



SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY
Board of Directors Remote-Access Meeting
Thursday, June 17, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Baskin at 7:05.

2. Roll Call

Directors present: Curt Abramson, David Baskin, Zach Friend, Bruce Jaffe, Jon Kennedy, Jim Kerr, Manu Koenig, and Marco Romanini (late arrival).

Directors absent: Justin Cummings, Tom LaHue, and Rob Marani.

Staff present: Ralph Bracamonte, Ron Duncan, Rosemary Menard, Sierra Ryan, Tim Carson, and Laura Partch.

Others present: Former Board member Cynthia Mathews, Board Alternates Robert Schultz and Allyson Violante, Montgomery & Associates consultant Georgina King, and several members of the public.

3. Presentation

**3.1 California Department of Water Resources Initial Assessments
Groundwater Sustainability Plans and Approval of the Santa Cruz
Mid-County Groundwater Basin GSP**

Staff provided a video presentation by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announcing the release of DWR's first assessments of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) submitted under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), including the approval of the GSP for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin (Basin). The video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jd9QW5rMXGM>.

The discussion that followed included appreciation for all those involved in the collaborative, cooperative, and successful effort to prepare the Basin GSP, including: Board members, member agency staff, the GSP Advisory Committee, consultants, and all other groups that participated in the process. Special acknowledgements went to Georgina King of Montgomery & Associates (M&A), and former Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF) senior planner Darcy Pruitt.

4. Oral Communications Related to Items Not on the Agenda

Issues within the purview of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA). Guidelines attached.

No oral communications.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approve March 18, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes (no memo)

5.2 Approve Revised Guidance for Oral and Written Communications and Disability Access

MOTION: Director Jaffe; Second, Director Friend. To approve the consent agenda. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6. General Business

6.1 Approve Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2021/22

Staff presented the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021/22 annual budget, similar in format and amounts to the draft budget presented to the Board in March, and noted the differences.

In Table 1, Budget Summary, the total operating expenses (\$419,100) are less than projected in March, and the total ending reserves (\$1,538,993) are higher by \$23,000. The biggest substantive change in the budget is that the cost of the 5-year update is spread over four budget years. This upcoming year will be the first of a series of member agency contributions towards that cost, but instead of being characterized as operating expense (since the GSP update will be a future expense), it is included within the reserves, resulting in a shift of \$75,000 from FY 2021/22 operating expenses to ending reserves.

In Table 2, Operating Expenses, the projected total under Administration is higher than previously anticipated and has been raised by \$15,000 for both the current year and for FY 2021/22. Although legal costs have come in under budget for many years, it seemed prudent to keep that at \$20,000. Adjustments were made following DWR approval of the GSP since the comments by DWR will be addressed in the GSP 5-year update. Minor changes were made to the design and anticipated construction timeline for the Monitoring Network Expansion. The GSP reporting budget category no longer includes the \$75,000 contribution towards the 5-year update mentioned previously. The budget includes a best estimate for the 5-year plan based upon DWR's approval of the initial GSP. The process for the 5-year update will be a topic of future Board and Staff discussions.

No public comment or Board discussion.

MOTION: Director Friend; Second, Director Jaffe. To approve the proposed MGA FY 2021/22 Budget. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6.2 Approve Amended MGA Governing Documents

Staff reviewed substantive changes to the first amended Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) following Board direction in March, as detailed in the accompanying table. Staff noted the minor additional changes to the first amended Bylaws.

If approved, the amended JPA will go to the individual member agencies for approval over the summer and will return to the MGA Board only if revisions are requested. Given the timing of the member agency meetings, notice of the amendments to the Bylaws may be provided in early August so that if the JPA is approved, the Board will have the 30-day notice required by the Bylaws for any amendment.

No public comment or Board discussion.

MOTION: Director Kennedy; Second, Director Jaffe. To approve the proposed amendment to the JPA and Bylaws. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6.3 Approve Montgomery & Associates Contract No. 2020-4, Amendment 1

The Board previously approved a multi-year contract with M&A. As previously discussed with the Board, the contract is anticipated to be amended least annually to incorporate a specific scope of work, schedule and budget on a fiscal year basis. Amendment 1 proposes the anticipated work for F& 2021/22.

The scope of services, detailed in the Board memo, includes the Year 3 annual report, work with the firm KISTERS on the Data Management System (DMS), initial GSP corrective actions (amounts for corrective actions and the 5-year update were reduced following DWR approval of the GSP), work with Balance Hydrologics (Balance) on Monitoring Network Expansion, keeping the MGA apprised of SGMA developments and related DWR efforts (i.e. reports, grant funds, data uploads, etc.) and, at the request of Executive Staff, potential groundwater modeling not related to the annual report.

No public comment or Board discussion.

MOTION: Director Kerr; Second, Director Romanini. To authorize the Board Chair to execute an amendment to the Professional Services Agreement (Contract 2020-4, Amendment 1) with Errol L. Montgomery and Associates, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$124,850; and, authorize the General Manager of Soquel Creek Water District to sign a purchase order for Montgomery & Associates in an amount not to exceed \$124,850. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6.4 Approve Contract for Administrative and Staff Support from the
Regional Water Management Foundation in FY 2021/22

Executive staff noted that, as set out in the memo, RWMF provides administrative support for Board meetings, grant reporting, agency management, planning, implementation of the GSP, and stakeholder engagement.

