



**MID-KAWEAH GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS WORK SESSION & BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

March 12, 2024 @ 1:00 P.M.  
**City of Tulare Council Chambers**  
491 North M Street  
Tulare, CA 93274

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Nelsen, Liz Wynn, Dennis Mederos, David Bixler, Dave Martin, and Blake Wilbur

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**GSA MEMBER STAFF PRESENT:** Aaron Fukuda, Valerie Kincaid, James Fisher, Diana Zegarra, Leslie Caviglia, Trisha Whitfield, Alex Peltzer, Derrik Williams, and Georgina King

**PUBLIC ATENDEES:** Mark Larsen, Johnny Gailey, Dave Van Groningen, and Robert Bender.

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Nelsen called the work session to order at 1:00 p.m.
- 2) **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Chair Nelsen called for public comments. No comments were forthcoming.
- 3) **MKGSA Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update**
  - a) **Department of Water Resources Inadequate Determination of the Revised 2020 Groundwater Sustainability Plan Submitted for the San Joaquin Valley – Kaweah Subbasin Update**
    - i) **Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team Subsidence Core Team Update** – Direction on Coordinated Recommendation for Minimum Thresholds for Subsidence – Derrik Williams provided the report. Subsidence rates in the San Joaquin Valley are the highest in the state and will remain as a high-priority focus for GSP revisions. DWRs will evaluate how quickly we are acting to minimize or prevent subsidence, which is principally caused by lowering of groundwater levels. Mr. Williams evaluated a list of all infrastructure sensitive to differential subsidence, to better define “significant and unreasonable impacts” in the Kaweah Subbasin. Some infrastructure does not have enough data to evaluate the impacts or likelihood of those impacts occurring, which will remain data gaps until a future GSP update. Mr. Fukuda followed Mr. Williams presentation by listing several potential projects and management actions that could minimize land subsidence.
    - ii) **Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team Water Level Core Team Update** – Direction on Coordinated Recommendation for Minimum Thresholds for Groundwater Levels – Georgina King provided the report. The Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team (Team) has been meeting weekly to develop coordinated methodology,

analyses, and reviews. Currently the team are addressing 3 key GSP deficiencies: The Kaweah mitigation program and plan, upper aquifer water levels, and subsidence. Ms. King then presented the Dry Well Susceptibility Analysis on behalf of the Team noting the impacts of lowering upper aquifer groundwater levels, and the anticipated mitigation costs if water levels are lowered to the minimum threshold.

- iii) Kaweah Subbasin Mitigation Program – Direction on Coordinated Recommendation – Mr. Fukuda provided the review of the Mitigation Program. The MKGSA is targeting a July delivery of a revised GSP for State Water Control Board review. Mr. Fukuda reported that the MKGSA on schedule to have a mitigation program and plan in place by Spring 2024. Mr. Fukuda described the application process for well mitigation including emergency water supplies, interim water supplies, a permanent solution, and homeowner education. Lastly, Mr. Fukuda noted that the Kaweah Subbasin GSAs intend on teaming with Self-Help Enterprises to provide administration and implementation of the mitigation program and plans.
  - iv) Mid-Kaweah GSA Well Mitigation Funding Plan – Direction on Coordinated Recommendation – Mr. Fukuda provided an overview of the funds collected under the MKGSA Emergency Ordinance and the portion that could be allocated for well mitigation. Mr. Fukuda reported that the MKGSA Advisory Committee directed the staff to develop additional structure in the Emergency Ordinance to adequately fund the well mitigation plan, which includes establishing a reserve fund policy.
- 4) CALL TO ORDER REGULAR SESSION – Following the work session and a brief recess, Chair Nelsen called the board of directors meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- 5) PUBLIC COMMENT – Chair Nelsen called for public comments. No comments were forthcoming.
- 6) GENERAL BUSINESS
- a) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 17, 2024. By a motion of Director Mederos and seconded by Director Bixler, the meeting minutes were approved.
  - b) Financial Reports
    - i) Financial Statements – Year-to-Date – Mr. Fukuda presented the financial statements. By a motion of Director Wilbur and seconded by Director Bixler, the Financial Statements were approved.
  - c) Legal Counsel Report – Ms. Kincaid provided the update. The State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) are considering revising (lowering) SGMA fees for the basins in probation, which were originally set for \$40/AF in the presentation to the Tulare Lake Subbasin. Ms. Kincaid reported that the Tulare Lake probationary hearing is on April 16, 2024 in Sacramento. The estimated schedule for the Kaweah probationary hearing is estimated around November 2024. DWR just released the first of three white papers regarding interconnected surface waters (ISW) on February 21<sup>st</sup>, which provides more background defining ISWs and some considerations to properly monitor and manage them. ISWs are a unique sustainability indicators in that DWR didn't deem any subbasin inadequate based on this alone. DWR also published a white paper on well permits. On February 21, 2024, two different assemblies, the Budget Subcommittee and the Water Parks and Wildlife committees met to receive an update on SGMA activities.

