

**MINUTES OF THE
2,211th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

MAY 13, 2024 - 3:00 PM

Directors having been duly notified; Madam Chair Russo Baca called the regular meeting to order at 3:02 pm. The following Directors and Staff were present:

DIRECTORS

Stephanie Russo Baca, Madam Chair	Present
Karen Dunning, Vice Chair	Present
Jiron, Director	Present
John P. Kelly, Director	Present
Duggins, Director	Present
Michael T. Sandoval, Director	Present
Colin T. Baugh, Director	Present

STAFF

Jason Casuga	Chief Engineer/CEO
Lorna Wiggins	General Counsel
Christina Bruff	Chief Water Counsel
Pamela Fanelli	Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Eric Zamora	Chief Operations Officer
Anne Marken	Water Distribution Division Mgr.
Matt Martinez	Water Operations Division Mgr.

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

Tony Tafoya, Sr.	Rudy Perea	Tarah Jaramillo, MRGCD
Russell Trujillo	Roque Sanchez, BOR	Anthony Wagner
Page Pegram, NMISC	Mark Garcia	Mark Kelly, ABCWUA
Judith McSweeney, MRGCD	David Montoya	Kelley Offott, MRGCD
Jennifer Faler, BOR	Mike Hamman, OSE	Martin Haynes
Hannah Riseley-White, NMISC	Kim Murphy	Leanne Woodruff, BOR
Sarah Delavan, BIA		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Alicia Lopez led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Madam Chair Russo Baca declared a quorum, and the meeting was publicly noticed. This meeting was a hybrid meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO.2 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Casuga added an update on his meeting with the Secretary of State's Office on the Local Elections Act for the 2025 election as 12(i) and move the former 12(i) to 12(j). Director Jiron made a correction to 11(b) to change the date from May 10th to April 10th.

Madam Chair Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA with the above changes**. Seconded by Vice Chair Dunning. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification - May 13, 2024**
- b. **Consideration/Approval of April 2024 Invoice for Wiggins, Williams & Wiggins**
- c. **Consideration/Approval of April 2024 Invoice for Law and Resource Planning Assoc.**

- d. **Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting - April 08, 2024**
- e. **Consideration/Approval of the Belen Feeder No. 3 Booster Station - Change Order - Richard DeLoia, CPO**
- f. **Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for April 2024 (For informational Purposes Only)**

Director Kelly the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA**. Seconded by Director Duggins. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

- a. **Bureau of Reclamation - Jennifer Faler, Area Manager**
 - 1. **El Vado Updates - Wayne Pullan, Upper Colorado Basin Regional Director.**

Mr. Roque Sanchez, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner of BOR and part of the political leadership team in DC, explained the mission of the Bureau of Reclamation and how important El Vado is.

- 2. **Operation Updates - Jennifer Faler, Area Manager**

Jennifer Faler, Area Manager, gave updates on El Vado and explained how they got to this point. She discussed the deformation of the faceplate, the decision to stop grouting, and options they are looking into to ensure storage for the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos prior and paramount lands and storage for MRGCD farmers. She stated they needed to button up the construction in preparation to be able to store in El Vado and will be going back to the drawing board on alternatives for seepage reduction without grouting as a solution.

Director Kelly expressed that giving up on a preferred alternative as a result of 12 years of studies and analysis was quite a shock, and they have had multiple assurances they would have water, but it just keeps getting moved out. He asked Ms. Faler if she would be a part of the technical team as their local rep.

Ms. Faler responded that the Albuquerque Area Office did farm the project out to another area office with more experience but they will take the project and be wholeheartedly responsible from this day on.

Director Kelly asked if they were going to involve private consultants with experience with similar dams.

Ms. Faler said she asked if they had ever used an outside engineering firm and the answer was no, but it is possible to do and they will be pursuing that in the next steps.

Director Jiron expressed concerns about this situation and said he did not know if he believed them anymore. He said they were playing with people's livelihood and he is extremely disappointed in how long this has taken. He noted they went the inexpensive way, but now it's going to end up costing them more.

Mr. Faler responded that they share the disappointment and it was rough to realize the outcome of this. She added they have not missed the storage

opportunity for farmers. She stated the debit is growing, which means they cannot store water for middle valley farms unless the state engineer decides differently.

Director Jiron added that regardless of if they can store water or not they need to get the dam replaced or fixed.

Mr. Sanchez explained the dam has already passed its 50-year lifespan and they want to be confident they would have a dam that is going to last another 50 to 80 years.

