

Friday, October 4, 2024 – 10:00 a.m.
Governing Board Meeting
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
Pardee Lodge, Pardee Center, Valley Springs, CA 95252

Summary Minutes

ROLL CALL

Directors Terry Woodrow, Chair, Jeff Davidson, Vice-Chair, Richard Farrington, Jack Garamendi, Richard Blood, William Patterson and Ed Gonzalez were present at roll call. Director Brian Oneto joined the meeting at 10:12. Also present were Executive Officer (EO) Richard Sykes, Authority Council Greg Gillott, Authority Secretary Lorna Barfield, Authority Treasurer David Glasser and 20 visitors.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

AUTHORITY BUSINESS

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of August 16, 2024

Motion 24-24 to approve the meeting minutes of August 16, 2024, with modifications was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Gonzales, and carried by voice vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

2. Treasurer’s Report – Third Quarter FY 2024

Motion 25-24 to accept the Treasurer’s Report for filing was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Garamendi, and carried by voice vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

Director Oneto joined the meeting at 10:12 changing the vote count to 8.

3. Watershed Protection Fee

Executive Officer (EO) Richard Sykes summarized discussions and recent input from member agency staff on the Watershed Protection Fee topic and requested input from the Board on a schedule and scope for developing a fee proposal. The Board discussed alternative options including direct agency funding, a county property assessment and modifying the reserves policy to supplement funds. Director Pattersen stated that EBMUD would not support a watershed protection fee as customers are already struggling to pay their water bills. Directors Gonzales and Davidson also expressed concerns with including a fee on water agency customer bills.

The EO recommended that UMRWA staff work with agency staff to seek a consensus proposal for funding forest health work that lives within the spirit of the JPA and still achieving something meaningful towards forest health. The Board showed a willingness to work on solutions and decided this will be a process that will take some further study and time. Regular updates and discussions will continue in upcoming meetings.

Larry McKenney, General Manager of Amador Water Agency shared his appreciation towards the Board for continuing these discussions and suggested that the UMRWA water agencies consider contributions to the Forest Health Bond as an alternative to fees place on water bills. Forest maintenance will be critical, and grants will become harder to get. A local funding stream is valuable towards this goal.

4. Arbor Fuels Reduction Project (Bid Item 1) Contract Award

2C Land and Timber advised staff it was not able to perform the work for the Arbor Fuels Reduction Project and turned down the contract awarded by the Board on August 16, 2024. Staff reached out to Markit! Forestry, the next highest rated contractor that proposed on the Arbor Project (RFP 24-03) Bid Item 1. The Board was asked to approve the recommended general services agreement with Markit! Forestry in the amount of \$1,341,428.90.

Motion 26-24 to approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign a General Service Agreement with Markit! Forestry in the amount of \$1,341,428.90 to perform the Arbor Fuels Treatment Project (Bid Item 1) was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Farrington, and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

5. Aspen Restoration Project Archeological Survey Contract Award

Motion 27-24 to approve and authorize the Executive Officer to sign an Agreement with one of the top three archeological consultants approved by the UMRWA Board at its April 26, 2024, meeting for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 to provide archeological services for the Aspen Restoration Project was made by Director Gonzales, seconded by Director Blood, and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

6. Biomass JPA Initiative Update

Christiana Darlington presented the Board with an update regarding the California Forest Residual Aggregation for Market Enhancement (Cal FRAME) study and progress made in recent months to advance the biomass initiative. She summarized steps and specific recommended goals and shared that seed funding will not be available until the FY26/27 budget. The board expressed continued interest in the need to address the economics of removing forest biomass but have concerns over the complexity of this issue. They noted an expectation that UMRWA staff will fully evaluate the various Cal FRAME studies when they are complete and synthesize this information in a manner that facilitate policy level discussion and decision making.

7. SWRCB Healthy Rivers (Voluntary Agreements) Update

Mike Tognolini provided the Board with a brief update on the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program voluntary agreement. The State Water Board draft program expected to be released in September is now anticipated in October 2024. Mike shared that a recommendation is expected.

8. Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA) – Possible UMRWA Membership

The Executive Officer made a recommendation regarding membership to MCWRA. MCWRA's legislative activities and efforts to promote state and federal funding of forest health work overlap with UMRWA interests and a membership at a relatively low cost is worthwhile to support these activities. MCWRA has indicated that an UMRWA membership would cost \$1,200 per year. The EO recommended and the Board agreed that they would re-consider membership on an annual basis depending upon value to UMRWA.

Motion 28-24 to approve the application for an UMRWA membership to the MCWRA for one year was made by Director Gonzales, seconded by Director Farrington and carried by voice vote: Yea 8 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

9. Legislative Issues Update

The Executive Officer stated that Proposition 4, if passed, shows substantial funding for Forest Health programs.

Director Farrington commented that H.R.8790 (Westerman) Fix Our Forests Act is currently in the senate, and recommended review of H.R.9760 (Huffman) Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act.

Board Member Comments:

Director Oneto spoke on observations of timber stand burn survival and suggested that prescribed fire is one of the best possible treatment options. He recommended that controlled burns be performed in the spring when conditions are safe. Director Farrington shared a recent field trip visiting the rim of the Caldor Fire and is hoping a reduction of ladder fuels and the development of fuel break networks will help manage and control wildfire thus protecting Spotted Owls and achieving other goals.

Director Garamendi announced his retirement and that this will be his last UMRWA meeting. He thanked the Board and stated this meaningful committee, important work and cooperative approach have been a very positive experience. Director Davidson also thanked the Board and shared being proud of this agency and the work that has been done.

Director Patterson announced his EBMUD Board retirement and that this will also be his last meeting. He requested an UMRWA contact list so he can keep in touch.

Executive Officer Comments:

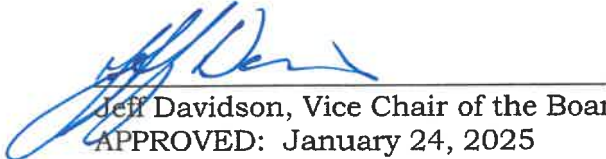
The Notice of Intent has officially been posted. The EO remarked on this big milestone and the efforts of bringing two forests together.

ADJOURNMENT: Director Woodrow adjourned the meeting at 11:39 a.m. The next regular meeting will be held on January 24, 2025, at McLean Hall, Pardee Center.

SUBMITTED BY:



Lorna Barfield, Authority Secretary



Jeff Davidson, Vice Chair of the Board
APPROVED: January 24, 2025