- d) MKGSA Advisory Committee Update – Mr. Fukuda gave the report. The Advisory Committee met on February 20, 2024 and March 5, 2024. Montgomery & Associates provided an update on water levels and mitigation costs on behalf of the Kaweah Subbasin Water Level Core Team. The MKGSA Advisory Committee recommended the 10x surface (10 times the historical annual average decline) as the ideal minimum threshold to balance both operational flexibility and affordable mitigation costs. MKGSA staff was directed to start working on policies to recommend to the MKGSA Board for the transfer of groundwater between GSAs. MKGSA staff was directed staff to prepare a strategy to utilize existing Emergency Ordinance revenue to fund the domestic well mitigation plan and to establish a cash reserve policy.
- e) Matter for Consideration
- i) Discussion and Consideration of Resolution No. 2024-02 – Resolution of the Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency Adopting the Version 1.0 Kaweah Water Market Pilot –Mr. Fukuda described the progress made in linking the water market software with the Water Dashboard. MKGSA staff recommends approving Resolution No. 2024-02 to extend the work to May 31, 2024 to resolve unforeseen challenges linking the software programs. By a motion of Director Mederos, seconded by Director Bixler and unanimously carried by all Directors present, Resolution No. 2024-02 was approved.
  - ii) Discussion and Consideration of Resolution No. 2024-03 – Resolution to Adopt the Second Non Material GSA Boundary Change – Mr. Fisher provided the report. The MKGSA boundary requires an annual update as the city of Visalia and City of Tulare boundaries continue to expand. The new boundary will recognize all annexations on or before October 1, 2023 for the 2024 water year invoicing. With Ms. Kincaid’s clarifications on the resolution, Director Mederos made a motion to approve the resolution, second by Director Wynn and unanimously carried, the resolution was approved.
  - iii) Discussion and Consideration of Montgomery & Associates Task Order No. 7 – DWR Response Amendment #2 – Mr. Fukuda recommended approving Montgomery & Associates Task Order No. 7 – DWR Response Amendment #2. This amendment incorporates the remaining tasks to update the GSP in the compressed timeline set by the state, so the budget will not exceed \$270,000. By a motion from Director Martin, second by Director Wilbur, the amended task order was approved.
  - iv) Discussion and Consideration of Montgomery & Associates Task Order No. 12 – Kaweah Subbasin Model Update and Recalibration Amendment #1: Predictive Modeling – Mr. Fukuda described how the MODFLOW model would be used in predictive modeling, such as future climate scenarios (required by DWR) and groundwater demand projections. By a Motion of Director Mederos, second by Director Bixler Task Order No. 12 Amendment #1 was approved.
  - v) Discussion and Consideration of Task Order No. 12 – Kaweah Subbasin Model Update and Recalibration Amendment #2: MKGSA Predictive Modeling – Mr. Fukuda described the necessary work required to run the predictive modeling scenarios needed for the revised GSP, such as preparation of non-irrigation demand projects and setting up requested model scenarios. By a motion from Director Wynn, second by Director Mederos, unanimously carried by all Directors present, Task Order No. 12 Amendment #2: MKGSA Predictive Modeling was approved.
  - vi) Discussion and Consideration of Cost Sharing Agreement with East Kaweah GSA and Greater Kaweah GSA – Predictive Modeling. Mr. Fukuda described

how the work in task order 12 amendment 1 benefitted the subbasin as a whole, not the MKGSA specifically. Therefore, the costs associated with the amendment would be split evenly between the 3 GSAs. By a motion from Director Bixler, second by Director Martin, the cost sharing agreement was approved.

- vii) Discussion and Consideration of Purchase of Pressure Transducer for Daily Water Level Monitoring – Mr. Fisher recommended purchasing one In-Situ Pressure Transducer for a Dedicated Monitoring Well. 17 of the 18 existing monitoring wells are currently monitored by a pressure transducer, this purchase would provide full coverage. By a motion from Director Mederos, second by Director Bixler, the purchase of pressure transducer was approved.
- 7) INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT – Mr. Fukuda gave the report. Mr. Fukuda reported on two events he attended at the California Irrigation Institute and the American Society of Civil Engineers. Mr. Fukuda also reported on the 2024 Spring groundwater readings.
- 8) CALIFORNIA GROUNDWATER COALITION – No updates provided.
- 9) LEGISLATION – No updates provided.
- 10) BOARD/STAFF UPDATES, FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS OR OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST – No updates provided.
- 11) CLOSED SESSION – The Board of Directors entered Closed Session. Director Martin did not attend Closed Session due to a conflict of interest. Upon returning from Closed Session, Ms. Kincaid reported that there were no actions taken in Closed Session.
- 12) ADJOURNMENT - Chairmen Nelsen adjourned the meeting at 4:35pm. Next Regular Meeting April 9, 2024