

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE TORRANCE WATER COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance Water Commission convened in a regular session at 7:03 p.m. on Wednesday, October 22, 2014 in the West Annex Meeting Room at Torrance City Hall.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Commissioners Craft, Leone\*, Kawai, Marshall,  
McGee, See\*\*, and Chairperson Nishinaga.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Public Works Director Beste, Senior Administrative Analyst  
Schaich, Senior Water Services Supervisor Berndt, and  
Metropolitan Water District Director Lefevre.

\* Commissioner Leone arrived at 7:05 p.m.

\*\*Commissioner See left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

**3. FLAG SALUTE**

Commissioner McGee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner See moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner McGee seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval.

**8A. PRESENTATION BY WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (WRD) REGARDING ISSUES RELATED TO COST OF SERVICE RATES, THE EXPANSION OF THE GOLDSWORTHY DESALTER, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE DISTRICT**

This item was taken out of order.

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich introduced the item and welcomed Ted Johnson, Chief Hydrogeologist, Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD).

Chief Hydrogeologist Johnson began his PowerPoint presentation with background information about WRD's management of two groundwater basins—Central Basin and West Coast Basin. He noted that WRD's service area is 420 square miles and covers 43 cities and 4 million people. He discussed the severe groundwater overdraft before 1960 and the creation of WRD in 1959 to provide artificial replenishment water for the aquifers. He stated that the two basins were adjudicated in the 1960s and the amount of pumping was set at 281,835 acre-feet per year.

He reported that now the groundwater basins are in balance. He showed slides of managed aquifer recharge at Rio Hondo, Pico Rivera, and San Gabriel spreading grounds, noting that sources are rainfall capture, recycled wastewater, and imported water. He described the 300 seawater barrier wells that Los Angeles County installed along the coast to stop saltwater intrusion and explained how fresh water is constantly injected in order to build up pressure to overcome intrusion and to replenish aquifers. He discussed the Goldsworthy Desalter that is owned by WRD and operated by the City and plans for its expansion. He expressed appreciation to City staff for helping to secure two grants totaling \$7 million from the State of California.

In response to Commissioner Marshall's inquiry, Chief Hydrogeologist Johnson stated that they use recycled water from Los Angeles County Sanitation District. He noted that WRD takes most of what they produce, adding that they are capped by certain regulatory permits. He discussed WRD's long-range goal "Water Independence Now" (WIN) to use more storm water and recycled water and less imported water.

Guest Charles Deemer expressed concern that the barrier wells are 50 years old and Chief Hydrogeologist Johnson concurred that it is an aging infrastructure but informed him that the wells are maintained every two years.

Chief Hydrogeologist Johnson provided information about Proposition 218, the "Right to Vote on Taxes Act" passed in 1996. He stated that the Replenishment Assessment (RA) charge for each acre-foot of groundwater extracted has always been a uniform rate for both basins. He noted that three agencies in the Central Basin filed suit regarding WRD's rate setting process and that the Superior Court has made an interim ruling that WRD's RA is a property-related fee. He stated that, even though it is not a final ruling, WRD implemented a Proposition 218 process for the establishment of its annual RA. He noted that WRD conducted a Cost of Service report for 2013 and 2014 to ensure full compliance with Proposition 218 requirements. He stated that the report is a review of reasons for WRD formation, hydrogeology of the basins, necessary projects and programs, cost for services, and proportionality of costs. He showed charts of WRD's 300 monitoring wells, WRD Services Provided, and WRD's budget.

Public Works Director Beste explained reasons why Proposition 218 should not apply to WRD and why these cities want to split the assessment and pay less than the West Coast Basin. He maintained that a uniform RA is fair, noting that the two basins are interconnected and the underflow between them is an important consideration. He noted that Torrance Municipal Water would strongly oppose any final ruling that splits the assessment.

In response to Commissioner See's inquiry, Chief Hydrogeologist Johnson stated that West Coast Basin pumps approximately 200,000 acre-feet per year and Central Basin approximately 42,000. He explained that the delay in making a final ruling is due to determination of damages.

Responding to Commissioner Leone's inquiry, Chief Hydrogeologist Johnson stated that WRD is a special district that does not report to anyone. He noted that there are five elected directors, a general manager, and staff.

Commissioner See left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**5A. MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2014**

Chairperson Nishinaga offered the following correction: Page 22, 8B, last line: "...the City's 2020 target is 110 to 115 gallons per capita per day use and is currently at 128."

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved to approve the Water Commission minutes of January 22, 2014 as amended. Commissioner Leone seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner See).

**5B. MINUTES OF MARCH 31, 2014**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved to approve the Water Commission minutes of March 31, 2014 as presented. Commissioner Craft seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner See).

**5C. MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2014**

The following corrections were noted: Page 1, Item 4, line 1: "Commissioner Kawai moved to accept..."; Page 2, Item 8A, paragraph 5: "Chairperson Nishinaga questioned why water usage is measured in whole cubic feet rather than fractions and Public Works Director Beste explained that ..."; Page 3, Item 8A, paragraph 3: "Commissioner McGee inquired about recycled water metering and received clarification..."; Page 4, Item 12B, "...MWD inspection tour to the State Water Project on May 31-June 1..."

**MOTION:** Commissioner Kawai moved to approve the Water Commission minutes of April 23, 2014 as amended. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner See).

**5D. MINUTES OF MAY 28, 2014**

**MOTION:** Commissioner McGee moved to approve the Water Commission minutes of May 28, 2014 as presented. Commissioner Kawai seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner See).

**5E. MINUTES OF JUNE 25, 2014**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved to approve the Water Commission minutes of June 25, 2014 as presented. Commissioner Kawai seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner See).

