

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BEDFORD COLDWATER
GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AUTHORITY**

February 15, 2024

Board Present

Jacque Casillas, City of Corona

Jack T. Ferguson, EVMWD

David Harich, TVWD

Staff Present

Jeff Pape, TVWD

Alex Lemieux, Aleshire & Wynder, LLP

Parag Kalaria, EVMWD

Christy Gonzalez, EVMWD

Michael Cruikshank, Water Systems Consulting

Katie Hockett, City of Corona

Corrine Nikolic, EVMWD

Scott Thompson, EVMWD

Ganesh Krishnamurthy, EVMWD

Kiernan Brtalik, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting of the Bedford Coldwater Groundwater Sustainability Authority was called to order by Chairperson Casillas at 4:07 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT– There were none.

I. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 16, 2023**
- B. Financial Statements for Period Ending December 2023**
- C. Receive and File the Audited Financial Statements for Fiscal Year End June 30, 2023**
- D. Ratification of Demands**
- E. Outside Contract Summary Report**

Director Harich requested several amendments on the Minutes of the November 16, 2023 Regular Board Meeting to correct spelling errors made on his last name.

ACTION: Chairperson Casillas made a motion, Director Harich seconded, and the motion carried unanimously to approve the Consent Calendar.

II. BUSINESS CALENDAR

A. Consider Adoption of Proposed Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget (MO #52)

Mr. Kalaria presented this item and referred to the information within the packet. Annually, BCGSA analyzes current financial activities and projects future expenditure requirements to develop a proposed budget for the following year. The total proposed budget for FY 2024-25 is \$684,325 which includes \$103,035 in administration costs for the Authority, \$521,000 in Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) implementation costs, and \$60,290 in required reserves.

All expenses outlined in the proposed FY 2024-25 Budget are anticipated to be covered by member-agency contributions. By the end of the fiscal year, it is estimated that the carryover from member contributions will amount to \$461,299. According to the proposed budget, there will be a total shortfall of \$189,266 for FY 2024-25, requiring each member agency to contribute \$63,089 to cover this deficit.

Over the span of five years, the projected total member contribution needed is estimated at \$553,932. To standardize the annual contribution from member agencies and ensure consistency, staff recommends the Board approve an annual member contribution per agency for FY 2024-25 in the amount of \$122,750. This contribution from members is essential to adequately fund the budgeted expenses for FY 2024-25.

As per the reserve policy adopted by the Board on May 16, 2019, the Operating and Non-Operating Reserves have both been set at 25% of the proposed budgets. The reserve requirements for FY 2024-25 have been incorporated in the proposed budget.

Answering a question from Director Ferguson, staff continually seek grant opportunities and the proposed \$15K budget will only be used if needed. Director Harich commented that most costs were flat over the projected years and felt it was worth looking into escalators due to inflation. Clarifying to Director Harich the proposed budget of \$43K for FY 2024-2025 was for identifying appropriate well monitoring locations, and the proposed budget of \$150K for the following year would be for construction of those wells. Director Harich requested to continually track costs to adjust and fine-tune the budgeting process.

Director Ferguson felt that costs are on the static side, however, since BCGSA is a newer agency, projected costs will change as time progresses and will be reflected in future updates. Director Harich felt the fixed costs and fees will be changing, and implementation costs will fluctuate impacting member agency contributions.

Chairperson Casillas agreed with the suggestion to adjust member contributions to level out through the years and felt that numbers will be adjusted every year with actual costs. Director Harich wanted to ensure the member contribution is as accurate as possible, so each year's adjustments become closer. Clarifying to the Directors, previous year's actuals were accounted for and reflected in this budget.

Director Harich was comfortable with moving forward with this budget as is, however, noted that moving forward we will have a much closer look at the actual numbers and history to reflect in future budgets.

ACTION: Chairperson Casillas made a motion, Director Harich seconded, and the motion carried unanimously to:

1. Approve the proposed BCGSA FY 2024-25 Budget; and,
2. Approve the annual member contribution per agency for FY 2024-25 in the amount of \$122,750.

