

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
INDIAN WELLS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Indian Wells Valley Water District was called to order by President Saint-Amand at 6:00 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 John Kersey. **PLEDGE**

President Saint-Amand informed the public of Director Cordell's passing, thus the mourning bunting over his nameplate. The Board of Directors extended their condolences to his family. Director Cordell was an excellent Board member and will be missed.

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** President David C.H. Saint-Amand  
Director Charles D. Griffin  
Director Stan G. Rajtora  
Vice President Mallory J. Boyd **ROLL CALL**

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Don Zdeba, General Manager  
Jim Worth, Attorney  
Ty Staheli, Chief Financial Officer  
Jason Lillion, Operations Manager  
Renée Morquecho, Chief Engineer  
Lauren Smith, Recording Secretary

**AGENDA DECLARATION** **AGENDA DECLARATION**  
Recording Secretary, Lauren Smith, reported that the agenda for tonight's Regular Board Meeting was posted on Friday, September 9, 2022.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION** **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**  
President Saint-Amand stated his opinions shared during this meeting are his own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of his employer, nor the Board.

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS** **PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
The Board heard public comment from Judie Decker and Mike Neel.

**CONSENT CALENDAR** **CONSENT CALENDAR**  
MOTION: was made by Director Griffin and seconded by Director Rajtora approving the Minutes of the August 8, 2022, Regular Board Meeting, Minutes of the August 11, 2022, Special Board Meeting, Minutes of the August 18, 2022, Special Board Meeting, Minutes of the August 29, 2022, Special Board Meeting, payment of Accounts Payable totaling

\$1,412,365.65, and Resolution No. 22-12: AB 361 Finding. Motion was carried, unanimously, by the following roll call vote:

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

**AWARD OF CONTRACT: TEMPORARY PAVEMENT REPLACEMENT**

**AWARD OF CONTRACT: TEMP PAVEMENT REPLACEMENT**

On September 8, 2022, the District received one bid for construction of trench pavement replacement. The bid was from Eric Onstott Construction in the amount of \$187,145.00. Renee Morquecho explained costs have risen 27% compared to the prices in the last pavement contract from 2019. Labor and asphalt prices have risen dramatically over the last few years due to inflation and the cost of oil.

MOTION: was made by Vice President Boyd and seconded by Director Griffin awarding the contract for construction of trench pavement replacement to Eric Onstott Construction in the amount of \$187,145.00. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

**ADMINISTRATION/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**ADMIN/EXEC: REVISIONS TO STANDBY POLICY**

During a recent transmission line break, many employees had to work through the night to complete tasks necessary to return the system to an operational state. To promote the level of safety the District has maintained; staff suggests an amendment be made to the current Standby Pay portion of the Personnel Manual.

The change would address incidences where an employee who works a total of 16 or more hours within a 24-hour period, which precedes a working day, would require the employee to go home at the sole discretion of their manager or designee. The employee would be compensated at their regular rate of pay for the workday which they were required to go home.

Director Rajtora requested the policy be worded differently for it to be easier to understand.

MOTION: was made by Director Griffin and seconded by Vice President Boyd approving the revisions to the Standby Pay portion of the Personnel Manual, including revisions to the wording for it to be easier to understand. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

**BOARD VACANCY**

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Jim Worth reported when there is a Board vacancy, it is subject to Government Code section 17.08. Within 15 days of the vacancy the District is required to notify Kern County, which staff and legal will complete this week. The Board has 60 days from the date of the vacancy to elect a new Director. The new Director would fulfill the rest of Director Cordell's term ending in 2024. 15 days before the Board appoints a new Director, the vacancy is posted and open to persons who may be interested. After appointment, staff will notify

Kern County of the Director appointed.

Director Griffin raised questions regarding Mrs. Cordell's benefits. Legal and staff will follow up accordingly to address Director Griffin's concerns.

The Board heard public comment from Mike Neel.

