP can only be challenged through a validation action.

Jim Worth commented the District's Groundwater Model will be released to the Court on April 21, 2025.

COMPREHENSIVE ADJUDICATION

**COMPREHENSIVE
ADJUDICATION**

Phase 1 trial to quantify the federal reserve water rights is scheduled for April 28, 2025. Discovery is ongoing.

Phase 2 trial - at the last Case Management conference, the District requested and was provided with a 60-day extension to produce the Groundwater Model. As a result of that, the Navy and the GA are arguing the trial needs to be continued for at least another 60-days to allow them sufficient time. Tomorrow, March 11th, at 10:30 a.m., there will be an Informal Discovery Conference, at which time the parties will discuss with the court whether to keep the original trial date, or extend it.

GENERAL MANAGER AND STAFF UPDATE

**GENERAL
MANAGER AND
STAFF UPDATE
COMMITTEE
MEETING
UPDATES**

Mr. Croll reported on the District's previous and upcoming outreach efforts, and ongoing outreach efforts through the District's media platforms, and newspaper articles regarding the District.

Mr. Croll summarized the topics of discussion on the Committee agendas, including GA imported water cost, Grant Writing Assistance, Potential

Collaboration with the Navy on Nature Base Solution, Rademacher update, and Public Records Request (PRR). (Committee Reports included in Board packet.)

Renee Morquecho announced the bag has been found. Photos were displayed showing the butterfly valve where it was stuck. NW TRANSM. PIPELINE

Staff expects costs this week from the Nichlas Construction to install the new pipe under Highway 178 at Brady to prepare for future replacement of the entire line in Brady, from Highway 178 to the tanks on Bowman Road.

Jim Worth to follow up with contractor regarding the removed pipeline to obtain a more definitive timeline for disposing of the pipeline.

Renee Morquecho provided the following updates for the Water Systems Consolidations: CONSOLIDATION PROJECTS

Dune 3: Legal is working on the language of the agreement between Dune 3 and the District. Virtual kick-off meeting with GHD held last week. State is also reviewing the right of entry agreement that will be needed for both Dune 3 and the Hometown projects.

Hometown: Potholing to finish the Hometown design was completed and the design should be completed within 2 weeks.

Rademacher: Potholing completed for Phase 2. Preliminary pipeline alignment under review by Staff. Two of five easement documents signed/filed.

Ty Staheli reported the estimated year-to-date revenues as of February 28, 2025, are \$11,409,117 and expenses are \$12,102,725. Expenditures exceeded revenues by \$693,608, which is better than budget by \$1,091,500. To date, the District has paid \$16,934,621 in GA Fees to the Groundwater Authority. FINANCIAL STATUS

District maintenance staff has completed the installation of the approximately 50' section of pipe on Brady. Staff will now begin shading and backfilling the pipe in preparation for filling, flushing, and sampling the pipe prior to bringing it back online for use. BRADY TRANS. PIPELINE BREAK

Jason Lillion reported the Water Supply staff has completed removal of old media, and is currently making repairs to interior structure. Next steps are to install underdrain laterals and begin installation of replacement media. The plants will be ready for the Summer season. ARSENIC TREATMENT

For the month of February, seven services were repaired and eight were replaced. The NO-DES truck made no runs in February. Since inception, the NO-DES truck has filtered 9,501,562 gallons. One valve was exercised. The GIS continues Water Supply Testing. OPERATIONS

BOARD COMMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Director Kicinski thanked staff and public for their participation in tonight's meeting. BOARD COMMENTS

Director Rajtora stated he was elated that staff was able to locate the bag.

Director Boyd commended George and staff for their way of presenting during the meeting and requested PowerPoint slides somehow be included in the packet. Staff will begin posting the slides on the website along with the packet and agenda.

The Board heard an agenda item request from Mike Neel regarding how many lawns currently have grass and calculations of potential savings if all grass was removed.

DATE OF NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The date of the next Regular Board Meeting is Monday, April 14, 2025.

DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren Smith

Recording Secretary

APPROVED: APRIL 14, 2025