The Executive Team supports this contract as a sole source procurement under the MGA Procurement Policy, believing it is a reasonable contract price given that RWMF handles the detailed work of the MGA and supports the work of the Board and member agencies.

No public comment or Board discussion.

MOTION: Director Friend; Second, Director Jaffe. To authorize the Board Chair to execute the contract not to exceed \$160,700 with the RWMF for the scope of services in Attachment 1; and authorize the General Manager of Soquel Creek Water District to sign a purchase order for the work to be performed by the RWMF in the amount indicated in the above motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6.5 Approve Consultant Selection for Non-De Minimis Metering Program
and Authorize Contract

Staff reported that the Board Temporary Committee (Committee), consisting of Directors Jaffe, Kerr and Kennedy, met to review and approve the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Metering Program, and to review the proposals received. In response to the RFP, the MGA received a single proposal from the consulting firm Geosyntec. The Committee recommended that the proposal be accepted and move forward to contracting. The Committee members plan to continue by participating with a kick-off meeting for the metering program.

No public comment or Board discussion.

MOTION: Director Kennedy; Second, Director Kerr. To affirm the Committee's selection of Geosyntec for the development the Non-De Minimis Metering Program; to authorize the Member Agency Executive Staff to complete contract negotiations with Geosyntec for the proposed services; and to authorize the Board Chair or the General Manager of the Soquel Creek Water District to execute a contract with Geosyntec for an amount not to exceed \$64,000, and authorize the General Manager of the Soquel Creek Water District to sign a purchase order for Geosyntec in an amount not to exceed \$64,000. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

7. Informational Updates

7.1 Treasurer's Report

Staff offered to field questions on the Treasurer's Report as the Treasurer was unable to attend the meeting.

No public comment or Board discussion.

7.2 Staff Reports

Data Management System: Staff reported that the technical team from the consulting firm KISTERS, Georgina King of Montgomery & Associates, and agency staff from both the MGA and the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA) met to discuss and advance development of the DMS. The framework is completed and reflects a significant effort on behalf of agency staff and the consultants. The developing DMS has already been successful for reporting purposes. Historical data will be entered next, then development of the portal, and finally staff training will occur. The DMS is expected to be completed by the end of the year. A future demonstration of the DMS will be presented to the Board once the development is further along.

Will all the member agencies be able to access this information as needed?

- Yes, the member agencies of the MGA and the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency will be able to access Basin information. Georgina King is a technical advisor for both Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs); the coordination of these two neighboring GSAs/groundwater basins on a common DMS is a wonderful asset for this region.

Monitoring Network Expansion: Staff reported this is a grant-funded project to install shallow monitoring wells and stream gages where data gaps were identified in the GSP. Balance is in the process of identifying potential locations for the shallow wells, most of which are within County right of way; it appears that only one location is on private property and will require an easement. Once well locations are finalized, the working group (Balance, M&A, and staff) will identify locations for stream gages.

DWR Aerial Surveys: Staff reported DWR will be conducting airborne electromagnetic (AEM) surveys to gather information about aquifer structures that will support the development and implementation of GSPs. The surveys are starting this summer and will move north through the Central Valley. There are DWR constraints on the program, such as limitations on where they can fly (i.e. not over buildings, and not offshore). They will also use a course grid, whereas the MGA used a fine grid. Staff attended a presentation and learned it will not be possible to pay for a finer resolution. The Basin is so small this survey might not provide much information, but DWR will be reaching out about other technologies and wants to collaborate on gathering additional data.

Groundwater Association of California: Sierra Ryan recently gave a presentation on Basin GSP water quality indicators and the regulatory landscape. The presentation was well received and it was helpful to finally report that what was proposed in the Basin GSP had met DWR's standards.

When we will see the minor changes requested by DWR for the GSP?

- The MGA response to recommendations in the DWR approval letter will be included in the 5-year update.

Future Board Meeting: A recent Executive Order by the Governor authorizes remote meeting through September 30th. Executive Team is discussing future meeting formats and locations.

Would the Board consider meeting at an earlier time, perhaps 6:00 p.m.?

- This will be added to the agenda for the September meeting.

Future Funding Opportunities: With the state budget surplus, it is anticipated DWR will be making grant funding available later this year, including \$300 million to support SGMA implementation. Staff expects to bring to a future Board meeting a draft Board policy or guidance on approaching possible grant opportunities. This is based in part on questions raised during the discussion of a prior grant funding opportunity about the roles and obligations of the member agencies, particularly regarding cost share/match funding obligations. Staff plans to develop procedures and guidance on pursuing potential funding opportunities.

8. Future Agenda Items

Staff will update the status of implementation projects at the next Board meeting.

9. Written Communications and Submitted Materials

Written communications are posted on the [Board Meetings](#) page of the MGA website.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23.

Next Board Meeting: September 9, 2021