**INDIAN WELLS VALLEY GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY (IWVGA)**

**IWVGA**

Director Rajtora commented on the August 10, 2022, Board meeting of the IWVGA including:

- Next IWVGA Board meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2022
- Board authorized the Water Resources Manager, Stetson Engineers, to prepare a Water Recycling Feasibility Study for the United States Bureau of Reclamation
- Existing Recycling Study Report has not been released
- Board approved a letter of intent to purchase 750 acre-feet of Table A water for \$6.4 million with a \$2 million down payment
- Imported Water Pipeline Alignment Study is underway and being conducted by Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group
- Rose Valley sub-flow monitoring effort is scheduled to begin fall/winter 2022
- Finance Advisor, Wulff, Hansen & Co., is recommending the Imported Water Bonding be privately bonded
- IWVGA's transition to a new financial system is still in progress with no firm completion date
- Still no validated method to measure change in groundwater storage, thus being unable to calculate recharge or overdraft
- Annual Report release process is scheduled to be discussed at the September Board meeting

Chuck Krieger, with Krieger & Stewart (K&S), reported on a meeting with K&S, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, Stetson Engineers, and City of Ridgecrest Wastewater Treatment Plant Consultant.

Mr. Zdeba reported a meeting was held last week with Provost & Prichard for the Imported Water Pipeline Alignment Study. Provost & Pritchard's Project Manager, Jeff Davis, and his associate met with District staff and K&S on September 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss the District's future water demands and potential connection points for the imported water pipeline to the District's system. Mr. Davis was told the District opposed a direct connection to its system due to multiple concerns including water quality issues. A site visit is being coordinated with staff for Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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

Jim Worth reported on recent actions regarding the Comprehensive Adjudication, including:

**COMPREHENSIVE  
ADJUDICATION**

- All the cases have been assigned to Judge Cluster in the Orange County Complex division
- Staff has filed a stipulation with the Judicial Council requesting Judge Cluster handle all cases, including Judicial Council cases

- Judge granted a stay of discovery in the adjudication matters for 180 days
- Staff is reviewing members of the public in the valley who did not receive the mailer in order to serve them one more time to fulfill the requirement
- A Case Management Conference has been scheduled for December 2, 2022; 1:30 p.m.
- A second public meeting is scheduled for October 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Ridgecrest City Hall regarding the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Facilitation process. At this meeting the consultants will provide feedback from the stakeholder assessments conducted.

The Board heard public comment from Mike Neel.

**GENERAL MANAGER AND STAFF UPDATE**

Don Zdeba updated the safety record to 509 consecutive days without a recordable injury.

Metered water production at the wells for the month of August was 238,655,000 gallons (732.4 acre-feet). The number the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is using for comparison is metered water through the distribution system, or consumption, and non-revenue water, which is water lost to leaks, flushing activities, blow-offs, etc. For the month of August, the number is 198,768,300 gallons (610.0 acre-feet).

Beginning with the month of June there was a requirement from the State Board to submit a preliminary report with consumption, population, and R-gpcd by the third business day of the month. The preliminary report was submitted September 1<sup>st</sup>. The full report is still required by the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month. District's full report was submitted on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

The conservation results for August show consumption down 31.7% compared to August 2013. The 20% conservation target established by the Board of Directors took effect June 2016. Since that time, the cumulative result is 23.4% on the strength of four consecutive months exceeding 30%.

In response to Governor Newsom's request for a voluntary 15% reduction to address current drought conditions, SWRCB is also comparing current water consumption to the same month in 2020. Comparing August 2020 to August 2022, there is an 8.0% reduction in consumption.

Comparing the August conservation results in recent years, 2021 was 22.6% lower than the 2013 baseline year, 2020 was 14.7% lower, 2019 was 20.9% lower, and 2018 was 18.1% lower. The residential gallons for capita per day (R-gpcd) for the month of August was 159.2. This includes both indoor and outdoor usage.

There were three new connections added during the month of August, contributing \$11,876 in Capital Facility Fees. These were the first three new connections of the new fiscal year which began July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Zdeba commented there was no Community Collaborative meeting September 6<sup>th</sup>.

**GENERAL  
MANAGER AND  
STAFF UPDATE  
SAFETY,  
PRODUCTION &  
NEW SERVICES**

**PUBLIC  
OUTREACH**

A new General Manager (GM) column titled "The Cost of Water Explained" was provided to The Daily Independent and The News Review. Both papers published the column last week.

