



APPROVED BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

April 14, 2021

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., General Counsel Phil McMurray welcomed those present and called the meeting to order. He stated that MIUGSA Board Coordinator, Jennifer McMaster was not able to make the Boards meeting and that he would run the meeting for that day. He made an announcement regarding temporary procedural changes that have been made to the Board meeting procedures in response to COVID, 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.

Mr. McMurray stated that to his knowledge, Ms. McMaster had not received any requests for a link to the video portion of the meeting, nor were there any public comments emailed on any agenda item.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following MIUGSA Representatives present:

Name	Organization
Hicham Eltal (Chair)	Merced Irrigation District
Ken Elwin	City of Merced
Justin Vinson	City of Atwater
Jose Antonio Ramirez	City of Livingston
Cynthia Benavidez	Le Grand Community Services District (LGCSD)
Daniel Chavez	Planada Community Services District (PCSD) (arrived at approximately 9:15 AM)
Carlos Valencia	Winton Water and Sanitary District (WWCSD)
Phillip McMurray	General Counsel

CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Meeting Minutes: March 10, 2021

On motion by Director Vinson, seconded by Director Benavidez; the Board unanimously accepted the Consent Calendar, as presented. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows:

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

REPORTS

Chair Eltal led a discussion with the Board regarding inter-basin coordination, and an update on the status of ongoing discussions between basins. Mr. Eltal stated that coordination is happening unofficially with the Turlock Sub-basin by virtue of MID being a member of the East Turlock Sub-basin GSA. With groundwater modelling north of the Merced River as part of the Turlock sub-basin GSP, a better understanding of the interactions between the basins has emerged. The group has just embarked on setting minimum thresholds for the various undesirable results under SGMA. As for the Chowchilla and Delta Mendota sub-basin, the three GSAs in Merced Basin have joined a DWR sponsored effort to facilitate between the basins regarding subsidence. At the first meeting, the basins were requested to discuss efforts taken by each to reduce subsidence. At the next meeting the parties should show the latest information related to subsidence in their respective sub-basins.

ACTIONS/DISCUSSION

Mr. Beaman presented and led a discussion and provided a detailed presentation regarding the recently completed and filed Annual Report for the Merced Groundwater Sustainability Plan, Water Year 2020. Mr. Beaman indicated that the first annual report was previously due to be filed with the California Department of Water Resources on or before April 1, 2020. That report was timely completed and submitted on March 31, 2020, and addressed water years 2016 – 2019. Moving forward, Mr. Beaman indicated annual reports would be prepared and submitted on or before the filing deadline of April 1, each year. For water year 2020, the GSP annual report was timely completed and submitted, on March 31, 2021.

Mr. Beaman and Mr. Eltal responded to various questions from the Board regarding the annual report.

Mr. Beaman then led a presentation and discussion regarding a proposed professional services agreement with Hansford Economic Consulting (Hansford). Mr. Beaman provided a brief history regarding the prior year’s contract with Hansford, indicating the Board had authorized execution of a professional services agreement with the economic consulting firm at its meeting on December 11, 2019. At that time, the Board requested MID execute the professional services agreement with Hansford on behalf of MIUGSA, which it did.

Mr. Beaman stated the tasks called for under the initial agreement with Hansford, i.e., preparation of a fee study, tasks related to the implementation for fiscal year 2021, and other professional services support relating to the fee and fee implementation during fiscal year 2021, had been completed. The existing agreement is therefore generally scheduled to expire. Mr. Beaman indicated however, there was funding allocated under the initial agreement that had not been spent, totaling approximately \$36,000. Mr. Beaman requested the Board to approve final negotiation and execution to of the professional services agreement between MIUGSA and Hansford utilizing the \$36,000 in funding.

Upon further discussion, Director Elwin made a motion to approve negotiation and execution of the professional services agreement with Hansford Economic Consulting, as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Chavez, and the Board unanimously approved the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows:

Ayes:	Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Benavidez, Chavez, Valencia
Noes:	None
Abstain:	Ramirez (Director Ramirez noted as abstention only because he was present for the meeting, but was unable to indicate his vote due to technical issues)
Absent:	None

Chair Eltal introduced the next item, a status update on implementation of the Merced Groundwater Subbasin GSP. Mr. Beaman introduced Mr. Jim Schneider with Olsson, the professional services consultant retained to represent MIUGSA and assist in the development of principle guidelines to implement the GSP within MIUGSA. Mr. Schneider led the Board in a high-level discussion of an initial water supply evaluation and data review, stating the initial analysis summarized water uses and water supplies to be used as general guidelines when implementing the Merced Subbasin GSP. Mr. Schneider also summarized the physical location and geography of MIUGSA in relation to the Merced Subbasin GSA, the Turner Island Water District GSA #1, and neighboring subbasins.

Mr. Schneider then summarized different types of water that may be available to water users within the MIUGSA, including MID surface water supplies for its in-District customers; native groundwater; and, developed groundwater supplies. Mr. Eltal clarified for the Board that the initial numbers indicating amounts of groundwater recharge through MID's water conveyance system, temporarily indicated as approximately 130,000 acre-feet per year, will be increased as part of discussions with the Merced Subbasin GSA and Turner Island Water District GSA #1 because that number does not include, for example, water recharged through surface water irrigation by individual growers.

Mr. Schneider concluded his presentation with a summary of known issues that the MIUGSA members and his firm will address in the future, such as certain irrigators are not connected to MID's water conveyance system; allocations of native groundwater will be less than historically used; and the need to avoid undesirable results. Certain policy discussions will also need to occur, such as allocations of groundwater locally; monitoring, enforcement and penalty issues; groundwater trading and credits. The Board asked, and Mr. Schneider and Mr. Eltal responded to questions.

Mr. Eltal introduced the final item for the Board's meeting, a discussion of the development of a schedule and public involvement plan for implementation issues associated with the Merced Subbasin GSP. He also introduced Ms. Stacy Roach with Olsson, who will be leading

development of the project. Ms. Roach began with a brief outline of the roles and responsibilities for a potential MIUGSA-specific Stakeholder Advisory Committee, MIUGSA, and Olsson in coordination with other consultants. She led a discussion regarding items to be discussed with stakeholders, including governance, monitoring groundwater use, water allocation principles and approaches, and options for enforcement and penalties.

Ms. Roach then reviewed the initial plan for a public engagement schedule, stating the Stakeholder Advisory Committee will likely facilitate a series of meetings to present information and solicit feedback on draft recommendations as they are prepared. The first 3 committee meetings will generally involve preparation and development of a draft report. The 4th meeting will be a summary of a final report for discussion. Ms. Roach said her expectation for the meeting scheduled would generally include meetings in August, September and October 2021, with the 4th and final meeting occurring sometime in March or April 2022.

CLOSED SESSION

None.

ADJOURN

On motion by Director Valencia, seconded by Director Elwin; the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:15 A.M.