MINUTES OF THE 2,178th REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

AUGUST 9, 2021, 3:00 P.M.

Directors having been duly notified; Madam Chair Dunning called the regular meeting to order at 3:03pm at the MRGCD General Office. The following Directors and Staff were present:

DIRECTORS			STAFF
Karen Dunning, Madam Chair	Present	Mike Hamman	Chief Engineer/CEO
Stephanie Russo Baca, Vice Chair	Present	Dr. Chuck DuMars	Chief Water Counsel
Barbara Baca, Director	Present	Lorna Wiggins	General Counsel
John Kelly, Director	Present	Jason Casuga	Chief Operating Officer
Joaquin Baca, Director	Present	Pamela Fanelli	Secretary Treasurer/CFO
Glen Duggins, Director	Present	Anne Marken	Acting Water Operations Mgr.
Michael T. Sandoval, Director	Present	Mike Lopez	Water Distribution Div. Mgr.
		DeAnna Philips	GIS Tech / Board Liaison

The following names of individuals were interested viewers, callers and/or participants:

Lacy A. Daniel, LRPA Loretta and Curtis Tolbert Nolan Meadows Rita Padilla Gutierrez Julian Avalos, MRGCD Estella Gamboa, MRGCD Marta Moerch, MRGCD Marianne Woodard

Francesca Shirley, MRGCD

Iliana Gamboa

Phil Bredfeldt, Western Solutions Andrew Hautzinger, Valencia SWCD

Adrienne Martinez, MRGCD

Beverly Ohline

Daniel Arquero, MRGCD

Sonny Cooper, Weston Solutions

Raymond Torres

Gabriella Coughlin, MRGCD

Viola Sanchez, BIA Jennifer Faler, BOR Christine Nardi, MRGCD

Tricia Snyder, WildEarth Guadian Marie VanDerGeest, MRGCD Judith McSweeney, MRGCD

Casey Ish, MRGCD

John Thompson, MRGCD Lobbyist

Shoshana Avrishon
Matt Martinez, MRGCD
Yasmeen Najmi, MRGCD
Willie West, MRGCD
Rick Altenberg, MRGCD
James "Santiago" Maestas
Max Henkels, NMDA
Andrew Melendez, MRGCD
Alicia Lopez, MRGCD

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AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director Barbara Baca led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Madam Chair Dunning declared a quorum, and the meeting was publicly noticed. This meeting is a new hybrid order meeting, wherein board members, staff, and the public are at the meeting in person but may also call in. Rollcall votes will no longer be necessary for regular motions although she called on Director Sandoval as he phoned into the meeting.

The Chair called for any announcements in which Vice Chair Russo Baca congratulated all the Valencia County Rodeo Royalty. Specifically one of our own, Julian Avalos, our Construction Supervisor at the Socorro Division office. His daughter won the princess competition and the Vice Chair's daughter won the rodeo queen competition.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Chair asked for any changes and Mike Hamman asked that an item be added under reports from the Chief Engineer regarding the status of El Vado and the Title Transfer.

Director Barbara Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA** with the above changes. Director Kelly seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** UNANIMOUSLY.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

- **a.** Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification August 9, 2021
- b. Consideration/Approval of July 2021 for Invoice for Wiggins, Williams & Wiggins
- **c.** Consideration/Approval of July 2021 Invoice for Law & Resource Planning Associates
- **d.** Consideration/Approval of Minutes for Regular Board Meeting July 12, 2021
- **e.** Consideration/Approval of Aqua Systems Slide Gates for \$72,400.00 Richard DeLoia, Chief Procurement Officer
- f. Consideration/Approval for Resolution M-08-9-21-171 Disposal of Obsolete Items
 Andrew Melendez, ER&T Assistant Manager
- **g.** Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for July 2021 (For Informational Purposes Only)

Director Barbara Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA**. Director Joaquin Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 – ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are held to six (6) minutes)

Curtis and Loretta Tolbert

Loretta and CurtisTolbert expressed their difficulties trying to sell their home without the potential buyers having a license to access the property. Jason Casuga, MRGCD Chief Operating Officer, explained to the Board that the research found three licenses for their property: one for an encroachment of the drain, another for encroachment of the Pajarito Lateral and a separate license for the culvert crossing on the Pajarito Lateral. He pointed out that the property is not legally subdivided. The Tolbert's said they established the nonconforming use with Valencia County which was submitted in their packet with approval from the county. After further explanation from Mr. Casuga on what the problem was, Madam Chair Dunning stated staff would look into it, make recommendation to the Board and get back to them.

Rita Padilla Gutierrez

Mrs. Padilla Gutierrez commented that she would urge the Board to fight the litigation due to the fact it has started to cause flooding to take place. Ms. Padilla Gutierrez and her husband farm in Jarales and Tome, and they have noticed that Jarales always has plenty of water, but Tome does not.

No additional comments on the matter.

Gabriella Coughlin

Mike Hamman introduced Gabriella Coughlin as a new staff member.

Ms. Coughlin introduced herself as the new agronomist/agroecologist of the District who will help explain the use and limitations of the soils in the valley. She stated she previously worked in Oregon before moving to the Albuquerque field office.

Director Duggins expressed his concern for the Conservancy and role of the government. Ms. Coughlin explained she understands and is here to try to bridge the gap between government and producers.

Madam Chair Dunning welcomed Gabriella Coughlin.

5. Report on New Committee Assignments - Chair Karen Dunning

Madam Chair Dunning proposed that the Board create two new committees. One of the two new committees is an agriculture committee to work with our new agronomist. Committee members would be Vice Chair Russo Baca and Directors Duggins and Sandoval. The directors all agreed to serve with Director Duggins being the chair.

The other is a licensing committee which would come up with policy recommendations, temporary licenses and/or permits etal. Discussion ensued and Directors Kelly, Joaquin Baca and Vice Chair Russo Baca agreed to serve on temporary assignments with Director Baca as the chair.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6- REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

a. Bureau of Reclamation - Jennifer Faler, Area Manager

Ms. Faler was on the line and discussed how the monsoons really helped this year mitigate some serious impacts to farmers, the ecosystem and recreation. She discussed the infrastructure bill in the Senate. She mentioned the basin study, which is MRGCD led, has been cleared. She ended the BOR's update with their ESA commitments and obligations.

Director Duggins inquired about the water leasing program which pays farmers *not* to water. Ms. Faler and Mike Hamman explained that the money does come from the federal government through Reclamation and developed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). This program has a grant that allows short term (one year or less) leases from farmers that choose to not take water from the District's system for a full or a partial season. There is an operational agreement between the District, NFWF and Reclamation.

MRGCD BOARD MEETING (08-09-21)

1. Heron Summary

Content = 81,622 ac-ft (8/4) Azotea tunnel: 20-40 cfs Total SJC inflow year-to-date: 59,656 a.f. Currently releasing 200 cfs Current MRGCD storage: 2,485 ac-ft

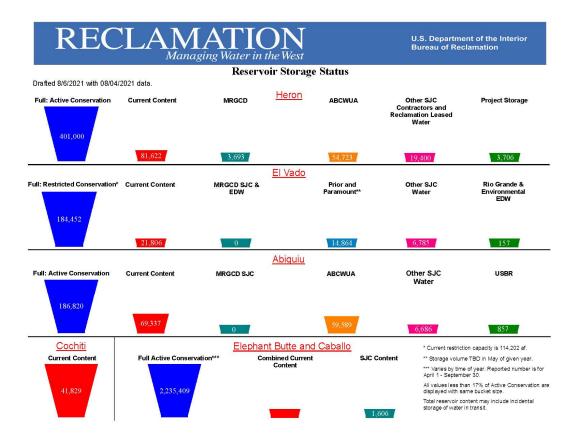
- 2. El Vado Summary
 - Total storage (all contractors and natural) in El Vado as of 8/4: 21,806 ac-ft.
 - B. Native in El Vado 157 ac-ft.
 - C. MRGCD's SJ-C storage in El Vado 0 ac-ft.
 - D. P & P: 14,864 ac-ft
 - E. EDWA: 0 ac-ft
 - F. All other SJ-C contractors: 6,785 ac-ft

Current release is 100 cfs RG Inflow is 50-100 cfs

3. Storage in Abiquiu

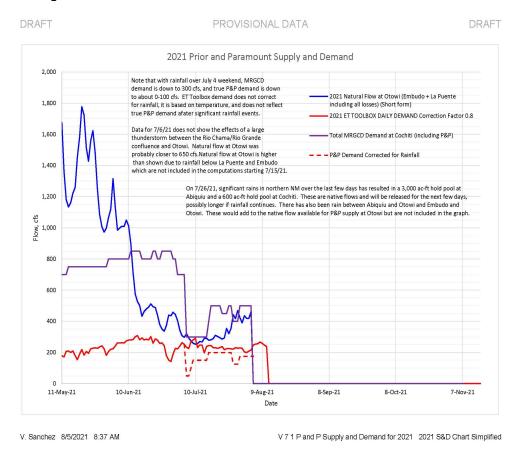
Content = 69,337 ac-ft (8/4) MRGCD's SJ-C storage= 0 ac-ft

Total water released for minnow to date in 2021: 1,607 ac-ft



b. Bureau of Indian Affairs - Viola Sanchez, Designated Engineer

Ms. Sanchez wasn't present but she sent a written report to the Board which included a graph showing Prior and Paramount (P&P) supply and demand for this irrigation season. She wrote that P&P supply has been greater than demand, so there was no need for a release from P&P storage in El Vado.



Ms. Sanchez also wrote that the BIA works together with the District to ensure that sufficient water is delivered to the Pueblos to meet P&P demand based on each Pueblo's water right. Water distribution within each Pueblo is at each Pueblo's discretion. Each Pueblo is responsible for working directly with their District ISO to direct available flows to the various District ditches as determined by the Pueblo.

Also provided to the Board was a draft rotational calendar for P&P deliveries during P&P-only operations and during times when P&P plus limited non-P&P operations takes place has been developed and shared with the District and the Pueblos.

<u>AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 – REPORT(S) FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO</u> - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

a. Initiatives Update - Pamela Fanelli, Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

Ms. Fanelli explained the District identified a replacement for the Assessments module that will also integrate with the water delivery module. The project will begin this month and take approximately six to nine months. She is excited about this as the current one is outdated and unstable.

b. Report on the Finance Committee Meeting, August 9, 2021 – Chair Dunning, Directors Kelly and Barbara Baca

Director Kelly explained that they discussed long terms needs looking at fleet replacement. The overall consensus of the finance committee meeting was they were happy with the model with the New Mexico Finance Authority. He believed vehicles should be sold around the 4-to-5-year window to minimize maintenance costs.

Director Baca requested a policy in way of a resolution from Ms. Fanelli and her team to have a good fleet with the money to back it up, to have a plan for replacement rather than be behind the eight ball.

Madam Chair thanked Ms. Fanelli for all her efforts working with many different government agencies trying to understand why the revenues from Sandoval County not coming in as expected. She's looking forward to next month's meeting for an update.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER - Mike A. Hamman, PE

a. Update on COVID-19 Operational Update: Revised Face Covering Mandate effective August 3, 2021 – Mike Hamman, CE/CEO and Christine Nardi, Human Resources Director

Christine Nardi announced due to the increasing cases of the Delta variant of COVID-19, they have updated the face covering mandate and strongly recommended that employees get the COVID-19 vaccination if they have not already done so. Saying, in accordance with the latest official guidance from the CDC, which was issued July 27, 2021, the state of New Mexico now recommends that fully vaccinated New Mexicans wear a face covering in indoor settings.

Therefore, in an effort to decrease the prevalence of COVID-19 within the MRGCD community, effective Tuesday, August 3rd, all MRGCD employees will be required to wear face coverings regardless of vaccination status when they're working indoors and when two or more employees, including the driver, are riding together in a District issued vehicle.

Madam Chair and Directors Kelly and Barbara Baca met for the personnel committee meeting which discussed how many organizations, government entities are requiring vaccinations and the District is not although the policy could change in the future based on numbers. A couple of ideas discussed to help employees would be a local clinic similar to Presbyterian's flu shot clinics and since there's much misinformation about the vaccine to have an educational session with questions answered by a medical professional.

b. Report on Water Supply Conditions - Mike Hamman, CE//CEO, and Anne Marken, Acting Water Operations Division Manager

Ms. Marken stated the monsoons have really helped with the water supply this year, but storms have dried up within the past week and temperatures have come up. MRGCD resumed releases of San Juan-Chama water on August 4th. The operations plan is to target demand of 600-cfs for MRGCD and release San Juan-Chama water from storage. She stated they believe to have about a week left of water in storage right now. Once MRGCD is out of stored water, the District will continue to divert from the river as it's available.

Mr. Hamman discussed the option of cutting off early in the fall or delay in the spring. Director Duggins expressed his concerns about the issue and said he would rather it be delayed in the fall than the spring, but both would be a disaster to farmers.

Vice Chair Russo Baca calls on Noah Meadows from the audience to speak on behalf of the issue.

Noah Meadows is a small farmer from Valencia County, Peralta area, that states the decision needs to be made before next month, because some crops require at least three waters and would like to know far enough in advance to schedule his plan for the year.

Discussion continued whether wait for the September meeting because it wasn't on the agenda or set up a special meeting sooner. The Chair proposed to have a special meeting on Friday, August 20th, at 10:00 a.m.

Vice Chair Russo Baca made the MOTION TO HAVE A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 20TH AT 10:00 A.M. Director Duggins seconded the motion. The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Status Report on Water Distribution - Mike Lopez, Water Distribution Division Manager

Mr. Lopez talked about how the recent rains provided more than enough rainwater for the arroyos and they were able to deliver a portion to Elephant Butte. He discussed how the rain events caused issues with the farmers to cut or not to cut hay crops. He and his team of ISOs will meet to plan for the remainder of the season. Stating they are aware when their stored water will run out and they are moving along with deliveries of water wherever possible.

d. Report on the Valencia County Commissioners Board Meeting, July 15, 2021– Mike Hamman, CE/CEO and Vice Chair Russo Baca

Vice Chair Russo Baca described the meeting from July 15th, where Mr. Hamman discussed MRGCD's flood control authority from the river *out* and not from the arroyos *in* and specifically what MRGCD has authority over and what we don't have authority over regarding flood control. They also discussed the Belen Watershed Program and what that entailed. Although, there was no decision made by the Board of Valencia County Commissioners, it was discussed that they would not be the flood control authority but have a separate flood control entity within the county. Their attorney, Mr. (Adren) Nance, stated they needed further discussion. Vice Chair Russo Baca stated there were a few members of the public that came and spoke and were in favor of flood control authority.

Mr. Hamman further explained the Commission directed County staff to start exploring all the different

options for flood control authorities. It was expressed that MRGCD will assist in conducting workshops for staff and local officials at some point.

Director Duggins made the MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORT ON THE VALENCIA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS BOARD MEETING. Director Kelly seconded the motion. The MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Update of the El Vado and Title Transfer – Mike Hamman, CE/CEO

Additionally, Mike Hamman discussed the update on El Vado Dam Rehab and the Title Transfer. He explained there was a hold up at the Office of Management and Budget regarding the El Vado Dam Safety Construction Plan. We need Congress to approve this by late August, early September to stay on construction schedule. He stated Senator Heinrich made a special appeal to Chairman Manchin and is in full support of this and wants it moved through. He stated that the Title Transfer authorization report is also sitting in Congress. He also stated that the District is due to take over the O&M of the Low Flow Conveyance Channel and the Drain Unit 7 while under our agreement with the Reclamation late August or early September. Mr. Hamman toured SHPO around to all the facilities and they understand most of our facilities should be on an exemption list.

e. Report on NM Drought Listening Sessions, July 15 & 29th, 2021 – Mike Hamman, CE/CEO

Mr. Hamman talked about the recent listening session events that occurred in July due to prior conversations that were had regarding the concerns that many part of the west were getting public relations exposure in terms of drought, and water shortages, and future impacts, climate change, etc. and not much going on about that, at least on the regional or national scale, associated with New Mexico. Vice Chair Russo Baca spoke at the July 15th meeting about the needs of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and the Middle Valley. Tanya Trujillo, the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, was very pleased with the outcome.

f. Report/Presentation on Meetings with Valencia County Officials on Formation of a Flood Control Agency, August 3 & 4, 2021 – Jason Casuga, COO

Mr. Casuga started off by showing a video created by Christine Bodie and narrated by Arcie Chapa; what the District is doing in relation to conservation.

Mr. Casuga introduced the newest member of the Engineering team, Marie VanDerGeest. Ms. VanDerGeest then gave a brief education/work experience background to the Board.

Mr. Casuga stated he was able to present a version of this presentation and the video to both staff leaders in Valencia County and to elected officials from Valencia County. The problem is the rain events and their frequency. He goes back and collects rain totals from years prior and finds a pattern of big rain events happening each year. Mr. Casuga explained how every major event in this area that has caused floods that have damaged property have come from the arroyos that originate outside of the District's benefited area. Mr. Casuga discussed drainage and how important it is to deal with groundwater to make it run smoothly. He goes on to talk about MRGCD has made investments to the Albuquerque Levee, Corrales Levee, San Acacia Levee, and Bernalillo to Belen Levee.

Mr. Casuga discussed MRGCD litigation cost, which is \$525,000 cash and \$1,081,000 in insurance. However, they are out of an insurance carrier right now because their insurance carrier left the District. He also stated the majority of the budget comes from Ad Valorem and Water Service Charges. The percentage by county that money is generated from is 8% Minutes of Middle Rio Grande Conservancy Board Meeting August 9, 2021

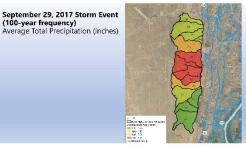
Sandoval, 62% Bernalillo, 23% Valencia, and 6% Socorro. Mr. Casuga discussed Jerry Lovato from AMAFCA (Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority) and Chuck Thomas from SSCAFCA (Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority) attending the meeting and provided the history and formation of each flood authority.

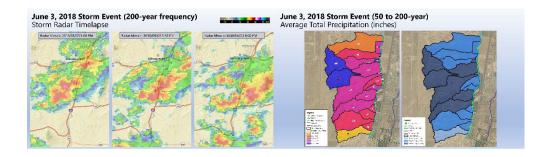
Mr. Hamman added that Valencia County state reps. and senators were at the meeting and had a robust conversation with them discussing the next steps and taxation issues. The District is willing to participate at some level as a cost sharing partner. There will be a follow up workshop with local elected officials, the county commission, the counsel of the town of Belen and also Los Lunas possibly in early September.

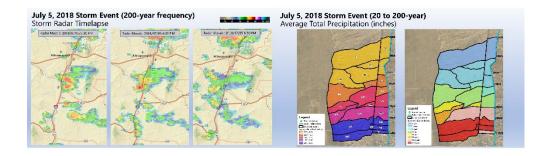


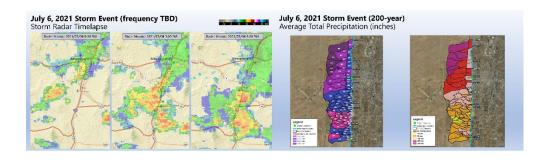


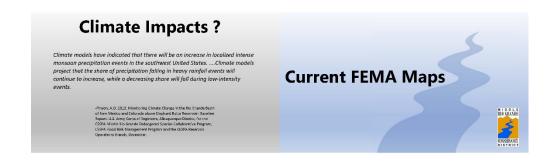


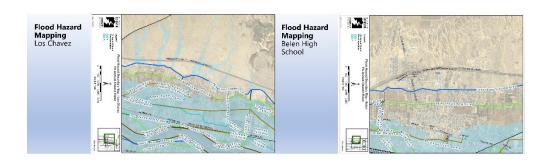














River Flood Control

289. The drairage system is not designed to control floods from the side arroyos. Such floods will occur in the future as in the past whenever a torrestid rainfall occurs on the steep slopes of the valley. Due care will be taken to protect the drains against damage from such floods, and whenever it is possible tool as ot, the arroyo waters will be afforded an entrance into the drains through restricted openings which will pass off the water in such a gradual manner as not to damage or overflow the drains.

River Flood Control Investments

- Albuquerque Levees
- · Corrales Levee
- · San Acacia Levee
- Bernalillo to Belen Levee (In Development)

River Flood Control Investments

- · Albuquerque Levees
- · Corrales Levee
- San Acacia Levee (Non-Fed Cost Share)
 City of Socorro: \$60,000
 MRGCD: \$900,000

 - > State of New Mexico & ISC: \$4,300,000

Bernalillo to Belen Levee Project









g. Notification of the 2021 Annual Field Day at NM State Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas on August 18, 2021

Mr. Hamman notifies everyone of a flyer in the packet about the annual field day at the Ag Science Center.



h. Notification of the 2021 MRGCD Water Service Charge Reclassification Hearing per NMSA 73-18-8.1; hearing scheduled for September 13, 2021 – Mike Hamman, CE/CEO

Mr. Hamman reminds the Board of the reclassification to be held at the next regular meeting and how the process works where property owners can file a protest regarding their water service charge; the District reviews and then the reclassification occurs annually.

<u>AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 – REPORT(S) FROM THE MRGCD ATTORNEY(S)</u> - Chief Water Counsel and/or General Counsel

a. Consideration/Approval of Resolution M-08-09-21-170 Authorizing the Chief Engineer/CEO and Chief Water Counsel to Continue to Work with the Office of the NM State Engineer to Develop and File a Proof of Beneficial Use Form Establishing the Extent of the Water Rights Placed to Beneficial Use within the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District – Charles DuMars, Chief Water Counsel

Dr. DuMars announced anything that involves attorney-client privilege will be handled in closed session.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - REPORT(S) FROM THE BOARD

a. Report on the Personnel Committee Meeting, August 9, 2021 – Chair Dunning, Directors Kelly and Barbara Baca

The report for the Personnel Committee was covered under Item 8.a.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 - EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. NMSA 1978 Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1(H)7
 - 1. Threatened or Pending Litigation

Madam Chair Dunning requested a motion to move into Executive Session. Director Joaquin Baca exited earlier, and Director Duggins voted but exited the meeting prior to Executive Session.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO GO TO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Director Barbara Baca seconded the motion. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

Director Barbara Baca	Yes	Vice Chair Russo Baca	Yes
Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Duggins	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Director Joaquin Baca	Absent
Madam Chairwoman	Yes	•	

Madam Chair Dunning Adjourned the meeting at 5:47 pm.

Madam Chair Dunning reconvened the meeting at 6:29 pm.

Director Barbara Baca made the **MOTION TO RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION**. Director Kelly seconded the motion. Rollcall vote was administered, and the **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Barbara Baca	Yes	Vice Chair Russo Baca	Yes
Director Sandoval	Absent	Director Duggins	Absent
Director Kelly	Yes	Director Joaquin Baca	Absent
Madam Chairwoman	Yes		

During Executive Session, updates were given on threatened or pending litigation. No decisions were made, nor any votes taken during Executive Session.

Director Kelly made the MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF ENGINEER/CEO AND CHIEF WATER COUNSEL TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE OFFICE OF THE NM STATE ENGINEER TO DEVELOP AND FILE A PROOF OF BENEFICIAL USE FORM ESTABLISHED IN THE EXTENT OF THE WATER RIGHTS PLACED BENEFICIAL USE WITHIN THE MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY. IN PARTICULAR, AN EXTENSION OF TIME TO FILE OF THREE YEARS TAKING US TO AUGUST 20, 2024. Director Barbara Baca seconded the motion. MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY.

With no further comments, questions or concerns, Madam Chair Dunning adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of August 09, 2021.

ATTESTED:	
Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM Secretary/Treasurer	Karen Dunning, Madam Chair MRGCD Board of Directors