B. Project Update: Investigation of Groundwater Surface Water Interactions at Temescal Wash (MO #53)

Mr. Kiernan Brtalik with Rincon Consultants, Inc. presented this item and referred to the presentation within the packet. This project was to address some uncertainties identified in the GSP. Work completed included data collection and review, vegetation, hydrology, and constraints analysis, and technical and monitoring reports. Confirming to Director Harich, the monitoring workplan has been submitted. A historical satellite and aerial imagery analysis was completed. Vegetation mapping and classification was also done to understand the composition of vegetation and evaluate susceptibility to changing groundwater conditions. Reach-by-reach hydrology analysis key takeaways included six potential monitoring well locations, with four prioritized. An environmental permitting and planning constraints analysis was also done with key takeaways being there were sensitive habitat and species in some of the proposed monitoring locations and identifying a streamlined schedule and cost by fine-tuning locations and project timing.

The Monitoring Workplan data collection and evaluation include remote analysis, continuous groundwater level monitoring, surface water flow monitoring, satellite imagery and aerial orthoimagery, ground photography, climatic data, and data collected by other agencies. There were five levels of effort identified, with the best path forward now going with level one which is remotely sensed data and watch for triggers that would advance to other levels.

Mr. Pape commented that the consultants did a good job of teaching us what the State wants and what they don't understand yet. The surface water and groundwater interaction are the most controversial and complex part of the GSP. He felt we have a good basis and having this in place to guide monitoring action will be helpful in the long term.

III. ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Cruikshank provided highlights on information provided in the meeting packet. Although Department of Water Resources (DWR) was due to give a determination of all GSPs by January 2024, the lower priority basins have not been completed. After meeting with DWR, he reported they were complimentary and impressed that the monitoring plan has been completed. Having this already done gives us more opportunities for future grants.

Answering a question from Director Harich, he noted there have been no issues on the work being done with the aggregate pits. In the next fiscal year, a feasibility study will be pursued for future funding opportunities. The Bedford Coldwater Water Year 2023 Annual Report is being prepared. The preliminary analysis of water levels in the Bedford Wash shows full due to the wet year. Levels in the Coldwater basin have increased approximately 50 feet in the last year, partly due to mountain precipitation and less pumping in this area.

Mr. Cruikshank continued to report on the Groundwater Surface Water Interactions at Temescal Wash Project. Phase 1 has been completed and implementation of Phase 2 is expected to be dependent on the guidance from DWR. Next year the monitoring well locations will be pursued and identified.

BCGSA staff is currently strategizing the next steps for engaging the property owners to gauge their interest in participating in a groundwater data collection effort for the Private Well Survey.

Regarding the Evaluation of the Effects of Aggregate Pits on Groundwater Flow and Quality Project, BCGSA continues to evaluate and improve the understanding of the hydrogeologic conceptual model in the vicinity of aggregate pits which will be incorporated into the 5-year GSP update. BCGSA will pursue grant opportunities to fund the next phase of the project.

IV. LEGAL COUNSEL REPORT

Mr. Lemieux reported on a recent Court of Appeals decision involving the Mojave Pistachios vs. Indian Wells Groundwater Authority. The local groundwater agency imposed a basin replenishment fee of \$2,130/AF starting in 2021. Mojave Pistachios filed a lawsuit attacking the GSA saying they are violating their vested water rights. The court determined they must pay first, litigate later. In a situation where a GSA imposes a replenishment fee, anyone who contests the fees must pay first and then litigate later. Although this doesn't directly impact this agency, it is worth keeping in mind in the future.

V. COMMENTS OF THE BOARD

Director Ferguson thanked Mr. Michael Cruikshank and Mr. Kiernan Brtalik for their reports and confirmed the next meeting date of May 16, 2024.

VI. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the February 15, 2024, Regular meeting of the Bedford Coldwater Groundwater Sustainability Authority was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

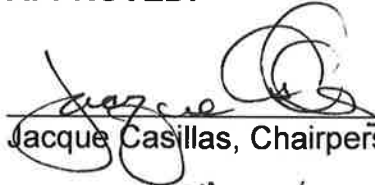
ATTEST:



Chance Edmondson, Secretary

Date: 8/15/2024

APPROVED:



Jacquie Casillas, Chairperson

Date: 8/15/2024