

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
INDIAN WELLS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

NOVEMBER 12, 2024

The Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Indian Wells Valley Water District was called to order by President Kicinski at 4:30 p.m. in the Board of Directors Hearing Room, 500 West Ridgecrest Boulevard, Ridgecrest, California. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mallory Boyd. **PLEDGE**

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** President Ronald R. Kicinski  
Vice President David C.H. Saint-Amand  
Director Mallory J. Boyd  
Director Charles D. Griffin  
Director Stan G. Rajtora **ROLL CALL**

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** George Croll, General Manager  
Jim Worth, Attorney  
Jason Lillion, Operations Manager  
Renée Morquecho, Chief Engineer  
Tyrell Staheli, Chief Financial Officer  
Lauren Smith, Recording Secretary

**AGENDA DECLARATION** **AGENDA DECLARATION**  
Recording Secretary, Lauren Smith, reported that the agenda for today's Special Board Meeting was posted on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION** **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**  
None.

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ON CLOSED SESSION** **PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
None.

With no further Board or Public comments, President Kicinski recessed the meeting and adjourned to Closed Session at 4:32 p.m.

**CLOSED SESSION** **CLOSED SESSION**  
The meeting was reconvened in Closed Session at 4:34 p.m.

Closed Session was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened to Open Session at 6:02 p.m.

No action was taken that requires disclosure under the Brown Act.

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Mike Neel and Renee Westa-Lusk.

**PUBLIC  
COMMENTS**

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

MOTION: was made by Director Griffin and seconded by Director Boyd approving the Minutes of the October 15, 2024, Special Board Meeting, October 21, 2024, Special Board Meeting, and Payment of Accounts Payable totaling \$1,381,233.81. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Kicinski, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

**CONSENT  
CALENDAR**

**OFFICE CLOSURE**

Staff requested the front office be closed on December 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Employees may use vacation during this time, as it is not a paid closure for District employees.

**OFFICE  
CLOSURE**

MOTION: was made by Director Griffin and seconded by Director Boyd approving the front office to be closed on December 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Griffin, Kicinski, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

**INDIAN WELLS VALLEY GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY (IWVGA)**

The Board discussed items from the October 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**IWVGA**

The November Board Meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum, meeting to be rescheduled for a later date.

The Board asked for follow up with the IWVGA Board regarding IWVGA meeting times, Closed Session times, reimbursement of legal expenses for the City of Ridgecrest, and the current available funds in the Replenishment Fee account.

The Board heard public comment from Mike Neel and Renee Westa-Lusk.

**COMPREHENSIVE ADJUDICATION**

The Court set the trial date for the Phase 2 regarding Safe Yield, March 30, 2026. The IWVGA filed a petition for writ of mandate, asking for the trial court's decision to be overturned and authority for determination of safe yield, independent of the GSP. Discovery will not start until after the Phase 1 trial is complete.

**COMPREHENSIVE  
ADJUDICATION**

Phase 1 trial is to quantify the federal reserve water rights and is scheduled for April 28, 2025. Discovery is ongoing.

Mr. Worth gave an update on ongoing adjudications with other Groundwater Authorities.

The Board heard public comment from Mike Neel and Renee Westa-Lusk.

**GM COMPENSATION**

It was reported that, while entitled, General Manager, George Croll, respectfully declined a compensation increase for his Annual Merit Review and COLA. This decision was made by the General Manager in an effort to reduce costs to the District.

**GENERAL  
MANAGER  
COMPENSATION**

**GENERAL MANAGER AND STAFF UPDATE**

**GENERAL  
MANAGER AND  
STAFF UPDATE**

Mr. Croll reported on the District's previous and upcoming outreach efforts, including staff attending the City of Ridgecrest's Trunk or Treat event. He also mentioned the annual Economic Outlook Conference usually held in February, and asked for suggestions. Mr. Croll also updated the Board on water consumption/production for the month of October.

Phases 1 and 2 have been pressure tested and disinfected. Bacteriological sampling was performed, with results expected soon. The contractor expects tie-ins and grading of the right-of-way to be completed before Thanksgiving.

NW TRANSM.  
PIPELINE

Dune 3 and Hometown contracts have been signed with the State. Staff has been in communication with Stetson Engineers to begin submitting invoices for reimbursement for Rademacher Way. The project will most likely be started after the New Year since the Springer transmission pipeline will be out of the service while the two tie-ins are completed.

CONSOLIDATION  
PROJECTS

The estimated year-to-date revenues as of October 31, 2024, are \$5,800,948 and expenses are \$6,588,267. Expenditures exceeded revenues by \$787,319, which is below budget by \$244,776. To date, the District has paid \$16,430,223 in GA Fees to the Groundwater Authority. Mr. Staheli shared that the District maintains an A+ rating with S&P and is endeavoring to maintain that rating with the proposed 2024 Financial Plan.

FINANCIAL  
STATUS

Mr. Staheli reported on the following conservation items: State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Water Waster Report - there have been 15 water waste reports received with 15 contacts made. There has been two formal Second Notice and one penalty issued.

CONSERVATION

Plants are now being winterized. Plant 2 will have media needs addressed this off-season in preparation for next year.

ARSENIC  
TREATMENT

Mr. Lillion reported for the month of October, 28 services were repaired and 22 were replaced. The NO-DES truck made one run in October. Since inception, the NO-DES truck has filtered 9,437,391 gallons. Seven valves were exercised. District staff is working with Nobel Systems bringing our new GIS system online. The new system provides a more streamlined approach to our work orders and work flow. Staff is planning on giving a demonstration to the Board at a future meeting.

OPERATIONS

**BOARD COMMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**BOARD  
COMMENTS**

The Board collectively wished staff and the public a Happy Thanksgiving.

Director Boyd thanked staff for their work on the Northwest Transmission Pipeline.

Director Rajtora thanked George Croll for his service as the General Manager over the past year.

Vice President Saint-Amand commented on the importance of the Arsenic Treatment Plants, specifically while finding a new media source and still providing the City with sufficient amount of clean water. He thanked the staff for their hard work.