

OJAI BASIN GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 25, 2024

The Regular Meeting of January 25, 2024, of the Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency was called to order at 3:01 PM in the Council Chambers, Ojai City Hall, 401 S. Ventura Street, Ojai, CA 93023.

**Attendees were:** Board Members: Richard Hajas, Jim Finch, Bob Daddi and Peter Thielke (via Zoom), General Manager Julia Aranda and Clerk of the Board/Administrator Cece VanDerMeer.

Also in attendance: Jordan Kear, Consultant, Peter Candy, Attorney (via Zoom)

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** Chair Hajas called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. VanDerMeer called the roll.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Led by Hajas.
3. **Director Announcements/Reports/Comments:**

Mutuals: None

Ojai Water Conservation District: Finch met with Casitas regarding LAFCO

City of Ojai: Whitman reported that Ben Harvey was selected as the new City Manager.

Casitas Municipal Water District: None

Community Facilities District Report: None

4. **GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS:**

Julia Aranda reported that the office had been upgraded with a new computer, but the database was not compatible with loading onto the new computer. Aranda stated that she located a firm to update the database to put on the new computer. Aranda requested the access firm to update the database and transfer it to the new computer, the cost was within Aranda's signing authority. Aranda stated that she would like to have the firm provide an assessment of the cost of updating the database to fit the needs of the OBGMA; reports, queries and changes we would be able to make. Aranda requested reviewing the well verification process, the Agency has received 2 well applications that are requesting a substantial extraction amount. Aranda would like to review possible costs to the agency for staff time spent on the well verification process.

5. **BASIN STATUS REPORT:**

Jordan Kear reported that the Basin level is 87.96 feet and capacity is at 87.96 % with 66,400 acre feet.

6. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT APPEARING ON THE AGENDA:**

Burt Handy stated that there is a coalition of small GSAs that the Board might want to research.

7. **CONSENT ITEMS:**

**a. Approve Minutes and Financial Report:**

Finch motioned to approve the consent agenda; Whitman seconded stating that he was abstaining from the Meeting Minutes of April 29, 2021, September 30, 2021 and December 9, 2021 as he was not on the Board during those meetings.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Finch, Daddi, Thielke, and Chair Hajas.

Noes: None

8. **ACTION ITEMS:**

**a. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair for 2024 – 2025:**

Finch nominated Hajas for the position of Chair. Daddi seconded. Finch moved to approve the election of Hajas for Chair; Whitman seconded.

Whitman nominated Finch for the position of Vice Chair; Thielke seconded.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Finch, Daddi, Thielke, and Chair Hajas.

Noes: None

**b. Well Verification: Review and Approve Water Well Registration and Verification Request for Assessor Parcel Number 014-0-040-200:**

The Board discussed the proposed well verification application. Kear clarified to the well driller, Michael Grasso, the conditions for approval: (1) Check wells within a 1,000-foot radius; (2) review correlativity and transmissivity values; (3) Update reference to Groundwater Sustainability Plan from draft to Final; (4) Put a meter on the existing well which will remain as a standby well. No action was taken on this item.

**c. Financial Policy: Review and Approve Financial Policy and Procedures:**

Aranda prepared the Financial Policy and Procedures document from a draft document the previous General Manager started. Hajas suggested reviewing the Financial Policy annually. Finch motioned to approve the Financial Policy; Daddi seconded.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Finch, Daddi, Thielke and Chair Hajas.

Noes: None

**d. Financial Audits: Receive and Accept Financial Audits for Fiscal Years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.**

Daddi motioned to approve the Financial Audits for Fiscal Years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019; Finch seconded.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Finch, Daddi, Thielke and Chair Hajas.

Noes: None

**e. Financial Auditor Services: Approve proposal from Farber, Hass, Hurley, LLC to provide financial auditing services for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2023 fiscal years for an amount not to exceed \$20,000.00.**

Daddi motioned to approve the proposal from Farber, Hass, Hurley, LLC to provide financial auditing services for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2023 fiscal years for an amount not to exceed \$20,000.00; Whitman seconded.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Finch, Daddi, Thielke and Chair Hajas.

Noes: None

**f. Ad-Hoc Committee: Discuss and take action on a Meter Compliance Ad-Hoc Committee.**

Finch and Hajas volunteered to be on the Meter Compliance Ad-Hoc Committee.

**f. Ad-Hoc Committee: Discuss and take action on a Legislative Advocacy Ad-Hoc Committee.**

Whitman and Thielke volunteered to be on the Legislative Advocacy Ad-Hoc Committee, Daddi volunteered to be an alternate.

**9. a. Discussion Items: Strategy for Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Compliance:**

Discussion regarding strategies for DWR compliance and how the Ojai Valley Groundwater Basin can maintain sustainability. Kear stated that he would provide a previous draft Conjunctive Use Table.

**10. ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 pm. The next regular scheduled meeting will be February 29, at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber in Ojai City Hall, 401 S. Ventura Street, Ojai.

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_