

Borrego Springs Watermaster Board Meeting

January 13, 2022

Opening Procedures

- A. Call to Order
- B. Pledge of Allegiance
- C. Roll Call
- D. Approval of Agenda



Public Correspondence

Instructions for Public Comment

The public may address the Board on items within the Watermaster's Jurisdiction that are included or not included on the meeting agenda.

To address the Board on items that are not included on the meeting agenda, the public may request to speak during **Agenda Item II – Public Correspondence**. Comments may be limited to three minutes per speaker.

To address the Board on items that are included on the meeting agenda, the Board Chairperson will call for public comments immediately following the agenda item's staff report presentation and prior to Board discussion.

No written correspondence received

Consent Calendar

- A. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting – December 9, 2021
- B. Approval of December 2021 Financial Report
- C. Receive and file November 2021 Watermaster Staff invoices

IV.A Consideration of Approval of a Real Estate Transfer Disclosure Statement. (ADAMS)

Recommended Actions:

1. Approve the enclosed Real Estate Transfer Disclosure Statement for posting to the Watermaster website.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

IV.B Consideration of Approval to Contract the Watermaster's Annual Financial Audit. (ADAMS)

Recommended Actions:

1. Approve \$8,000 quote to perform the financial audit and direct Staff to engage Lance, Soll & Lunghard, LLP to perform the work.

Fiscal Impact:

None. The WY 2022 approved budget included an expenditure of \$15,000 for performing the financial audit

IV.C Watermaster WY 2021 Annual Report – Report Outline and Schedule for Review and Submittal to DWR and Court. (ADAMS)

Recommended Actions:

1. Board discussion.

Fiscal Impact:

None. Preparation of Annual Report is included in WY 2022 Budget.

IV.C Watermaster WY 2021 Annual Report – Report Outline and Schedule for Review and Submittal to DWR and Court. (ADAMS)

WY 2021 Annual Report Outline

0. Executive Summary
1. Introduction and Background
2. Watermaster Administrative Activities
3. Watermaster Technical Activities
4. Borrego Springs Subbasin Hydrogeologic Conditions
5. WY 2021 Water Rights Accounting
6. Summary of Physical Solution Implementation Progress



IV.D Methods to Estimate Annual Change in Basin Storage (MALONE)

Recommended Action: Board Discussion

Summary:

- Watermaster is required to submit an annual report to the DWR that includes an analysis of changes in groundwater elevations and storage in the basin.
- The TAC met on November 9, 2021 to discuss and recommend methods to estimate storage change.
- TAC consensus is to continue using the methods employed for past annual reports with some relatively minor revisions for the time being. TAC reasoning:
 - Produce storage-change results that are consistent with past estimates
 - Minimize the influence of methods themselves on the storage-change results.
- Staff is documenting the TAC recommendation and will circulate to the TAC to finalize.
- Staff will provide the Board with the recommended method in February and our progress.

IV.E DWR Grant Application for SGMA Implementation: Update and Possible Action(s). **PART 1: Malone** **PART 2: Adams**

Recommended Actions:

Part 1

- Receive update on grant activities and progress
- Authorize staff to utilize the remaining budget of \$19,820 included in Statement of Work No. 4 (attached) to support BWD staff to finalize the preparation of the DWR grant application for SGMA implementation funding as it relates to Watermaster submitted projects

Part 2

- Approve the attached draft letter to the Borrego Water District for signature and delivery.

IV.E DWR Grant Application for SGMA Implementation: Update and Possible Action(s). **PART 1**

Recommended Action:

Part 1:

- Receive update on grant activities and progress
- Authorize staff to utilize the remaining budget of \$19,820 included in Statement of Work No. 4 (attached) to support BWD staff to finalize the preparation of the DWR grant application for SGMA implementation funding as it relates to Watermaster submitted projects

Fiscal Impact:

The Board previously approved funding in an amount up to \$54,631 to prepare the DWR grant application materials for SGMA implementation funding. The Board capped the initial spending limit at \$34,811 contingent on the details of the final DWR grant guidelines. If Action (2) is approved, Staff will have access to spend the full \$54,631 approved in Statement of Work No. 4 (SOW No. 4)

IV.E DWR Grant Application for SGMA Implementation: Update and Possible Action(s). **PART 1**

- Since December 9, 2021 Regular Board Meeting:
 - California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has released its final Guidelines and a Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP)
 - Watermaster staff has been working collaboratively with Borrego Water District (BWD) staff, DWR staff, BWD consultants, the Watermaster Parties and their consultants, the TAC, the EWG, and other interested parties in Borrego Springs to prepare grant application materials
 - DWR held an informational meeting on January 6, 2022 to answer questions about the grant application process and eligibility
 - The Watermaster Board held a Special meeting on January 10, 2022 to receive detailed information from the BWD on its plan and process to complete the grant application on behalf of the Borrego Springs Subbasin.

Watermaster Project Proposals for DWR Grant Application

List of Project Submittals being prepared by Watermaster:

1. Monitoring and Reporting for Sustainable Management
2. Redetermination of Sustainable Yield by 2025
3. Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands
4. GDE Monitoring Program

Other Potential Watermaster Party Projects Under Consideration

1. Turf Conversion*
2. Water-Use Efficiency*
3. Water-Supply Augmentation

* Projects are proposed on private property. Awaiting clarification from DWR on eligibility.

