



**MID-KAWEAH GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY
MEETING MINUTES**

October 10, 2023 @ 3:00 PM

MKGSA Board of Directors Meeting
Tulare Public Library
491 North M Street
Tulare, CA 93274

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Nelsen, Dennis Mederos, David Bixler, Emmanuel Soto, Blake Wilbur, and Dave Martin

GSA MEMBER STAFF PRESENT: Aaron Fukuda, Kathi Artis, Valerie Kincaid, James Fisher, Diana Zegarra, Leslie Caviglia, Rhett Anderson, and Trisha Whitfield

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Amanda Piersch-Derby, Allison Tristao, Nicole Bona, Doug Jackson, Geoff VandenHeuvel, Mark Larsen, Eric Correia, Rosalinda Alexander, Lisa McEwen, Staci Wilkins, Derrik William, Georgina King, Cole Brazil, and Melisa Herman

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER** - Chair Nelsen called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- 2) **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Chair Nelsen called for public comments. Aaron introduced his guest, Cole Brazil. He’s a young high school student job shadowing for a day under Aaron Fukuda for water quality careers.
- 3) **GENERAL BUSINESS**
 - a) **Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting on September 12, 2023.** Director Mederos pointed out two corrections that needed to be made. First, the meeting was held at Tulare Public Library and not at Tulare Irrigation District office. Second, Agenda Item 3gii – Should read “*The project is anticipated to be complete by January 2024*”, not January 2023. By a motion of Director Mederos, seconded by Director Bixler, the September 12th, 2023, meeting minutes were approved after those two corrections were made.
 - b) **Financial Reports**
 - i) *Financial Statements* – Ms. Artis presented the financial statements. By a motion of Director Martin, seconded by Director Bixler, the Financial Statements were approved.
 - ii) *Call for Funds* – Mr. Fukuda provided a review of the current and future expenses for a proposed call-for-funds. The largest foreseeable expenses are GSP revisions and MODFLOW modeling work. By a motion of Director Bixler, seconded by Director Martin, the Call-For-Funds in the total of \$192,000 was approved.

- c) **Legal Counsel Report** – V. Kincaid provided reports on both surface water and groundwater. For surface water, phase 2 of the Bay Delta Plan (requires outflow for fish habitat). The SWRCB adopted a 40% unimpaired flow requirement for the San Joaquin between February and June, while the Sacramento Valley is proposed at 55% unimpaired flow year-round. The comment period is currently open with several workshops.

There are two groundwater updates. First, DWR is continuing to review the remaining 43 GSPs submitted in 2022. Second, SWRCB draft report for Tulare Lake’s inadequate determination is anticipated soon. The probationary timeline proposed earlier this year appears to have been delayed by several months.

- d) **MKGSA Advisory Committee Update** – Advisory Committee Chair Eric Correia gave the update from the October 3, 2023, meeting. The Advisory Committee reviewed sustainable management criteria and groundwater levels conditions and evaluated cost scenarios for mitigation. The Advisory Committee also recommended the Precipitation Policy for board consideration, deciding an 80% of a 25-year rolling average precipitation credit was easier to manage than 80% of actual precipitation measured. Finally, the Advisory Committee approved the WY2024 allocation at 6 inches for Tier 1 and 6 inches for Tier 2, and leaving costs the same. Moreover, the groundwater pumping cap was raised to 3.0 AF/acre, and the mitigation block was reduced from 1.0 AF/acre to 0.5 AF/acre.

e) **MKGSA Groundwater Sustainability Plan Update**

- i) *Department of Water Resources Inadequate Determination of the Revised 2020 Groundwater Sustainability Plan Submitted for the San Joaquin Valley – Kaweah Subbasin Update* – Mr. Fukuda provided the update. The Kaweah Subbasin Technical Team is divided into (1) The Water Level SMC Core Team and 2) The Subsidence SMC Core Team. Each core team is evaluating adjusting MTs set in 2022 to address the GSP deficiencies. So far, the subsidence analysis is proving to be the most complex, and the core teams are looking to account for residual subsidence in their analysis.
- ii) *Kaweah Subbasin Mitigation Program* – Mr. Fukuda gave the update. The MKGSA Staff has cataloged the comments and questions from the public comment period and put into a ‘comment matrix’. Based on coordination with the Kaweah Subbasin Technical team, responses to the matrix were collaboratively developed with the subbasin.
- iii) *Mid-Kaweah GSA Well Mitigation Plan* – The Advisory Committee reviewed and approved the responses for both the mitigation program and mitigation plan. The mitigation program and plans are intended for board consideration by November, but additional technical work may delay consideration until December.

