

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
INDIAN WELLS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023 – 2:00 P.M.

BOARD ROOM
500 W. RIDGECREST BLVD., RIDGECREST

Attendees: Ron Kicinski, Chuck Griffin, Don Zdeba, Ty Staheli, and Jason Lillion

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Committee/Public Comments

None.

3. Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (IWVGA)

Chuck Griffin had no updates from the April 12, 2023, IWVGA Regular Board meeting

The next IWVGA meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2023, there will also be a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting today April 27th at 5:00 pm. At this meeting there will be discussion regarding the shallow well mitigation program. Griffin has requested, at previous meetings, that the IWVGA form an ad hoc committee specifically for this program, to which there has not yet been a decision made. Director Ron Kicinski suggests that there be a discussion with Josh Nugent about how to create a check list of what should be considered when looking at shallow well mitigation.

4. LADWP Aqueduct Water Release

Releases continue from four of five sites within the Indian Wells Valley. Boulder Draw remains shut off since April 17th. As of yesterday, an estimated 2,763 acre-feet had been released. After speaking with Water District employees who have been monitoring the flow in the Dixie wash, it has been observed that the water has receded almost a mile to south of Bowman Road. It was initially thought that since the wash has been so dry for so long that the water would soak down, however, Chuck Krieger stated that if the aquifer is shallow, once the water soaks down far enough it could possibly speed up the percolation process which could be what is happening. We will continue to monitor the water flow and the wash basin.

The Water District is also investigating possible projects involving both BLM and State lands to put the water to beneficial use by encouraging recharge to the aquifer, we have narrowed our focus on District-owned properties. Krieger & Stewart has surveyed all sites and produced contour maps to assist with identifying multiple sites within the wash to place sandbag dams. In addition to filing a Notice of Exemption, staying within the wash would only require a Stream Alteration Agreement from Fish & Wildlife.

The District is also looking at creating catch basins to which we could connect into the wash and use a scrapper to create ponds that would be about 5 feet deep and could potentially fill and stay filled with the released water. Additional work outside of the wash will require biological surveys for Desert Tortoise and Mojave Ground Squirrels and an Incidental Take Permit from Fish & Wildlife. We are communicating with Stetson staff as well as Supervisor Peters' staff to coordinate necessary resources.

5. Potential Impact of Recycled Water on District's Need for Imported Water

During discussion of Item A2 on the agenda of the January 24th Board Workshop, Board discussion of potential Strategic Planning Effort, the Board requested to add recycled water as an agenda item for the Water Management Committee. In particular, the Board is interested in discussions with the City of Ridgecrest concerning recycled water being credited against the District's requirement for an imported water supply to meet its needs.

Director Kicinski would like to know how far into the treatment process the City is planning to go. It is indicated that the current plan is to tertiary treat the recycled water.

6. Brackish Water Study

Very little to report since the March Committee meeting. The draft Status Report covering the 4th quarter of 2022 as well as the 2022 Annual Report are still works in progress. Both should be complete this week and will be issued to DWR as drafts for their review.

Final steps before compiling the draft Feasibility Study document include efforts to evaluate shallow well impacts in the Study Area based on existing predicted drawdowns using the Desert Research Institute (DRI) model. The project completion date is December 30, 2023.

7. Alternate Water Sources

a. Exploration of sub-basins within the valley

John Jansen, with Collier Geophysical, continues work on the final draft of his report on interpretation of the 104 miles of seismic data that has been reprocessed. He has completed the net clay calculations for all HG zones and shared the results with Tim Parker for his review. Tim has completed his review so John can now finalize his report.

At the January 24th Board workshop staff was tasked with drafting a plan for exploring the potential of the El Paso Subbasin to provide a water supply not currently being fully utilized. Krieger & Stewart had previously issued a technical report with tasks and preliminary costs in 2021. The current work will expand on that report. Tim Parker has reviewed the aerial electromagnetic data from the SkyTEM flyover as well as geologic logs in the area and identified potential sites to consider for drilling exploration wells.

Forms to apply for Technical Support Services from the Department of Water Resources (DRW) are no longer available on-line and have to come from DWR

Regional offices. Last month Tim contacted the DWR Regional Office by both phone and email and also the State office by email. Jack Tung, with Regional Office, expressed reservations about receiving an application from other than a Ground Water Sustainability Agency (GSA). At last check-in, Jack is waiting to hear back from the Technical Support Services program as is Tim. Tim, Dave Scriven, and I did have a call with Paul Gosselin and Tim Godwin this morning during which they acknowledged the benefits of exploring the El Paso area and wanted to make sure the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (IWVGA) was in support of the project and the District submitting an application for funding.

8. Future Agenda Items

None.

9. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 2:17 pm