

Friday, October 1, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.
Special Governing Board Regular Meeting
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District “Vets Hall”
300 Daphne Street, Valley Springs, CA 95252

Summary Minutes

ROLL CALL

Directors John Coleman, Terry Woodrow, Gary Tofanelli, Richard Farrington, Richard Blood, Ed Gonzalez, and Jeff Davidson were present at the meeting. Absent: Brian Oneto. Also present were Executive Officer Richard Sykes, Administrative Officer Rob Alcott, and Authority Secretary Lisa (Stuart) Gualco, and 8 visitors and presenters.

PUBLIC COMMENT – none.

AUTHORITY BUSINESS

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of July 23, 2021

Motion 16-21 to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 23, 2021, was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Woodrow and carried by roll call vote: Yea 5 – Nay 0 – Abstain 2.

2. Treasurer’s Report – Third Quarter FY 2021

A copy of the Treasurer’s Report for the Second Quarter of fiscal year 2021, which ended June 30, 2021, was presented to the Board. It was also noted that the CNRA invoice was recently forgiven due to a significant delay by the state in providing the final billing. This invoice was to be covered with funds from UMRWA’s reserve.

Motion 17-21 to accept the Treasurer’s Report for filing was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Woodrow and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

3. Forest Projects Report

The Forest Projects Report presents two Specific Project Agreements to facilitate the development of the Forest Projects Plan in cooperation with the Stanislaus and Eldorado National Forests; recommends the submittal of a grant applications to the California Wildlife Conservation Board and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy; and requests authorization to amend the KW Emerson contract cost ceiling by \$50,000 to utilize remaining unused project funds and possible additional funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). NFWF contacted UMRWA with the offer of additional funds which can be applied to more culvert replacement work; however, that was prior to the Caldor Fire, and it is expected that the funds are no longer available. UMRWA may proceed with this work if funds should be procured, though it is unlikely.

Motion 18-21 to (1) approve a Forest Projects Plan Specific Project Agreement (SPA) with Stanislaus National Forest and ratify the Executive Officer’s signature on that agreement; and approve and authorize the EO’s signature on a SPA for the Forest Projects Plan with Eldorado National Forest, (2) authorize staff to submit a grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for the Upper Mokelumne River Aspen Restoration and Wildlife

Defense Project, (3) authorize staff to submit a grant application to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy under the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program for tasks related to development of Phase 2 of the Forest Projects Plan and (4) authorize staff to amend the KW Emerson Contract to increase the contract cost ceiling by up to \$50,000 for additional culvert and road work if funds become available was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Woodrow and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

4. Legislative Issues Update

Director Farrington provided the Board with updates AB-697 recently signed by the governor. This bill was supported by UMRWA and broadens the use of funds collected under the state's Good Neighbor Authority with the US Forest Service. Director Farrington asked whether UMRWA is eligible to receive funds as a result of this bill. Director Farrington also noted that AB 1570 (technical assistance from Cal Fire) and SB 804 (Forestry Training/Conservation Corp) are on the governor's desk awaiting his action. Finally, Director Farrington discussed another bill pending the governor's action, AB 1346, which would direct the air board to prohibit the use of small gas engines including generators, chainsaws, etc. under specified conditions. Director Farrington noted that this could adversely affect UMRWA's forest health work. The board asked the EO for a memo on the fate of the bills UMRWA took a position on in 2021.

Motion 19-21 directing the EO to submit a position letter on behalf of UMRWA requesting the Governor veto AB 1346, which the governor will need to sign by October 10, specifically calling out chainsaws, generators, and other equipment used in forestry, was made by Director Gonzalez, seconded by Director Davidson and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

5. Forest Program Planning Session

The Board reviewed the previous forest planning session in 2017, heard from the public on ideas for UMRWA's focus, and received a presentation from Megan Layhee on the progress of the GIS data collection process involving the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group. The Board was also provided a brief description of pyro-silviculture and an update on the other organizations and entities doing treatment work in and adjacent to the Mokelumne River Watershed.

Board members expressed support for the pyro-silviculture approach and the need to advocate at all levels for increased state and federal resources.

The EO discussed the recommended action to apply a portion of the UMRWA reserves to assist with work on the FPP and increase efforts to pursue funding.

Director Gonzalez asked about the amount of UMRWA's reserves and was directed to the Treasurer's Report provided in each board packet. Director Farrington suggested that we include the pyro-silviculture approach in the FPP.

Director Tofanelli exited the meeting, reducing the vote count to 6.

Motion 20-21 to apply \$100,000 of reserves to pursue planning and implementation grants and to proceed with both phases of the FPP as fast as funding allows, was made by Director Davidson, seconded by Director Farrington and carried by roll call vote: Yea 6 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

Director Farrington suggested that we add support of the pyro-silvicultural approach to forest management on the January Board Meeting agenda as an action item. Director Farrington questioned whether other Member water agencies might be interested in exploring grant funding to address wildfire risks to local water and wastewater facilities. He noted planning grants could be available from Cal Fire for this purpose. He also suggested we consider providing a detailed report into the Governor's Forest Resiliency Initiative and how it can help us get work done in the Mokelumne Watershed.

Regine Miller noted that staff will explore potential forest health/wildfire preparedness funding via FEMA/Cal OES.

Board Member Comments:

Rich Farrington noted that drought relief grants are being considered by DWR and UMRWA should think about possible opportunities.

Ed Gonzalez commented that he felt storage issues were being ignored and feels UMRWA should be looking at more storage opportunities on the Mokelumne River tributaries.

John Coleman thanked Terry Woodrow for chairing the July 28th meeting and asked that board members contact the EO regarding their desire to start the next meeting at 10am instead of 1:30pm.

Executive Officer Comments:

The EO provided the Board with information on the DAC study draft and will provide the final at the January meeting. There will be a meeting with the regional participants within the month to update the projects list and there will be a draft feasibility study from Blue Forest Conservation on the forest resiliency projects available for the next meeting. The EO also explained that UMRWA's Conflict of Interest code draft is ready for review and will be emailed to members after the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Director Coleman adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on January 28, 2022, at the Vet's Hall in Valley Springs at 10:00 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

Lisa Stuart, Authority Secretary

John Coleman, Chair of the Board
APPROVED: October 01, 2021