

Friday, January 27, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.
Governing Board Regular Meeting
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
Pardee Lodge, Pardee Center, Valley Springs, CA 95252

Summary Minutes

ROLL CALL

Directors John Coleman, Chair, Terry Woodrow, Vice-chair, Jack Garamendi, Ed Gonzalez, Richard Farrington, and Richard Blood were present. Absent: Brian Oneto, Amador County, Jeff Davidson, Calaveras County Water District. Also present were Executive Officer (EO) Richard Sykes, Authority Counsel Greg Gillott, Authority Secretary Lisa Gualco, Lorna Barfield, East Bay Municipal Utility District, and 13 visitors.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

AUTHORITY BUSINESS

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2022

The summary minutes of the October 7, 2022, meeting were provided to the Board for review.

Motion 01-23 to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 7, 2022, was made by Director Farrington seconded by Director Woodrow and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

2. Treasurer’s Report – Fourth Quarter FY 2022

A copy of the Treasurer’s Report for the Fourth Quarter of Fiscal Year 2022, which ended September 30, 2022, was presented to the Board.

Motion 02-23 to accept the Treasurer’s Report for filing was made by Director Gonzales seconded by Director Blood and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

3. Forest Projects Plan – Phase 1 Project Approval

The Forest Projects Plan - Phase 1 (the Project) is a 25,671-acre landscape-level timber stand and wildlife habitat improvement and protection project located on U.S. Forest Service lands, primarily within the upper Mokelumne River watershed. The project is designed to help prevent high-intensity, large-scale wildfires, improve forest conditions, and protect communities and important wildlife habitat and other resources. This is accomplished with non-commercial vegetation treatments and prescribed burning activities which will enhance and protect a variety of habitats including three ecosystems that provide essential components of wildlife habitat: late seral/old forest ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and aspen stands. The treatments will enhance forest health by reducing competition for resources (water, sunlight, and nutrients) within forested stands that are overly dense and in habitats that have been diminished due to conifer encroachment from lack of fire (aquatic systems, aspen stands).

The Project is categorically exempt from CEQA. An exemption from CEQA for prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning and fuel reduction projects initially established in 2019 was recently extended by AB 211 which was signed by the Governor on September 27, 2022. This exemption applies to projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Motion 03-23 to (1) approve the Forest Projects Plan - Phase 1 and (2) confirm staff's determination the Project is exempt from CEQA and authorize staff to file a Notice of Exemption with the CA Office of Planning and Research and Amador County, El Dorado County and Calaveras County Clerks was made by Director Farrington seconded by Director Woodrow and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

4. Forest Projects Report

The EO provided the Board with an update on the Authority's Forest Projects Plan (FPP) initiative, Phases 1 and 2. Also presented were updates related to the Aspen Meadow Restoration Project. The report concluded with a summary of UMRWA Forest Project Grants which have been awarded, not awarded, or are proposed. Grant opportunities to fund FPP - Phase 1 fuel treatments have been identified with two recommended for full applications.

Cal Fire Forest Health Program – This would be UMRWA's application for a second Forest Health Program grant. (UMRWA was awarded a nearly \$5 million Forest Health grant in 2022 to complete the Phase 1 plan and perform fuel reduction treatments on 3,000 acres.) Additional funding is needed to continue Phase 1 fuel treatment work and Cal Fire has \$120 million (from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund) available for Forest Health Program funding this fiscal year.

SNC Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Program – The Authority submitted a Concept Proposal for Phase 1 treatment funding (\$4.5 million) in July 2022 and while SNC staff endorsed UMRWA's proposal, they recommended UMRWA delay submitting a full application until after Phase 1 NEPA/CEQA approvals were finalized. While SNC has not yet specified when the next round of grant applications will be accepted, UMRWA staff recommended the Board approve Resolution No. 2023-02 in case the solicitation period occurs prior to the April 28, 2023, UMRWA board meeting.

The landscape-level Phase 2 FPP will address forest health issues on up to 220,000 acres of Stanislaus and Eldorado NF lands within and flanking the Mokelumne Watershed. In addition to the far larger scale, the second phase of the FPP process will consider forestry activities not included in Phase 1 due to potentially more significant environmental impacts. SNC staff has identified Cal Fire's Wildfire Prevention Program as a potentially suitable option and recommends UMRWA apply for Cal Fire for Wildfire Prevention Program to help fund Phase 2 of the Forest Projects Plan.

In August 2022, UMRWA completed the selection process for a consultant to perform project management and environmental planning for Phase 2. Late that month, staff executed an agreement with Cardno, Inc. (now called Stantec) to initiate project work under a \$50,000 contract with the expectation that subsequent amendments would be executed as additional grant funding became available. An amendment is also needed to reflect the name change from Cardno to Stantec (who recently acquired Cardno) and to add to the authorized scope of work to include continued project management, continued outreach and communication, initiation of tribal engagement, specified NEPA and planning tasks (project initiation letter, draft purpose and need, determination of NEPA approach with USFS), initiation of communication with regulatory agencies regarding listed species, and support for grant applications.

