



APPROVED BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

February 8, 2023

The Board of Directors for the Merced Irrigation-Urban Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MIUGSA) met on the above date, pursuant to notice, at 9:00 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

At 9:00 A.M., Chair Hicham Eltal welcomed those present and called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following MIUGSA representatives present:

Name	Organization
Hicham Eltal	Merced Irrigation District (Chair)
Ken Elwin	City of Merced (Vice Chair)
Justin Vinson	City of Atwater
Tony Avina	City of Livingston
Carlos Valencia	Winton Water and Sanitary District (WWSD)
Cynthia Benavidez	Le Grand Community Services District (LGCSD)
Phillip McMurray	General Counsel
Jennifer McMaster	Board Coordinator

Roll call showed the following MIUGSA representatives absent:

Daniel Chavez	Planada Community Services District (PCSD)
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CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Matthew Beaman, Merced Irrigation District Water Resources Regulatory Engineer noted the agenda incorrectly lists the August 9, 2022 Unapproved Minutes on the Consent Calendar. He indicated this was a typographical error and the agenda should have indicated the October 12, 2022 Minutes were attached for Board review and consideration. He indicated that the October 12, 2022 minutes were actually attached as part of the background materials rather than draft minutes from the August 9, 2022 meeting.

Chair Eltal noted he would need to step away at some point during the meeting and asked that the agenda be take slightly out of order to allow him to participate in the discussion regarding the ongoing development of MIUGSA draft rules and regulations and implementation policies. He asked that the Board move that item to be discussed following presentation of the Quarterly Financial Report.

The Board indicated it appreciated the correction to the inadvertent mistake on the Consent Calendar, and also indicated it would move forward with the meeting allowing flexibility in the order of items to be discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes – October 12, 2022
2. Minutes – November 9, 2022
3. Cash Transaction Report

On a motion by Director Elwin, seconded by Director Vinson; the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Consent Calendar, as presented. The votes were as follows:

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

REPORTS

Mr. Beaman presented the Board with MIUGSA’s Quarterly Financial Report. He noted the report covers the quarter ending December 2022. He reminded the Board that revenue is not typically significant during the last part of the year, as it is generally based on the tax rolls. He then reviewed expenses for professional services and discussed overall expenditures for the quarter totaling approximately \$94,000.

Mr. Beaman summarized variances from budgeted versus actual costs to date and discussed a number of miscellaneous and anticipated future expenses. He noted MID paid approximately \$100,000 for MIUGSA related activities during the quarter that had not been invoiced yet. He said MID is likely to bill the cost sharing expense of approximately \$40,000 sometime over the next couple of months. Mr. Beaman also noted MIUGSA’s FY2023 Budget included anticipated cost for addressing changes to the County’s groundwater ordinance, however staff was able to come to agreement with the County on most of the outstanding issues, and therefore he does not believe MIUGSA will incur those costs as previously anticipated. Mr. Beaman and Mr. Eltal responded to several questions from the Board regarding budgeted items and actual costs, and variances.

Mr. Beaman provided a profit and loss summary overview and reported approximately \$38,000 in revenues associated with MIUGSA’s regulatory fee received this quarter. He indicated the total revenue generated this fiscal year so far is approximately \$57,900.

The Board discussed the profit and loss report, as well as future staffing needs as MIUGSA moves into the implementation and enforcement phase of the Merced Subbasin GSP. Mr. Beaman responded to several questions before moving on to the next item.

Mr. Beaman then discussed and provided a status update regarding the development of draft rules and regulations, and policies for implementation of the GSP. He provided some general background regarding the GSP and MIUGSA Stakeholder Guidance Committee (SGC) meetings held between August 2021 and May 2022.

Mr. Beaman provided an overview of general concepts, including monitoring, enforcement, allocation, accounting and reporting. He discussed implementation policies and recommendations the GSA should consider based on SGC feedback, including the need to be able to track different types of water and make an official determination regarding the types of water that would count toward a MIUGSA allocation. Mr. Beaman responded to several questions from the Board.

Mr. Beaman then discussed several policies already approved by the Board, and provided an overview of draft policies staff, consultants and the SGC have been working on developing for Board consideration in the near future. He provided information related to currently existing wells within MIUGSA and reviewed the development of a draft well metering schedule. He discussed recommendations from the SGC regarding the draft well metering schedule, rules and regulations, and implementation policies.

The Board and Mr. Beaman engaged in a robust discussion regarding the need for staffing, well installation and implementation of well monitoring and enforcement. Director Valencia and Director Elwin noted a potential need to have some standardization of well meters, to which Director Eltal and Mr. Beaman agreed.

Mr. Beaman discussed water budget and accounting. He noted stakeholder recommendations for flexibility/opportunity for water users. Mr. Beaman discussed water supply to be included in the accounting platform and potential calculations to be used when determining groundwater usage. He provided some examples depicting how a groundwater balance may be calculated using the best available information. He noted challenges when using ET. Mr. Beaman also provided some examples depicting groundwater balance calculations on a well with a meter installed. He then discussed groundwater pooling and recommendations from the SGC regarding moving groundwater between management zones. He noted some limitations especially where subsidence exists.

Mr. Beaman discussed the next steps for implementation of the GSP, including outreach and continued development and eventual finalization of rules and implementation policies. He said the next SGC meeting is anticipated to be held March 6, 2023.

Chair Eltal noted this is a systematic process and the purpose of the update is to include the Board on progress as it is being made, and to receive instruction and direction on how rules, regulations and policies continue to be developed and finalized. He then announced that he needed to step out of the meeting at approximately 10:10AM and said Mr. Elwin would conduct the remainder of the meeting on his behalf. Chair Eltal asked and the Board approved tabling the discussion regarding MID's application for a temporary water right permit off Mariposa Creek. Mr. Elwin conducted the remaining portion of the meeting, beginning with Report Item 4.

Mr. Beaman discussed progress made regarding the development of MIUGSA’s well registration portal and water accounting platform. He said staff has been working with other pilot partners, including Merced County, in establishing the platform. He noted Merced County plans to initiate a soft launch sometime in April. Shortly thereafter, the registration portal will be incorporated into the water accounting platform and made available to the GSA’s.

Mr. Beaman discussed funding for the development of the registration portal and accounting platform. He discussed a grant application submitted in December 2022. He said the application remains pending determination; however, if awarded, funding would be used for reimbursement of costs incurred in the development of the registration portal. Mr. Beaman concluded with a brief visual overview of how the water accounting platform would be utilized.

ACTION/DISCUSSION

Mr. Beaman provided the Board with a brief overview of Groundwater Awareness Week observed annually by the National Groundwater Association (NGWA). He said this is an opportunity for the Board to recognize the importance of groundwater as a resource that is essential to health, safety, and prosperity and to further confirm its commitment to proactive leadership in the management of those resources within MIUGSA’s jurisdiction.

After further discussion and on motion by Director Vinson, seconded by Director Benevidez; the Board unanimously approved the observation of National Groundwater Awareness Week, as presented. The votes were as follows:

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

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:25AM.