



APPROVED BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

December 9, 2020

The Board of Directors for the Merced Irrigation-Urban Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MIUGSA) met virtually on the above date pursuant to notice at 9:00 A.M., consistent with temporary authorization to deviate from Brown Act meeting guidelines issued through Executive Order by California Governor Gavin Newsom.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

At 9:00 A.M., Chair Hicham Eltal welcomed those present and called the meeting to order. MIUGSA Board Coordinator, Jennifer McMaster made an announcement regarding changes that have been made to the Board meeting procedures in order to make good faith efforts to comply with the Governor’s Executive Orders and allow the public the opportunity to observe, participate and comment in the Board’s meeting.

Ms. McMaster stated that staff had not received any emails from members of the public requesting a link to the video portion of the meeting or commenting on any agenda item. Ms. McMaster also informed the public of the procedure for submitting comments during the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following MIUGSA Representatives present:

Name	Organization
Hicham Eltal (Chair)	Merced Irrigation District
Ken Elwin (Vice Chair)	City of Merced
Justin Vinson	City of Atwater
Jose Antonio Ramirez	City of Livingston
Carlos Valencia	Winton Water and Sanitary District (CSD)
Daniel Chavez	Planada Community Services District (CSD)
Cynthia Benavidez	Le Grand Community Services District (CSD)

*(**Note – Board member Chavez was present during the Board’s meeting, however during the meeting he experienced technical difficulties with his audio device and was unable to signify a vote during consideration of several of the Board’s action items. For purposes of these minutes only, Board member Chavez is noted to have abstained from the vote.)*

WRITTEN PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

None.

BOARD ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Meeting Minutes: October 14, 2020

On motion by Director Benavidez, seconded by Director Elwin; the Board unanimously approved the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows:

Ayes:	Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Valencia, Benavidez, Chavez, Ramirez
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	None

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None.

REPORTS

Matthew Beaman, Merced Irrigation District, Water Resources Regulatory Engineer, provided the Board with an update regarding a domestic well inventory project, administered by the Merced Integrated Regional Water Management Authority, and funded by a Disadvantaged Community Involvement Grant issued by the California Department of Water Resources. Mr. Beaman provided an overview of the project and grant funding received. Mr. Beaman noted that the project involves a study aimed to review the existing well databases of the Merced County Environmental Health Department and the California Department of Water Resources. He indicated that the study will help to verify where each well is located within the basin and will assist with determining the status of each well identified.

Mr. Beaman noted that a technical memorandum summarizing the findings of the well study is on track for completion toward the end of December 2020. Mr. Beaman noted that the study is anticipated to provide significant benefit to disadvantaged communities in the area, planning purposes of the GSP and sustainable groundwater management within the basin. Mr. Beaman indicated that the development of a stakeholder outreach program is anticipated to follow the release of the technical memorandum.

ACTIONS

Mr. Beaman requested the Board review and consider approving an amendment to the contract between MIUGSA, Merced Subbasin GSA, and Turner Island Water District GSA-1 and Woodard & Curran, for services related to the development and implementation of the GSP. Mr. Beaman provided background information and reviewed previous amendments to the agreement. Mr. Beaman noted that the proposed amendment will generally allow Woodard and Curran to perform the work necessary to prepare a GSP Data Gaps Plan, develop a remote sensing decision

support tool, develop a Water Year 2020 Annual Report, and prepare a Proposition 68 Implementation - Round 1 Grant Funding application on behalf of the GSA's.

Mr. Beaman discussed the benefits and estimated costs associated with the proposed amendment to the agreement with Woodard and Curran. He discussed and provided an overview of the cost share amongst the GSA's, and MIUGSA's member agencies pursuant to the existing MOU. Mr. Beaman discussed staff's recommendation to approve the proposed amendment and noted that a similar action item will be presented to the other two Merced GSAs (Merced Subbasin GSA and Turner Island Water District GSA-1) for consideration at their respective upcoming Board meetings. The Board asked and staff responded to a number of questions. Following significant conversation, Director Elwin made a motion to approve the proposed amendment to the agreement with Woodard and Curran as presented, seconded by Director Ramirez; the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows:

Ayes:	Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Valencia, Benavidez, Ramirez
Noes:	None
Abstain:	Chavez
Absent:	None

Mr. Beaman requested the Board review and consider adopting Resolution No. 2020-03 authorizing Merced Irrigation District to pursue 2020 Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program Implementation – Round 1 Grant funding on behalf of the Merced Groundwater Basin. Mr. Beaman discussed the purpose of the grant and projects to be submitted for funding. He discussed and provided an overview of the timeline for the grant application, and noted that the Proposal Solicitation Packet was posted for public review in November 2020. Mr. Beaman indicated that, grant applications are due by January 8, 2021.