**5F. MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2014**

Chairperson Nishinaga offered a correction as follows: Page 3, Item 9, paragraph 2, "...he stated that they reportedly came out against building the twin tunnels but this is unrelated to the Water Bond. Staff added that the new ..."

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved to approve the Water Commission minutes of September 24, 2014 as amended. Commissioner McGee seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner See).

**6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PUBLIC**

The Commission welcomed former Water Commissioner Charles Deemer who discussed an article in the October 22 Daily Breeze regarding water main breaks and water produced vs. water charged.

Responding to Chairperson Nishinaga's inquiry, staff explained that water losses for the past five or six years average 3%.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**8B. STATUS OF CONJUNCTION USE PROCEEDINGS IN THE WEST COAST GROUNDWATER BASIN**

Public Works Director Beste provided a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the conjunctive use program. He reported that development of a conjunctive use program in the local groundwater basins has been under active consideration for the last 15 years and in various stages of litigation for the last five years. He stated that in September 2014 a tentative agreement was reached on all outstanding issues. He announced that the matter is scheduled for a Superior Court Hearing on December 9, 2014 and expressed hope that conjunctive use becomes effective by the end of this year.

He stated that the amended judgment clarifies several environmental issues that include use of storage space and extraction of water and coordination with CEQA, new facilities for storage cannot create any material harm, and method a party can object to a project based on material physical harm. Regarding non-environmental issues, the amended judgment clarifies WRD's rights and interests in basin operation reserve, expands groundwater storage rights to up to 200% of adjudicated rights with storage panel approval, deletes the inter-basin transfer provision, and clarifies the Watermaster's functions and process.

Public Works Director Beste stated that the Department of Water Resources will be replaced with a local Watermaster that is made up of several bodies—a president, vice-president, treasurer, and two members of the West Basin Water Association. He stated that WRD would be in charge of the administrative function and that a storage panel would be in charge of major storage projects. He concluded his presentation by stating that the additional carryover of 200% could result in the economic benefit of approximately \$1 million to Torrance Municipal Water (TMW) compared to the current 20%.

In response to Chairperson Nishinaga's inquiry, he defined a Watermaster as an entity that oversees the actions of a basin and a water purveyor as anyone who pumps water.

Responding to Commissioner Marshall's inquiry, Public Works Director Beste stated that he does not expect TMW to store water if it has all its well capacity. He noted, however, that water would be stored if a pump breaks down so that TMW does not lose its water rights.

**8C. WATER COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL 2013-14**

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich presented a draft Fiscal 2013-14 Water Commission Annual Report for July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. He recommended that the Commission review the report and, upon approval, it would be submitted to City Council for acceptance.

MWD Director Lefevre offered a minor correction.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Marshall moved to approve as amended the Water Commission Annual Report for July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. Commissioner Kawai seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner See).

**9. METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

MWD Director Lefevre reported that MWD voted to award a contract to Torrance-based Hobbs-Bannerman Company for improvements to the wastewater handling system at the Mills Treatment Plant. He announced a Connect2Met event for small businesses on November 6 at the Toyota Meeting Hall. He reported that the MWD Board also authorized refinements to the Local Resources Program, increasing the incentive to \$340 per acre-foot for the Goldworthy Desalter. He stated that MWD is working with all member agencies to renew purchase order agreements that would increase the cost of MWD water if water is taken above a base agreed to in the purchase order. He stated that TMW may be penalized for underpumping but there will likely be an appeal process that would allow them to avoid the penalty. He noted that MWD is working on a Water Supply Allocation Plan that would be recommended to the Board if the drought continues and there is need to implement the Plan in 2015.

**10. WEST BASIN WATER ASSOCIATION REPORT**

Public Works Director Beste reported that all reports at the October 7 West Basin Water Association meeting have already been discussed at this meeting.

**11. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT REPORT**

Senior Water Services Supervisor Berndt noted that the Monthly Department Report for September 2014 was included in agenda packets. He reported that production of potable water for the month was 1,684.7 acre-feet, a decrease of approximately 9.7% compared to September 2013. He stated that there were six water main breaks in September compared to four for the same period last year. He noted that field crews are in the process of installing new mains in North Torrance. He reported

that the Goldsworthy Desalter is undergoing rehabilitation to restore capacity and that the drilling of two new saline water source wells will begin in early 2015.

**12. ORALS**

**12A.** Commissioners discussed going dark in November 2014 due to the Thanksgiving holiday and it was decided to adjourn the meeting to December 3, 2014.

**12B.** Commissioner Marshall stated that he has not received a stipend check for approximately 14 months and Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich advised that he is looking into the matter.

**12C.** Commissioners thanked staff for the extensive knowledge that they provide to the Commission.

**12D.** Commissioners Kawai, Leone, and McGee stated that they are looking forward to the water trip. Commissioner Marshall and Chairperson Nishinaga offered their regrets that they are unable to attend.

**12E.** Commissioner Leone expressed his appreciation to MWD Director Lefevre for all his hard work.

**12F.** MWD Director Lefevre stated that many Riviera Homeowners Association members do not understand why they are in the California Water Service area and not TMW.

**12G.** Chairperson Nishinaga inquired why the City is not using waterless urinals and Public Works Director Beste responded that they chose to use the more cost effective ultra low flow urinals instead.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At 9:37 p.m., Commissioner McGee moved to adjourn the meeting to Wednesday, December 3, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Commission meeting room. Commissioner Leone seconded the motion and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Nishinaga so ordered.

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Approved as amended December 18, 2014 s/ Rebecca Poirier, City Clerk
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