f) **MKGSA GSP Implementation Workplan**

- i) *Emergency Ordinance to Establish an Extraction Limitation for the Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency Service Area – Update*
1. *Discussion and Consideration of Precipitation Allocation Policy*
– Mr. Fisher lead the discussion for the consideration to adjust the precipitation credit to the groundwater allocation from 80% of actuals (measured) to 80% of 25-year rolling average allocated at the beginning of the year. By a motion of Director Mederos, seconded by Director Bixler, the proposed precipitation policy adjustment was recommended for a roll-call

vote. Mr. Fukuda motioned the roll call. The precipitation policy amendment passed 6-0, by the following roll call. Ayes: Directors Mederos, Wilbur, Nelsen, Soto, Bixler and Martin.

2. *Discussion and Consideration of Water Year 2024 Allocation* – Mr. Fukuda lead the discussion for the consideration of the water year 2024 allocation. There were three significant changes. First, the groundwater pumping cap was increased from 2.5 AF/acre to 3.0 AF/acre. Second, the mitigation tier was reduced from 1.0 AF/acre to 0.5 AF/acre. Third, the total WY 2024 allocation was reduced from 2.50 AF/acre to 1.83 AF/acre. By a motion from Director Martin and 2nd by Director Wilbur the motion carries.

g) Kaweah Subbasin Coordination

- i) *Kaweah Subbasin Management Committee* – Meeting on September 27, 2023 @ 9:00 AM – GSA Update and Combined meetings with NRCS
- ii) *Prop 68 Implementation Grant* – Okieville Recharge Basin construction underway
- iii) *SGM Implementation Grant Round 1* – No update
- iv) *Department of Conservation Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program Grant* – Request for Proposal (RFP) Out for Solicitation
- v) *Water Marketing Strategy Grant* – Progress is ongoing.
- vi) *Kaweah Water Foundation (CVSALTS)* - No update.
- vii) *Kaweah Inter-basin Coordination* – No update.

4) INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

- a) *Discussion and Consideration of Provost and Pritchard Services for Website Template Design* – Mr. Fukuda led the discussion. The MKGSA noticed increased website traffic for GSA matters but received feedback that information is not easy to find and is considering a redesign. The staff found Provost & Pritchard (P&P) already designed the most intuitive website platforms in the valley that would suit MKGSA’s needs. P&P provided a not-to-exceed estimate of \$6,500 for a website redesign template. By motion of Director Mederos and second by Director Bixler the motion is carried, allowing the MGKSA to proceed with the website redesign.
- b) *Discussion and Consideration for Tulare Irrigation District Support Letter for Bureau of Reclamation Grant to Design and Construct Basin No. 8 Basin Improvements and Backup Well and Tank Facility for Okieville* – Mr. Fukuda led the discussion. Fukuda was requesting from the Board for a support letter for Tulare ID to pursue a grant funding opportunity through the Bureau of Reclamation Water Smart Grant. The Okieville Well Resiliency Project would provide the community of Okieville with a backup well, tank, booster, generator, and Basin No. 8 Recharge and diversion enhancements. The grant application is due October 31, 2023 and only requires a 5% cost share. By a motion from Director Martin and second by Director Wilbur the motion carries, approving a support letter for TID’s well resiliency project.
- c) *Discussion and Consideration for Tulare Irrigation District Support Letter for Bureau of Reclamation Grant to Design and Implement a Water Dashboard* – Mr. Fukuda led the discussion. TID currently collects surface water and groundwater data through several programs and formats, and stores data on static spreadsheets. The current process is labor intensive and prone to error. TID is proposing a Dashboard to collect and store all data in a data management system with GIS functionality and decision support tools. There is a grant funding opportunity to fund the Dashboard, Mr. Fukuda requested a support letter from the MGKSA. By a motion from Director Mederos and second by Director Bixler the motion carries.

- 5) CALIFORNIA GROUNDWATER COALITION – No update
- 6) LEGISLATION – No update
- 7) BOARD/STAFF UPDATES, FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS OR OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST – The November meeting has been moved up to November 7, 2023 @ 3:00 PM
- 8) CLOSED SESSION
 - a) Gov't Code §54956.9 – Anticipated Litigation: One Case
There were no reportable actions taken in closed session.
- 9) ADJOURNMENT - Chair Nelsen adjourned the meeting. The next scheduled meeting is November 7, 2023 @ 3:00 PM