Monitoring and Reporting for Sustainable Management

Components currently comprised of O&M and Capital Costs:

- Groundwater pumping monitoring
- Groundwater level and quality monitoring
- Surface water monitoring
- Aquifer Testing
- Data Management System
- New monitoring well construction
- Well Abandonment*
- Reporting
 - Annual Reporting
 - CASGEM Reporting
 - GMP 5-year update
- Outreach
 - Meetings
 - Website
 - Other
- Project Management/Grant Support

Preliminary Cost Estimate = \$3.1 Million

** Cost not included yet. Projects would benefit private property. Awaiting clarification from DWR on eligibility.*

Redetermination of Sustainable Yield by 2025

Current/Planned Efforts of the TAC

- Extend the model through WY 2022
- Compare metered pumping vs. model-estimated pumping
- Determine if comprehensive model updates and recalibration will be necessary in future
- Use model to redetermine Sustainable Yield in 2025
- Cost Estimate = \$300,000

Grant Proposal

- Model improvements (update model software/versions; refined model grid; other)
- Extend the model through WY 2022
- Conduct model recalibration
- Perform uncertainty analyses
- Use model to redetermine the Sustainable Yield in 2025
- Prepare final report with model documentation

Cost Estimate = \$900,000

Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands

Current/Planned Efforts of the EWG

- The EWG contends that biological restoration could be a solution for addressing potential adverse impacts associated with fallowed lands during the period of the Rampdown
- The EWG recommended the preparation of a Biological Restoration Workplan as a first step
- Cost Estimate = \$17,500

Grant Proposal

- Collect/review existing data; field reconnaissance; characterize historical/current conditions
- Develop a “Biological Restoration Workplan”
- Conduct case studies; Development best practices
- Develop a prioritization of current/future fallowed lands for biological restoration
- Final report with recommendations

Cost Estimate = \$700,000

Groundwater Dependent Ecosystem (GDE) Monitoring Program

Current/Planned Efforts of the EWG

- The EWG contends that a GDE Monitoring Program is necessary to check/verify the conclusions of the GMP that GDEs are no longer dependent on the regional aquifer
- The EWG recommended the preparation of a GDE Monitoring Program Workplan as a first step
- Cost Estimate = \$5,500

Proposal: Develop/Implement GDE Monitoring Program

- Prepare GDE Monitoring Program Workplan
- Update/expand upon the technical work performed for the GMP
- Construct monitoring facilities; Conduct field studies; Conduct monitoring thru 2024
 - **Monitoring facilities (~\$800,000) could support other Watermaster initiatives**
- Final report with recommendations

Cost Estimate = \$1,400,000 (\$600,000 not including monitoring facilities)

Watermaster Project Proposals for DWR Grant Application

List of Project Submittals being prepared by Watermaster: \$6.1 Million

1. Monitoring and Reporting for Sustainable Management - \$3.1M
2. Redetermination of Sustainable Yield by 2025 - \$900k
3. Biological Restoration of Fallowed Lands - \$700k
4. GDE Monitoring Program - \$1.4

IV.E DWR Grant Application for SGMA Implementation: Update and Possible Action(s). PART 1

Additional work is necessary beyond submittal of the projects to the BWD to support finalizing the Spending Plan and the grant application. This work is deemed necessary to be successful in bringing grant funding to support sustainable groundwater management activities for the benefit of the Basin

Recommended Action:

Authorize staff to utilize the remaining budget of \$19,820 included in Statement of Work No. 4 (attached) to support BWD staff to finalize the preparation of the DWR grant application for SGMA implementation funding as it relates to Watermaster submitted projects

Fiscal Impact:

The Board previously approved funding in an amount up to \$54,631 to prepare the DWR grant application materials for SGMA implementation funding. The Board capped the initial spending limit at \$34,811 contingent on the details of the final DWR grant guidelines. If Action (2) is approved, Staff would have access to spend the full \$54,631 approved in Statement of Work No. 4 (SOW No. 4)

IV.E DWR Grant Application for SGMA Implementation: Update and Possible Action(s). **PART 2**

Recommended Action:

Part 2: Approve the attached draft letter to the Borrego Water District for signature and delivery.

Summary:

- At 1/10 Special meeting, Board formed a subcommittee comprised of Directors Smith and Seley to draft an agreement between BWD and Watermaster to resolve concerns of some Board members in supporting the BWD grant application process
- The subcommittee met on January 11, 2022 to discuss preparation of an agreement to propose to the BWD.
- Upon discussion, subcommittee elected to prepare a letter to express its desire to continue to work collaboratively with the BWD to secure the available \$7.6 million in grant funds for the benefit of the Basin and ask for cooperation in addressing three requests to secure the Watermaster Board's full support. The requests are based in stated principles that guide the foundations of the Watermaster's actions.

V.A – Legal Counsel Report

- Update on Status of Judgment Recordation
- Reminder of the January 20, 2021 Court Hearing

V.B – Executive Director Report

- Status of Contact to Known Property Owners that Purchased Property from BPA Parties
- Status of Payment of First Installment of Assessments
- Status of Metering
- Status of Research on Compliance Challenges with Following Standards
- Status of Watermaster's Budget