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SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY

Board of Directors Meeting

September 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Capitola Branch Library, 2005 Wharf Road, Capitola

Meeting webcast (via Zoom) for remote viewing.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Kennedy.

2. Roll Call

Directors present: (Alternates acting as voting Directors shown in *italics*)

Jon Kennedy (Chair) – Private Well Owner

Carla Christensen (Vice Chair) – Soquel Creek Water District (arrived at 6:03 p.m.)

Jim Kerr (Secretary) – Private Well Owner

Curt Abramson – Private Well Owner

David Baskin – City of Santa Cruz

Kimberly De Serpa – County of Santa Cruz (arrived at 6:03 p.m.)

Dr. Bruce Jaffe – Soquel Creek Water District

Manu Koenig – County of Santa Cruz

Marco Romanini – Central Water District

Jillian Ritter – County of Santa Cruz

Alternates present as non-voting observers:

Robert Schultz – Private Well Owner

Member Agency Staff present:

Heidi Luckenbach – City of Santa Cruz

Melanie Mow Schumacher – Soquel Creek Water District

Sierra Ryan – County of Santa Cruz

Ralph Bracamonte – Central Water District

Supporting Staff and Consultants:

Tim Carson, Rob Swartz, Sophia Sholtz – Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF)

Ryan Aston (remote via Zoom) – SCI Consulting Group (SCI)

3. Oral Communications Related to Items Not on the Agenda

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Becky Steinbruner commented.

4. Consent Agenda

- 4.1 Approve June 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes
- 4.2 Response to Board Direction related to a 2021 Security Breach at Kisters Water Resources, Inc.
- 4.3 Approve Annual Statement of Investment Policy Fiscal Year 2025-26
- 4.4 Approve Well Water Meter Agreement with Landowner (agricultural property at southern end of Sumner Avenue, Aptos)

Director Baskin pulled item 4.3 from the consent agenda to discuss.

Director Jaffe pulled item 4.4 from the consent agenda to discuss.

Becky Steinbruner commented.

MOTION: Director Jaffe; Second: Director Baskin; to approve items 4.1 and 4.2 from the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Board discussed item 4.3 including investment types, the policy's delegation of authority to determine the allocation of investments, and state statutory requirements that guide investment policy. The Board requested that the Treasurer attend the next meeting to provide an update on investments performance.

Becky Steinbruner commented.

MOTION: Director Baskin; Second: Director Romanini; to approve item 4.3 from the consent agenda with the request that collateralized mortgage obligations be removed as a potential investment vehicle. Motion passed unanimously.

Board discussed item 4.4 including the frequency of meter reading and type of meter.

Becky Steinbruner commented.

MOTION: Director Jaffe; Second: Director Christensen; to approve item 4.4 from the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

5. General Business

- 5.1 Receive Update on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Compliance Funding Options Assessment

Sierra Ryan, County of Santa Cruz, and Ryan Aston, SCI Consulting, presented answers to questions posed by Directors at the previous (June 12, 2025) Board meeting. Sierra Ryan reported on discussions amongst the MGA Agency Executive Staff on approaches and considerations in assessing the funding options. Ryan Aston reviewed questions concerning Agency cost apportionment and the legality of different fee structures. Ryan Aston and Rob Swartz reviewed different funding mechanisms employed by different GSAs across California and reviewed different fee types (e.g.,

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Proposition 26, Proposition 218), examples of various fee methodologies (e.g., groundwater extraction volumetric charges, by acreage, by parcel, other) including hybrid approaches, examples of various ways to apportion costs, and examples of how other GSAs categorize user types and user classes. The content of the forthcoming funding options assessment memo, the next steps in the process and the estimated timeline were presented.

Directors asked further questions from Ryan Aston and discussed his presentation.

Becky Steinbruner commented.

5.2 Initiate solicitation for two Private Well Owner Director positions and
Consideration of a Temporary Subcommittee to Recommend Private Well Owner
Representatives for Board Appointment

Tim Carson provided an overview of the proposed solicitation for two Private Well Owner Directors. Terms for Private Well Owner Directors Kennedy and Abramson expire at the end of 2025. A solicitation will be conducted for Private Well Owners to fill the vacancies. The Bylaws outline the public solicitation process and the use of a temporary subcommittee to oversee the development of the application and applicant evaluation criteria, to conduct applicant interviews, and to provide its recommendations on nominees to the Board at the next Board meeting.