Chair Eltal reminded the Board of comments submitted regarding the grant application due date, which recommended DWR move the application deadline to March 2021. He noted that DWR did not extend the deadline.

Mr. Beaman provided the Board with an overview of grant funding available and discussed potential costs amongst the GSAs. Mr. Beaman noted that only one (1) application will be accepted per basin and that projects to be considered must be consistent with the purpose of Proposition 68, and must provide multiple benefits.

Mr. Beaman discussed work done to date in regard to the grant application. He discussed in particular, the Coordination Committee's recommendation to submit a grant application, including a number of projects, and further recommendation to authorize Merced Irrigation District to submit the application and administer the grant on behalf of the subbasin (if awarded).

Chair Eltal discussed the background for project selection, including discussions with MIUGSA representative agencies and discussion of proposed projects with DWR. He noted that following these discussions, two (2) projects were selected for submission, the selected projects include the El Nido Conveyance System Improvements and Le Grand-Athlone Water District Intertie Project – Phase 1. Chair Eltal discussed the El Nido Conveyance System Improvements.

Mr. Beaman discussed the objectives of each project and noted that groundwater recharge is the primary benefit of both projects. He also discussed a number of additional benefits and the

anticipated location of each project. Following a detail review of each of the projects and discussion regarding associated costs, Mr. Beaman made a recommendation that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2020-03, authorizing Merced Irrigation District to file the application, administer grant funding (if awarded), and authorizing other actions relating thereto.

The Board engaged in significant discussion, including a discussion relating to the costs of the application. The Board was generally okay with the costs, and determined that MIUGSA would provide the funding necessary to prepare and submit the grant application based on the MIUGSA's proportionate share of the grant award. Following the discussion, Director Elwin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2020-03 as presented, seconded by Director Benavidez; the Board voted unanimously to approve Resolution No. 2020-03. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows:

Ayes:	Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Valencia, Benavidez, Ramirez
Noes:	None
Abstain:	Chavez
Absent:	None

Mr. Beaman provided a presentation and overview of staff's efforts toward the acquisition of bookkeeping/accounting services. Mr. Beaman noted that staff has contacted a number of local firms for related services. He indicated that discussions included, amongst other things, the scope of services needed, experience with government and small public agencies, availability of personnel, comprehensive rates/rate structure. Mr. Beaman noted that staff received "Engagement Letter(s)" from three firms, including proposed fees for each. The three firms include Balanced Books, LLP; Kemper CPA, LLP; and Grimbleby Coleman CPA.

Mr. Beaman provided an overview of the scope of services needed and a summary of findings. Mr. Beaman discussed and compared the characteristics of each firm. He also discussed additional steps and associated costs necessary to securing services to support MIUGSA. Following discussion, Mr. Beaman presented staff's recommendation to consider selecting Kemper CPA Group, LLP for general bookkeeping and accounting services, as presented.

On motion by Director Benavidez, seconded by Director Vinson; the Board voted unanimously to approve the action, as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows:

Ayes:	Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Valencia, Benavidez, Ramirez
Noes:	None
Abstain:	Chavez
Absent:	None

Chariman Eltal provided a presentation and overview of recommendations for securing general legal services for MIUGSA. He provided background information and discussed the process, including comparison of other GSA counsel in the area. He noted previous discussions with the Board relating to recommendations for legal counsel. Following detailed discussion, Chair Eltal presented staff's recommendation to consider authorizing execution of contract(s) with Phillip McMurray for the purpose of receiving general legal services for MIUGSA.

Mr. McMurray was present during the meeting and available for questions, however the Board had no questions for Mr. McMurray during the meeting.

Following presentation, Director Elwin made a motion to approve, seconded by Director Ramirez; the Board voted unanimously to approve the execution of contract(s) for the purpose of receiving general legal services for MIUGSA, as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the vote was as follows:

Ayes:	Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Valencia, Benavidez, Ramirez
Noes:	None
Abstain:	Chavez
Absent:	None

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

Chair Eltal had two (2) items for discussion.

Chair Eltal requested the MIUGSA Board Coordinator to send a reoccurring meeting invite to members of the Board for future MIUGSA Board meetings. He mentioned that while a meeting invite is sent in advance of each Board meeting, it would be helpful to have a reoccurring calendar reminder. The Board provided feedback, based on that feedback a reoccurring meeting invite will be sent to all Board members.

Chair Eltal discussed representation on the Stakeholder Committee, particularly for the core urban community. He asked that the Board assist with recommendations for representation on the Committee. The Board discussed and provided feedback, based on that feedback potential recommendations may be discussed at an upcoming Board meeting.

ADJOURN

On motion by Director Elwin, seconded by Director Benavidez; the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:10 A.M.