Motion 04-23 to (1) adopt Resolution 2023-01 authorizing an application for a Cal Fire Forest Health Program grant for FPP – Phase 1 implementation, (2) adopt Resolution No. 2023-02 authorizing an application for a Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Program grant for FPP – Phase 1 implementation, (3) adopt Resolution No. 2023-03 authorizing an application for a Cal Fire Wildfire Prevention Program grant for FPP – Phase 2 planning and environmental review and (4) Authorize the Executive Officer to execute Amendment 1 to the agreement with Stantec (formerly Cardno) for FPP – Phase

+ 2 planning was made by Director Farrington seconded by Director Garamendi and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

5. DWR and CPUD Implementation Grant Agreements

On December 12, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) informed UMRWA it was being awarded a \$589,785 Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Grant. A total of \$566,225 from this grant will be passed through to Calaveras Public Utility District (CPUD) for costs to build the Jeff Davis Water Treatment Plant Backwash Recycle Project. The remaining balance (4 percent) will fund UMRWA grant administration costs (including grant support by Woodard & Curran). The two agreements needed for UMRWA to secure the Prop 1 grant, and to describe UMRWA's pass-through arrangement with CPUD, were recommended for Board approval.

Motion 05-23 to (1) approve the DWR – UMRWA Proposition 1 Grant agreement in the amount of \$589,785 and authorize the Executive Officer to sign the agreement (2) approve the Grant Implementation Agreement with Calaveras Public Utility District and authorize the Executive Officer to sign the agreement and (3) adopt Resolution No. 2023-04 authorizing the Executive Officer, or designee, to execute the DWR grant agreement and any amendments thereto, and perform any and all work required to fulfill Prop 1 – Round 2 grant requirements was made by Director Blood seconded by Director Garamendi and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

6. Website Support Agreement with Woodard & Curran

UMRWA's website is supported and maintained by Woodard & Curran (W&C). The website has become an essential tool in carrying out UMRWA's contracting out activities and will continue to serve as a primary means for sharing Board agenda materials. It has also served as the primary means for communicating and sharing MAC Plan update documents with the stakeholder Regional Participants Committee. The website also serves as a resource for the public to familiarize themselves with UMRWA, as it does interested contractors, funding agencies, and others. Going forward, the website will be heavily relied upon as UMRWA expands its forest health programs.

The recommended agreement with Woodard & Curran will continue website support services for 2 years at a cost of \$10,000 per year (Task 1). The agreement also tasks W&C with guiding UMRWA through a process for formulating and implementing a plan to create a file storage and sharing system (Task 2). The not-to-exceed cost for this task is \$23,520.

Motion 06-23 to approve the agreement with Woodard & Curran and authorize the Executive Officer to sign the agreement was made by Director Farrington seconded by Director Woodrow and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

7. Third Amended Joint Powers Agreement

At the October 7, 2022, meeting the Board endorsed the draft Third Amended Joint Powers Authority agreement and directed staff to transmit the proposed agreement to Member Agencies for review and comment by December 1. No Member comments, either suggesting modifications or questioning proposed changes, were received. Amador Water Agency has communicated that their Board of Directors reviewed and approved the Third Amended JPA on October 27, 2022 (provided no material changes are subsequently made).

Motion 07-23 to approve the Third Amended Joint Powers Agreement for transmittal to Member Agencies for their approval and signature, was made by Director Blood seconded by Director Garamendi and carried by voice vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

8. Legislative Issues Update

Executive Officer Richard Sykes shared information regarding bill SB39 which modifies the SNC mission, better organizes subregions of the area and adds climate change activities to grant funding. Amador Water Agency has reviewed the bill and saw no reason to oppose. The board requested that SB39 be added to the April agenda for discussion and possible action.

Board Member Comments:

Richard Farrington attended the last ACCG meeting and shared concern regarding the Power Fire restoration funds, of which, 40% of the of \$45 million had not been spent in the burn area. He would like the discussion of forming an UMRWA Ad Hoc committee to support the research and return of these funds be added to the April meeting agenda.

Director Gonzales expressed concern about the PG&E Blue Lake dam rehabilitation project.

Director Garamendi had questions on the status of the Mokelumne Water Battery Project.

John Coleman thanked Vice-chair Woodrow for chairing the October 7 meeting as he was unable to attend.


Executive Officer Comments:

The Executive Officer discussed correspondence received from EBMUD's David Briggs regarding PG&E's formation of Pacific Generation. The board requested this item be added to the April agenda for discussion and possible action.

The EO reminded the board of the filing requirements for the FPPC Form 700. He also provided information on the DWR grant awarded via Sierra Institute to Amador Water Agency and Foothill Conservancy covering conservation projects. Sierra Institute will contract directly with the organizations and not through UMRWA. He continued to share that Blue Forest Conservation is meeting with EBMUD and PG&E regarding a forest resilience fund.

ADJOURNMENT: Director Coleman adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held on April 28, 2023, at Pardee Center.

SUBMITTED BY:



Lorna Barfield, Authority Secretary



John Coleman, Chair of the Board
APPROVED: January 27, 2023