A draft schedule has the application period open in October, interviews in November, and final subcommittee discussion and deliberation during late November and early December, with final recommendations to the Board at the December 11, 2025 Board meeting.

Becky Steinbruner commented.

Directors discussed the item and asked questions to Tim Carson about the process.

MOTION: Director Jaffe; Second: Alternate Director Ritter; to establish a temporary subcommittee to screen and nominate candidates for the appointments of two (2) Directors to represent private well owners. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Director Jaffe; Second: Alternate Director Ritter; to nominate Sierra Ryan, Director Jaffe, Director Kerr, Alternate Director Schultz, and Director De Serpa as Alternate to participate on the temporary subcommittee. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Director Romanini; Second: Alternate Director Ritter; to provide direction to staff to follow recommendations from the previous Private Well Owner solicitation subcommittee to, among other suggestions, conduct an outreach meeting for interested Private Well Owner applicants in advance of the application deadline. Motion passed unanimously.

5.3 Establish a Policy to Review Applicable County of Santa Cruz Well Construction
Permit Applications

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Rob Swartz discussed the County of Santa Cruz (County) Well Permit Application. The County in its recent Well Ordinance update, recognized the importance of GSAs in the sustainability of the Basin; the Well Ordinance now allows for 10 days for GSAs to provide comments on any new well permit application submissions within their management areas. The GSAs can provide comment, request additional information, or identify any other requirements that must be met, for the construction and use of a new well. The County anticipates that most well permit applications will be for Domestic wells and will require a low level of review.

The policy authorizes the Member Agency executive staff to appoint a reviewer to complete the timely review of well permit applications within 10 business days of receipt. If the well permit is straightforward and there are no concerns, the reviewer will respond as such, and if there are concerns, the reviewer will notify the executive staff of the potential concerns and solicit feedback on how to proceed with the County.

Rob Swartz clarified that under the new Well Policy, all non de minimis users are required to install a meter on their well. Sierra Ryan noted that there was not currently a procedure for releasing meter data to the GSA and a separate agreement with the landowner may be required.

Becky Steinbruner commented.

MOTION: Director Jaffe; Second: Director Romanini; to approve and adopt Well Construction Permit Application Review Policy. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Informational Updates

6.1 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report is included in the Agenda Packet for review.

No questions or comments were received on the item.

6.2 Staff Reports

- **GSP Implementation Status Update**

The GSP Implementation Status Update table can be found in the Agenda Packet for review.

Rob Swartz called attention to the Small GSA Coalition (Coalition) in the staff report. Sonoma Valley Water has been funding the administrator and legislative advocate used by the Coalition. The Coalition is now working on a cost share agreement amongst the 10 – 12 participating agencies to jointly fund the Coalition expenses.

Rob Swartz highlighted the successful efforts of the Coalition as recent revisions to the State budget include \$3.5M allocated exclusively to small GSAs as a direct result of the Coalition's efforts to raise awareness of the issues facing small GSAs. Rob Swartz is also the lead on the

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Coalition's Compliance Expense Committee, which meets regularly with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to streamline the compliance requirements.

No questions or comments were received on the item.

- SGMI Grant Update

The SGMI Grant Update can be found in the Agenda Packet for review.

Tim Carson gave a brief update on the SGMI Grant and the status of the 5 component projects. The Cunnison Lane well is completed, and the rest of the projects are still underway.

No questions or comments were received on the item.

6.3 Selection of Geophysical Imaging Partners, Inc. to conduct a Geophysical Survey to Map Potential Saltwater Intrusion

Geophysical Imaging Partners (GIP) was a sole-source selection to collect additional geophysical data to help inform assessments of seawater intrusion. GIP was selected based upon the unique qualifications and experience of GIP's staff with the specialized geophysical data analyses and familiarity with the prior related work in the Basin. The MGA Executive Staff approved the selection of GIP on August 18, 2025 with a not-to-exceed budget for the proposed work of \$24,965.

Becky Steinbruner commented.

7. Future Agenda Items

Director Romanini requested that the Treasurer's report be moved to the Consent Agenda in future Board meetings.

8. Written Communications and Submitted Materials

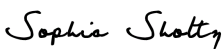
Written comments can be found at the MGA website.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: December 11, 2025

SUBMITTED BY:

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12/16/2025
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Sophia Sholtz
Regional Water Management Foundation

DocuSigned by:

12/16/2025
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Jim Kerr, Secretary
Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency