



# **Regional Water Management Group**

LOCATION: Online (ZOOM)

## **MINUTES**

Monday, February 26, 2024, 1:30 pm

### **1. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm, by Bobby Macaulay, chairperson.**

Those present included:

Al Solis – SEMCU	Ian Turner – Madera County
Aleta Allen – Madera County	Jacinta Cabral – Madera County
Amy Siliznoff – Madera/Chowchilla RCD	Jacob Roberson – RWMG Coordinator
Becky Horn – Triangle T WD	Jason Rogers – City of Chowchilla
Bobby Macaulay – Madera County	Jeannie Habben – Madera County
Carl Janzen – Madera ID	Jenny Nunez-Rodriguez – Madera County
Clyde Wheeler – Indian Lakes	Jon Cottingham – Coarsegold RCD
Craig Wagner – Madera County	Keith Helmuth – City of Madera
Don Roberts – Gravelly Ford WD	Kim Witten – Madera County
Emily Garcia – Madera County	Kimberly Sandoval – Madera County
Erin Capuchino – Y/S RCDC	Noah Lopez – MAWA
Fahed Mosleh – Madera County	Preston McGill – Yosemite Lakes Park
Gretchen Heisdorf – Root Creek WD	Sadjeet Johal – SEMCU

### **2. Review & Approval - Agenda & Minutes**

- A motion to approve the January minutes and February agenda was made by Gretchen H; Keith H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Public Comment**

- Items of interest were mentioned by Jacob R (for more information, reach out to Jacob):
  - The Summit for Equity and Resilience in Water: Success and Lessons Learned from the IRWM DACTI Program will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27, both in-person and online.
  - The California Water Commission approved a white paper that contains potential strategies to protect communities and fish and wildlife in the event of a drought. This white paper will be shared with the Secretaries for Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, and Food and Agriculture, who requested the Commission's engagement on this topic.
  - DWR has published the Status of 2020 Agricultural Water Management Plans and Implementation of Efficient Water Management Practices Report.
  - The Office of Water Programs at Sacramento State is hosting an online seminar on March 15<sup>th</sup> from 12 pm – 1 pm. Topic for this seminar is Safe Drinking Water for DACs. This seminar is free and open to the public.

- DWR is hosting a week of webinars and virtual workshops to celebrate Groundwater Awareness Week 2024 March 11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>. Workshops will focus on providing an interactive environment for GSAs to learn outreach and engagement techniques to assist with community engagement.

#### **4. Discussion & Action - Financial Report/Warrant Approvals**

- February 2024 Financial Report
  - Jacob R reported that work is in progress regarding an organization or agency taking over the accounting functions.
  - We began the month with \$24,560.50 with no incoming or outgoing expenses. We ended the month with \$24,560.50.
  - Bobby M asked if invoices have been sent out yet, and Jacob mentioned that no invoices have been sent to members for dues since there is no one for the checks to be sent to right now.
  - A motion to approve the February financial report was made by Gretchen H; Keith H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. Discussion & Action – RCDs Joining as DACs**

- Jacob R commented that during last month's meeting, the group discussed waving the membership dues for RCDs. Coarsegold RCD and Madera/Chowchilla RCD are interested in joining, but need an official motion to be made by the Madera RWMG to allow them to wave the membership with joining before submitting a membership application.
- A motion to approve RCDs joining the MRWMG and waving the member dues was made by Al S; Gretchen H second; all voted; Motion passed unanimously.

#### **6. Discussion – Madera RWMG Accounting Functions**

- Jacob R reported that he spoke with MAWA about handling the accounting functions for the group, and they mentioned that the Madera County Farm Bureau handles their accounting functions. Jacob spoke with Christina B at the MCFB when she returned from vacation, and she mentioned she was going to review her notes before getting back to Jacob about handling the accounting functions for the group. Jacob gave her a call before today's meeting and left a voicemail. Jacob has not heard anything back from Christina.
- Jacob added that the group does have a few invoices that are unpaid right now and have been for months. Those invoices are for Jacob's position as the group coordinator and also for CalTech Web who manages the website for the group. Jacob is fine with waiting for payment and so is CalTech Web until the group is able to find an organization or agency to handle the accounting functions.
- Jacob also added that the group does have a grant that will be closing in June of this year. Hopefully something is figured out before the grant is closed out so we can receive the money in and get it paid out for the work that is being done on the grant.
  - Al S asked if Bobby M can sign the invoices to be paid for the grant, and Bobby mentioned he can sign the invoices, but there is no one performing the accounting functions so checks cannot be deposited or sent out by the Madera RWMG right now.

