



**APPROVED GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 11, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

At 9:03 A.M., Hicham Eltal welcomed those present and called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following Merced Irrigation-Urban Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MIUGSA) Representatives present:

Name	Organization
Hicham Eltal (Chair)	Merced Irrigation District
Ken Elwin	City of Merced
Justin Vinson	City of Atwater
Jose Antonio Ramirez	City of Livingston
Carlos Valencia	Winton Water and Sanitary District (CSD)
Daniel Chavez	Planada Community Services District (CSD)
Cynthia Benavidez	Le Grand Community Services District (CSD)
Bob Giampaoli	Le Grand Community Services District (CSD)

The following MIUGSA Representatives were absent:

None

WRITTEN PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

None.

CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Eltal announced and opened public hearing at approximately 9:04AM for comments relating to the proposed adoption of the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan, Resolution No. 2019-03. Matthew Beaman, Merced Irrigation District Water Resources Regulatory Engineer gave a brief presentation and overview of the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP), the public engagement process throughout its development and the timelines for submission to the California Department of Water Resources. Additionally, Mr. Beaman gave an overview of the process moving forward if adopted.

Following presentation by Mr. Beaman, the Board heard comments from the public, which lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Angela Esclas, representing Self Help Enterprise (SHE) of Fresno, California, commended the member agencies for their work towards achieving sustainability within the Merced subbasin through the development of the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan and expressed their interest in having the GSP show more monitoring regarding water quality servicing the local disadvantaged communities (DAC). SHE representative expressed commitment to working with the GSA's in order to ensure that the GSP is successful and indicated that though there have been edits to the GSP that capture most of their concerns, drinking water quality could be improved. Ms. Esclas indicated that SHE would like an analysis to determine how many wells will go dry and hopes that their concerns related to water quality can be addressed within the 1st year of the GSP implementation. Chairman Eltal assured SHE that water quality for the disadvantaged community is an essential component for MIUGSA, since almost all the disadvantaged communities in the Merced Groundwater Basin are located with MIUGSA. However, completing all work within the first year may be over extending the capability of the groundwater sustainability agencies at this time, as we would still be working with State Department of Water Resources (DWR) towards the approval of a final GSP.

Nataly Escobedo Garcia, representative for Leadership Counsel/ UC Irvine student, reiterated comments made by representative for SHE and thanked the member agencies for edits that were made to the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan, which addressed comments made during the public review period, she echoed Ms. Esclas comments and requested that a water impact analysis be undertaken to ensure no impacts on the DACs. Chairman Eltal explained that analysis made with the available data and missing key monitoring sites will not be reliable, that is why MIUGSA has been firm on filling monitoring data gaps in the basin for all beneficial uses and groundwater sustainability indicators. He also added, given all that, it is important to keep in mind that the GSAs have no authority beyond reducing groundwater pumping to maintain sustainability within the State approved sustainability indicators limits for the basin. That is why the GSP will always rely on the agencies that have control over land management, and water quality compliance at the local and State level for the basin and possibly adjacent basins. Chairman Eltal thanked members of the public for their comments and discussed the limitations of the GSA's as it relates to water quality control. The public hearing closed at approximately 9:30AM.

ACTIONS

1. Review and consider adopting Resolution 2019-03, adoption of the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan dated November 2019 and authorizing its consultants and Plan Manager to submit the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan to California Department of Water Resources by January 31, 2020.

Following public hearing on the proposed adoption of the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan, and upon further discussion by the Board, Daniel Chavez (Planada CSD) made a motion to adopt Resolution 2019-03 adopting the Merced Groundwater Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan and authorizing other actions relating thereto as presented, the motion was seconded by Ken Elwin (City of Merced); the Board voted unanimously to approved the motion. The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Ramirez, Valencia, Chavez, Benavidez
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

2. Consider selection of consulting firm(s) in response to MIUGSA-RFQ-2019 regarding fee assessment and rate setting for MIUGSA mandated SGMA services, for the purpose of considering execution of contract(s) to perform related analyses and authorizing MID to administer such contract(s).

Chairman Eltal reminded the Board of presentations received at the November 13, 2019 Board meeting in response to MIUGSA-RFQ-2019 regarding fee assessment and rate setting for MIUGSA mandated SGMA services and solicited input from those members of the Board who have had the opportunity to review the two bids that were received. Jose Ramirez (City of Livingston) indicated that the City of Livingston has had a long standing relationship with Hansford Economic Consulting, LLC. Mr. Ramirez stated that Hansford has additionally, and recently been retained to work on utility rate setting services for the City of Livingston. Mr. Ramirez indicated that Hansford Economic Consulting, LLC has proven to be knowledgeable, flexible, accommodating and competitive.

Mr. Eltal acknowledged the flexibility expressed by Hansford Economic Consulting, LLC and recommended awarding the contract to Hansford Economic Consulting, LLC. The Board discussed the consulting firm's qualifications and costs. If awarded to Hansford Economic Consulting, LLC the cost would be not to exceed approximately \$125,000 and would include 10 trips, which could include multiple meetings for each trip.

After further discussion, Daniel Chavez (Planada CSD) made a motion to award the contract for assessment and rate setting for MIUGSA mandated SGMA services to Hansford Consulting, LLC as presented, seconded by Ken Elwin (City of Merced); the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Eltal, Elwin, Vinson, Ramirez, Valencia, Chavez, Benavidez
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Meeting Minutes: November 13, 2019

On motion by Ken Elwin (City of Merced), seconded by Cynthia Benavidez (Le Grand CSD) the Board unanimously approved the minutes as written.

REPORTS

Chairman Eltal provided an update regarding LAFCO File No. 0688 – Notice of Formation of Owens Creek Water District. Chairman Eltal indicated that since the last Board meeting, the GSA's signed and submitted a joint comment letter to LAFCO opposing the proposed action. Chairman Eltal discussed submission of a comment letter on behalf of MIUGSA. Ken Elwin (City of Merced) indicated that he would like to analyze the proposed action further.

Chairman Eltal discussed the California Department of Water Resource's activities post GSP submittal. Chairman Eltal indicated that once submitted, the state will have 2 years to review the GSP, however MIUGSA will be responsible as of February 1, 2020. Chairman Eltal indicated that

upon submission of the GSP, the California Department of Water Resources will review and initiate a comment period at the state level and will work with the GSA's on comments received. Ken Elwin asked how the GSP's will work together. Chairman Eltal indicated that further coordination amongst neighboring basins will be necessary moving forward.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

None.

CLOSED SESSSION

None.

ADJOURN

Cynthia Benavidez (Le Grand CSD) made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ken Elwin (City of Merced) seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:10AM.