

MINUTES

Owens Valley Groundwater Authority

Board Members:

SIERRA HIGHLANDS	John Camphouse	COUNTY OF MONO	Fred Stump
EASTERN SIERRA CSD	Ron Stone	CITY OF BISHOP	Chris Costello
INDIAN CREEK-WESTRIDGE CSD	Luis Elias	COUNTY OF INYO	Dan Totheroh
WHEELER CREST CSD	Glenn Inouye	BIG PINE CSD	BryAnna Vaughan
TRI VALLEY GWMD	Dave Doonan	KEELER CSD	

October 10, 2019

The Owens Valley Groundwater Authority meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m. at the Bishop City Council Chambers, Bishop, CA.

1. Pledge of allegiance

BryAnna Vaughan led the pledge of allegiance.

2. Public Comment

The Chairperson opened the public comment period and there was no one wishing to address the Board.

3. Introductions

The Board introduced themselves with one alternate, Carol Ann Mitchell – Tri Valley GWMD and one absence, Keeler CSD.

Chris Costello joined the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

4. Approval of minutes from the August 8, 2019 OVGA Board meeting

The Chairperson requested a motion to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2019 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes by Ron Stone, seconded by John Camphouse. Motion passed 8 yes (34.18 votes) 1 abstention (3.82 votes), 1 absent (2 votes).

5. Board Member Reports

BryAnna stated the Big Pine CSD is requesting a state grant through the IRWMP to expand Big Pine CSD's sewer evaporation ponds and requests a letter of support from the OVGA prior to the 10 day deadline. Dan Totheroh stated the Inyo Board would like to have the OVGA Board return to their representative Boards prior to the next meeting and determine future participation in the OVGA. Luis Elias stated the Indian Creek/Westridge CSD Board of Directors held a special meeting regarding their participation in the OVGA. Glenn Inouye stated a new Chairman was elected to replace him when he officially resigns. Carol Ann Mitchell stated the Tri Valley Groundwater Management District is evaluating their options based on the priority status. Fred Stump stated his Board discussed the issue but there was no clear direction.

Moved by Dan Totheroh and seconded by Chris Costello to add an urgency agenda item as follows:

Approve a letter of support for the Big Pine CSD to expand their sewer evaporation ponds and authorize Aaron Steinwand to sign.

Phillip Anaya asked the amount of the grant; Rick Kettleman with IRWMP requested the Board approve the letter of support; Bryanna Vaughan stated the grant is approximately \$100,000.

Motion by Dan Totheroh, seconded by John Camphouse to approve the letter. Motion passed unanimously (38 votes) with 1 absent (2 votes).

6. OVGA staff reports

- a. Financial Report
- b. Report on Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority activities

Laura Piper, Inyo County Water Department, provided the financial report and stated the OVGA cash balance is \$124,572.29. She stated transactions since the last meeting was a fourth quarter interest payment and consultant fees. John Vallejo stated Indian Wells is moving forward in getting their draft GSP completed by their January 2020 deadline. The Board and staff discussed their intent to import water, and a possible agreement with LADWP to purchase water and or a banking agreement. Sally Manning asked if their sustainability criteria were being discussed. Mr. Vallejo stated that draft chapter of the plan has not been released yet. Philip Anaya asked if China Lake Naval Weapons center was discussed for funding possibilities. Mr. Vallejo stated the Navy is a member of the Board.

7. Termination of Keeler CSD participation in the OVGA

Dr. Aaron Steinwand stated there was a letter sent out last July regarding their participation on the OVGA Board. Keeler replied and requested their participation in the OVGA be terminated. Discussion followed on the changes, voting shares, and Brown Act if Keeler is removed. Motion to remove Keeler CSD from the Board pursuant to article 6, section 1.5 of the JPA; motion by Glenn Inouye, seconded by BryAnna Vaughan. Motion passed unanimously. 9 yes (38 votes).

8. Implications of DWR reprioritization of the Owens Valley Groundwater Basin

Dr. Aaron Steinwand provided a staff report regarding the possible reassignment of the basin as low priority. He stated the final status of the basin is still uncertain at this time and discussed drafting a mission statement. Tony Morgan stated the process used to develop a mission statement is the Board develops guiding principles and from that, a mission statement is formed based on the collaborative concerns and interests of all Board members. The Board and staff discussed their options in detail and provided their individual Boards concerns and possible options regarding low and medium priority designation. The Board chose to discuss topics related to items 8, 9, & 10 together. All Members regardless of basin designation wished to move forward with the sustainability plan; requested the consultant move forward; asked for staff to send contribution invoices to each entity; and utilize grant funding. Phillip Anaya questioned if management areas were going to be developed; stated there is an implementation grant process ongoing; and the OVGA needs to move forward with that application. Dr. Steinwand stated the implementation grant proposals will be solicited in the summer of 2020 and if our basin becomes low priority, we may be ineligible. Ted Williams stated he thinks the Board should move forward to develop the plan regardless of DWR's basin prioritization. Sally Manning stated she agrees a mission statement is a good thing, and encouraged the Board to obtain all the facts to assure the basin can be sustainable. Earl Wilson stated CASGEM evaluation made the Owens Valley high priority then it dropped to medium; alternative GSP plans are being denied by DWR; water quality will be a big issue in the future; and requested the Board move forward with the GSP. Daniel Cutshall stated there is no guarantee if designated a low priority basin that it will stay that way and suggested the Board continue forward with the GSP. Lyn Bolton stated if the Board moved forward with the GSP and collected the data, that would show that the basin is a small percentage impact to groundwater. She stated that information could be used as data to prove to legislature how much LADWP is impacting drawdown of the basin.

The Chairperson called a break at 3:45 pm and reconvened the meeting at 3:56 pm.

9. Determination of member interest in future participation in the OVGA

Glenn Inouye, Wheeler Crest CSD, expressed his agency's wish to terminate participation in the OVGA should the basin priority be rated low. Mr. Vallejo stated the future Board item would need to agree to release those parties from the financial agreement in place. He stated an agenda item could be that Wheeler Crest be relieved from its responsibilities under the financial contribution agreement and removed from the Board. Mr. Inouye stated they would request that there be no financial penalty for terminating their participation on the Board. Aaron Steinwand stated if we are designated low, he would send a notice requesting the member write a formal letter requesting termination so it could be agendized at the next meeting which would be a majority vote by the Board, and then the following meetings have the revised funding agreements for those wishing to remain on the Board. Earl Wilson asked if there was any data on diminimus users, Aaron stated as far as use, no.

10. Members' annual financial contribution and continued progress on the GSP

The Chairperson stated we are well into the second year; all entities contributed the first year; the only entity to contribute so far in the second year is the City of Bishop, and invoices were sent out last May 2019. Aaron Steinwand stated Chairman Stump is correct, the OVGA has been subsisting entirely on 2018/2019 member contributions; a grant advance was received in June 2019 but staff was advised by DWR to not utilize the grant funding until the OVGA was positive it would continue to exist and proceed with the plan. He stated the consultants work was slowed and payments of contributions were withheld pending the outcome of the basin priority rating. He stated invoices will need to be reissued to account for the year end credit adjustment and although we have the grant funding that covers the consultants costs, the budget was created was for two staff members (Inyo) and now there are three agencies with staff, which has a benefit but has increased the original developmental budget. John Vallejo stated with regard to the JPA and

Bylaws, any outside funding source shall be a credit (grant funding) to the member contributions. He stated dependent on the future composition of the Board, the members funding requirements will change and can be answered in a future agenda item. He stated the GSP budget vs the annual budget differs and you wouldn't want to take a credit midstream and create a shortfall. Chris Costello stated it seems the entire Board wishes to move forward with the plan; the entire Board in good faith has entered into the funding agreements; and made that commitment to contribute. The entire Board confirmed they wished to move forward with the GSP. Jarod Phillips asked if we are reprioritized to low, can we still utilize the grant funding. Staff stated yes. Phillip Anaya stated he is in support of the OVGA moving forward with the GSP and said he hopes the basin remains as a medium priority basin.

11. Discussion regarding future agenda items

The Board requested that if available, have staff bring the final determination from DWR; a formal request to Aaron Steinwand from members that wish to withdraw if a low priority rating releasing them from their financial contributions; and a staff presentation on basic hydrology concepts.

12. Set next meeting

The next OVGA meeting was scheduled for November 14, 2019 in the Bishop City Council Chambers.

13. Adjourn

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4:41 pm.