Staff continues to work with Providence Strategic Consulting to promote WaterSmart. As of this morning, there are 1,526 active accounts accounting for 11.8% of customers. This is up from the 11.5% reported last month. There were 1,974 customer alerts issued in August and there have been 12,202 in the past 12 months.

Regarding the Junior Associate Board (JAB) Member pilot program, Sierra Sands Unified School District (SSUSD) Superintendent, Dave Ostach, reports he had their technology department develop a query of all their students in the district who are 16 years of age or older. There are approximately 850 of those students in the district. He also sent a message about the program to all their parents.

Cerro Coso Community College (CCCC) responded earlier this evening that they intend to email the information to students residing within the District's service area. We have received one application to date. Applications are due Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>.

Canyon Springs Enterprises (CSE) has completed installation of the pump cans and suction piping for the Gateway/Salisbury booster stations and has backfilled around both. This week they have started forming the building foundation. CSE has also completed the foundations for the communication towers at the Arsenic Plant No. 2 and Gateway tank sites. They have begun sandblasting the interior of the new Gateway tank in preparation for coating. Subcontractor Paso Robles Tank will be mobilizing in October to begin erecting the new C-zone tank. BOOSTER STATIONS AND TANKS PROJECT

Ty Staheli reported that the estimated year-to-date revenues as of August 31, 2022, are \$2,853,943 and expenses are \$2,817,613. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$36,330, which is better than budget by \$49,650. FINANCIAL STATUS

Mr. Staheli reviewed the report provided by ENGIE Services for July 2022 through August 2022 with the Board. For August, the actual savings was \$50,649.87 and the guaranteed savings \$50,171.57. Since we just started a new fiscal year, the total savings thus far is \$101,686.14. At the Well 35 site, the actual savings for August was \$2,291.42 and guaranteed was \$1,994.07. The total savings since the Well 35 site went online January 2022 was \$17,049.56. SOLAR PRODUCTION

Mr. Staheli reported on the following conservation items: CONSERVATION  
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Water Waster Report - So far in 2022, there have been a total of 66 water waste reports received with 66 contacts made. There have been five formal Second Notices and zero penalties issued.

Pureflow has tentatively scheduled with the District to replace the underdrains in November. Staff has also asked Pureflow for the exact amount of the proprietary media that is needed for each vessel to ensure that the District has ample supply on hand should any be needed for the replacement of said media. 24,052,000 gallons produced from Arsenic Treatment Plant 2. ARSENIC TREATMENT

Mr. Lillion reported for the month of August, 23 services were OPERATIONS

repaired and 57 were replaced. Maintenance continues to work on Peg Street to replace laterals ahead of City paving projects. The efficiency of the NO-DES truck has afforded the District the ability to lengthen the duration of time between flushes. This has allowed staff to clear July and August of any flushing, providing more manpower to respond to the increased number of leaks in the summer months. Since inception, the NO-DES truck has filtered 8,542,475 gallons. 183 valves were exercised, 681 year-to-date.

**BOARD COMMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**BOARD  
COMMENTS**

Director Rajtora extended his condolences to the Cordell family. He commented Mr. Cordell was a true gentleman and a supporter of the people.

Director Griffin echoed Director Rajtora's sentiments adding Director Cordell was a great asset to the Board, the community, and his family.

Vice President Boyd also sends his condolences to the Cordell family. He commented the Finance Committee did receive feedback from Mark Hildebrand, of Hildebrand Consulting, regarding the Rate Study which is scheduled to be discussed at the December Board meeting.

President Saint-Amand thanked the staff for their reports this evening.

With no further Board or Public comments, President Saint-Amand recessed the meeting and adjourned to Closed Session at 7:15 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION**

**CLOSED  
SESSION**

The meeting was reconvened in Closed Session at 7:23 p.m.

Closed Session was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened to Open Session at 8:56 p.m.

No action was taken which would require disclosure under the Brown Act.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren Smith

Recording Secretary

**APPROVED: October 11, 2022**