## **7. Discussion – Draft Bylaw Updates**

- Jacob R reported that he received an email about two weeks ago from Joel E with the Attorney General's office. Joel mentioned, "this would seem to confirm my intuition that the issue with the Brown Act is the limitation of virtual meetings. Unfortunately, I suspect that a legislative fix will be needed, which perhaps could be limited to regional multiagency organizations such as yours, as there may be resistance to authorizing virtual meetings for cities, counties, school districts and special districts with more discrete jurisdictional boundaries." Jacob did not feel like this provided a clear answer regarding the Madera RWMG having to follow the Brown Act when it comes to monthly meetings.
- Jacob added that he reached out to a few other RWMG's in the past, and they mentioned that they do not follow the Brown Act for their meetings. Jacob also reached out to the RWMG in Ventura County, and they do not follow the Brown Act either for their meetings.
  - Bobby M asked Jacob to send him the information he gathered from the different RWMG's he reached out to regarding following the Brown Act for their meetings. Bobby would like this information when talking with County Counsel and staff about getting this matter solved.
- Erin C added that she was talking with a nonprofit's attorney about this same topic for the Yosemite/Sequoia RCDC, and if there is money from any of the Board members involved with the County, then you have to follow the Brown Act. Bobby mentioned that he understands that but does not necessarily agree with the attorney due to conversations Bobby has had with County Counsel. The conversation Bobby has been having with the County Counsel has been focusing around this group not being established through statute. The group decided to meet informally and that we meet voluntarily. We are not a nonprofit. We do not have an established Tax ID. We are not necessarily spending money from grants or state money, we are more of a pass through for organizations to receive grants or state money for various projects.

## **8. Discussion – Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Funding**

- San Joaquin Valley
  - Chowchilla Nitrate Control Program / Chowchilla Management Zone – Projects 12 and 13
    - Becky H reported that the last mailer they sent out advertised a \$50 gift card (Visa card, grocery store gift card, etc.) for the first 50 qualified applicants. They did receive an increase in applicants after offering the gift card.
    - Becky also added that Sarah W is going to host a second Zoom meeting with Madera County Priority 2 Area Dischargers for the CMZ. This meeting will be on Wednesday this week at 3 pm. Those dischargers were sent a notice at the end of December that they will have to comply with the Nitrate controls. Sarah is going to review what the options are to comply. Some options include joining the CMZ or the Valley Water Collaborative. The meeting is primarily to receive feedback from participants and answer any questions they may have. Dischargers have until February 2025 to comply.

- Becky mentioned that Chowchilla launched their Domestic Well Mitigation Program where they are doing replacement wells for domestic wells that went dry. They have done 2 tests for homes that have drilled new wells, and both tested below the threshold for Nitrate. These homes will be reimbursed for the cost of drilling their new wells.

## **9. Discussion – Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Funding**

- Mountain Counties and San Joaquin Valley Counties
  - Indian Lakes and Parkwood
    - Fahed M reported that the Indian Lakes project was completed on February 21<sup>st</sup> as far as installation. They are waiting on finishing up billing and invoices for this project. For Parkwood, they are approximately 38% complete. They have ordered some lids for the meter boxes that are placed in driveways or are set in concrete. They should receive those lids sometime this week or the beginning of next week. The project is moving forward smoothly. They did add another person to the crew for the Parkwood installations since Indian Lakes is completed. They are installing about 35 meters a week with the additional person on the crew.
      - Bobby M asked if there is an estimation on when the Parkwood installations will be complete, and Fahed mentioned he does not have an answer since they are waiting on the lids for some of the meter boxes. His best guess for the Parkwood installations to be completed would be sometime in April.
      - Clyde W thanked Fahed and Madera County Public Works getting the meters installed and getting the project finished.
  - City of Madera
    - Keith H reported that the one project that is under construction is mostly done. The other two projects are in design.
  - City of Chowchilla
    - Jason R reported that they are tentatively scheduled to start construction next month depending on weather.

## **10. Discussion – SGMA Implementation Grant**

- Gretchen H reported that the formal amendment that was requested for project 4 (Root Creek WD) was approved. The pay request and progress report 6 (October 2023 – December 2023) was submitted to DWR on February 21<sup>st</sup>. It is still under review so there is no status update on those yet. The groundwater model update is ongoing for project 2. For project 3, they are waiting on permits and an easement to be approved prior to moving forward with finalizing plans/specifications for construction bidding. A grant amendment may be necessary due to the delay in obtaining permits and final easement. This is a conversation that Gretchen and DWR will need to have along with their grant manager because they have a hard sunset date on this grant and it should not be allowed to be extended. This may be an issue for project 3. For project 4, this is complete and all the deliverables have been sent to DWR. The final pay request was made on pay request 6 which was submitted on February 21<sup>st</sup>. For project 5,

there is no new information to share. The various design scenarios are still ongoing.

#### **11. Discussion – Drought Working Group**

- Jenny N commented that their grant application for \$125,00 was approved by DWR. This grant is for the County Drought Resilience Planning Assistance Program. With this grant, the Water and Natural Resources Department is going to do some siting for monitoring wells in the Madera Ranchos area, and for facilitation to create a domestic well mitigation program for the Madera Subbasin.
  - Bobby M asked when the domestic well monitoring program is expected to be out in the Madera Ranchos area, and Jenny mentioned they are working on reviewing the draft agreement with DWR. They are looking to have a timeline established once the agreement is finalized.
- Jenny also added that they have an upcoming meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will be on Zoom at 10 am.

#### **12. Discussion – IRWM Round 2 Application**

- Kim S reported that they are still waiting to hear back from Public Work's maintenance staff on their schedule to get timing on when the project can begin.

#### **13. Discussion – IRWMP Project List – 2024 Call for Projects**

- Jacob R commented that the call for projects is done every year as stated in our bylaws. The 2024 call for projects will officially open on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, and close on Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. During the April meeting, the group will vote on either approving or denying projects being added to the IRWMP Project List. Also, during this 40-day period for the call for projects, Jacob will reach out to various agencies that have projects on the IRWMP Project List right now that have received funding from different sources to see if those projects have been closed so they can be removed from our list to help dwindle down the number of projects on our list.
  - Bobby M asked Jacob to send the application and information for adding projects to the IRWMP Project List to the Yosemite Lakes Park Home Owners' Association. They have some interest in expanding their knowledge around the Madera RWMG and the projects that can be funded through IRWM Funding when available.

#### **14. Discussion – In-Person Meeting Late Winter / Early Spring**

- Jacob mentioned that the majority of the group members showed interest in having an in-person meeting during a regularly scheduled Madera RWMG meeting to discuss possible collaboration on projects. This collaboration could be on projects currently on the IRWMP Project List or on future projects. Jacob added that most of the members mentioned that they can watch the 45-minute IRWM Success Video on their own.
  - Bobby M asked Jacob if he had a good sense on what meeting would work well for the group to meet in-person, and Jacob said he does not have a specific date in mind. Jacob also added that the May meeting is currently scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> which is a holiday, so that meeting needs to be canceled or scheduled for an early Monday in May. Bobby

mentioned that for the May meeting, we can move it to the 20<sup>th</sup> if there is anything urgent needing approval from the group (the accounting functions for example). If there is nothing urgent needing approval, we can go ahead and cancel the May meeting.

- Bobby mentioned that we will plan to do the in-person meeting in June on the 24<sup>th</sup>. This will give us enough time to make arrangements for the in-person meeting.

#### **15. New/Suggested Members for the Madera RWMG**

- Jacob commented that he reached out to the Columbia RCD about the fee being waived for RCDs interested in joining the Madera RWMG. Jacob has not heard anything back from them yet.

#### **16. Future Agenda Items**

- Nothing suggested.

#### **17. Next Meeting**

- Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 25, 2024, at 1:30 pm on Zoom.

#### **18. The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 pm.**