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**SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY
Board of Directors Remote-Access Meeting
Thursday, December 15, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

Directors present: Curt Abramson (late arrival), David Baskin, Zach Friend, Jon Kennedy, Jim Kerr, Manu Koenig, Tom LaHue, and Marco Romanini; Alternative Directors Doug Engfer and Rachél Lather

Directors absent: Bruce Jaffe, Rob Marani and Donna Meyers

Staff present: Ralph Bracamonte, Ron Duncan, Rosemary Menard, Sierra Ryan

Consultants present: Tim Carson, Rob Swartz, and Laura Partch, Regional Water Management Foundation (RWMF)

Others: Robert Schultz (Alternate Director) and at least 1 member of the public

3. Consider Addition of a Late Item to the Agenda and Approval of Resolution No. 22-05

The continued need for a Board Resolution on remote-meeting requirements came to the attention of staff after the agenda was posted. Conditions required for remote meeting have not changed. Additions to an agenda require a motion by vote of 2/3 of the directors present.

MOTION: Director Kennedy; Second, Director Friend. To approve addition of a late item to the agenda pursuant to Government Code § 54954.2(b) regarding Assembly Bill 361 (Virtual Meeting) and adopt Resolution No. 22-05, authorizing the meeting of the Board to be held virtually in accordance with Government Code § 54953(e). Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Oral Communications Related to Items Not on the Agenda

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

Tim Carson welcomed Rob Swartz, who brings pertinent experience to the full-time Senior Planner position with RWMF. Under the contract between RWMF and the County of Santa Cruz, Rob's role as Senior Planner for Groundwater Sustainability is split between the MGA and the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency.

4. Consent Agenda

- 4.1 Approve September 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes
- 4.2 Accept Audited 2021/2022 Financial Statements
- 4.3 Approve 2023 MGA Board Meeting Schedule
- 4.4 Approve Policy for Reviewing Well Permits under Executive Order N-7-22

MOTION: Director Friend; Second, Director Koenig. To approve the consent agenda as amended by a correction to Item 4.2 as identified by MGA Treasurer Leslie Strohm. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote; Director Kennedy abstained on Item 4.1.

5. General Business

5.1 Approve Amendment #2 to the Fund Agreement between MGA and County of Santa Cruz

Staff outlined a proposed second amendment to the Fund Agreement between the County of Santa Cruz and the MGA. As set out in the Board memo, the amendment addresses changes for both the Balance Hydrologics and Storesund contracts, and that grant funds will partially offset the cost for the changes.

MOTION: Director Baskin; Second, Director Kennedy. To authorize the Board Chair to execute Amendment #2 to the Fund Agreement with the County of Santa Cruz for monitoring, administrative and planning services, and data management system. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

5.2 Approve Consultant Selection for Basin Stream Monitoring and Related Services and Authorize Execution of Contract

Staff reported that having expanded the Basin monitoring network with new streamflow and groundwater monitoring sites, the MGA is now pivoting to a multi-year contract for monitoring streamflow and other services in the Basin.

A Request for Proposals was released in October. Member Agency and RWMF staff reviewed and ranked the three responsive proposals and interviewed each responder. Based upon the evaluation criteria, the Trout Unlimited proposal was determined to best meet the needs of the MGA.

MOTION: Director Baskin; Second, Director Romanini. To approve the selection of Trout Unlimited for Basin Stream Monitoring and Related Services and authorize the General Manager of Soquel Creek Water District to finalize contract negotiations and authorize the Board Chair to execute the contract for professional services.

5.3 Receive Groundwater Extraction Metering Plan for Non-De Minimis Users

The Metering Plan includes minor changes based on Board input from the September meeting and additional staff review. Rob Swartz will take the lead in using the Metering Plan as a foundation for developing a Metering Policy and Program.

The possibility of subsidies or grants to assist with the cost of metering will be addressed in the Metering Program. The current criteria for establishing non-de minimis users is based on existing and estimated water use. Finalized criteria will be included in the Metering Policy and Program, and any disputes would come to the MGA Board.

Public comment: Becky Steinbruner regarding the criteria for determining use and urged developing trust and buy-in from the public.

MOTION: Director Engfer; Second, Director Baskin. To 1) receive and accept the Groundwater Extraction Metering Plan Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin written by Geosyntec Consultants and 2) direct staff to craft a policy for future adoption based on the guidance in the Metering Plan.

6. Informational Updates

6.1 Treasurer's Report

No comments.

6.2 Staff Reports

NOAA Letter to County of Santa Cruz

A letter from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration requests that the County change the well permitting process to reduce the number of ministerial approvals. The County response will be provided to the Board.

Public comment: Becky Steinbruner encouraged the MGA to follow Sonoma County regarding the connections between surface streamflow and wells and also public trust/participation.

City of Santa Cruz Updates

Included in the packet are shared informational items on work by the City of Santa Cruz as part of the development of its policy, *Securing our Water Future*. The City set a reliability goal and evaluated a set project concepts, operating costs, and other criteria, including energy. The information provided demonstrates that the impact of doing nothing is about fifty times more expensive than doing the projects.

Public comment: Becky Steinbruner on tools in the information provided by the City.

Rosemary Menard provided additional information regarding water affordability.

DWR AEM Surveys

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducted Airborne Electromagnetic surveys in California in 2022, including in inland areas of Santa Cruz County in November. DWR will publish the flight lines and then issue a report on the findings in about six months.

Future Requests for Qualifications for legal services

Staff anticipates that in the coming year the MGA may need specialized legal assistance on the requirements of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Ethics Training Tuesday, 2/7 @ 5:00 to 7:00PM

Invitation from the District will be forwarded to all Directors and Alternates.

March MGA Board meeting will be held in person at the Capitola Library.

6.3 Annual status Report on Board FPPC Compliance

7. Future Agenda Items

None.

8. Written Communications and Submitted Materials

None.

9. Adjournment

Chair LaHue adjourned the meeting at 6:48 PM.

Next Board Meeting: March 16, 2023