Director Duggins asked for them to just get somewhere for them to park their water.

Vice Chair Dunning asked if there was any way to get their money back.

Ms. Faler stated she had no problem asking to get some funding back. Mr. Sanchez added there is still funding remaining and they have some tools to help meet some of those challenges. He noted it was something they were looking at.

Mr. Casuga said they would be receiving a letter request from him and the CFO on requesting to not start paying on the repayment agreement under the project is complete, paying 15% of the total cost.

Director Kelly agreed with Director Duggins that they need to find somewhere to park their water. He stated he understood that under Article VI, they could park the entire debt to Texas and put water on top of it and asked if that was correct.

Madam Chair Russo Baca noted she and Mr. Fleck have discussed making a better infographic about available storage to be helpful.

Mr. Casuga asked for clarification on if it was possible that nothing could be stored at El Vado.

Ms. Faler said they were confident they would be able to complete grouting and should be able to store there, but it could also be zero.

Mr. Casuga suggested getting a Geotech engineer on board to initiate a time and material contract to introduce somebody outside of the federal government as a technical reviewer on MRGCD's from a Geotech standpoint and suggested RJH Engineering.

Ms. Faler stated she was shooting to get construction to three years, even though a typical Safety of Dams Project is about six years. She expressed that it is not a matter of are they going to be able to store water or get agreements in place, but what the total volume is.

Director Duggins asked if we could put the low flow on fast track, what we can do to get that going, and where we can pay our debt faster.

Ms. Faler explained that the Director Duggins is referring to the Low Flow Conveyance Channel, which is a defunct reclamation facility constructed in the

50s to get New Mexico out of the debt to Texas. She said it's not a matter of having a water right to do certain things but that water ultimately ends up in Elephant Butte. She added that there were more depletions from it but the endangered species habitat is what's depleting it and they cannot turn that off. She explained that the solution is in place but it's a matter of getting compliance, because anyone that damages the habitat is subject to jail time.

Director Kelly noted that Mr. Hamman has made some threats if they should we go over that 200,000 acre feet in debt. He asked what is their agency's role was in helping them find that conservation storage and how important is that storage to meeting the Compact.

Mike Hamman, the NM State Engineer, commented they have not yet received an official threat and they value their partnership with MRGCD and the BOR. He stated that he and Ms. Riseley-White address what they are dealing with the middle Rio Grande from a water rights perspective and Compact deliveries. He said they can look at opportunities once Abiquiu is fully available from a native storage perspective. He expressed the Water Control Manual was accepted and approved to add native storage along with San Juan Chama water, and now they need to finalize the agreement between Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, and the state engineer would then issue permit to allow for native storage at Abiquiu. Mr. Hamman expressed that when they get out of debit they would begin to have better operational options. He noted that they have a much better relationship with Texas now than a year ago, and one of the options could be to store Article VI water wherever they can and re-time that delivery in the winter months.

Director Kelly commented that they have collectively made a mistake, but their focus right now needs to be finding an alternative storage big enough to store under Article VI.

Ms. Faler voiced that the May forecast in the annual operation plan predicted 50% exceedance, but they are now trending towards 70%, which is drier the more you go up, so they are no longer expecting a full allocation.

b. Bureau of Indian Affairs - Dr. Sarah Delavan, Designated Engineer

Ms. Delavan stated the prior and paramount storage target has been hit for the 2024 irrigation season and the prior and paramount demand is 189 cubic feet per second. She said she has discussed a rotation schedule with the Coalition of the Six Middle Rio Grande should it be needed. She announced she has started on a wind down plan and is making a plan on making decisions when prior and paramount storage is released.

Director Duggins commented it was good and smart to do a plan in advance, but asked how they plan for an unpredictable environment.

Ms. Delavan explained it was more like a guideline.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to six (6) minutes)

Martin Haynes

Mr. Haynes asked why they were only looking at Abiquiu or one dam, and not Cochiti or the Jemez Dam since the Jemez Mountains got a tremendous amount of snow. He noted it was time to get after the federal congressional members and get them to support us.

Tony Tafoya

Mr. Tafoya explained his family irrigates off the Sandoval Lateral and his brother starts the water at about 4:00 in the morning, and by 7-8:00 the water drops due to irrigators north of them, and it takes hours of calls to the ISO before they can continue, and once they restart it takes a longer to get done even sometimes until midnight. Then, the rest of them have to wait until Friday when two other neighbors finish. He added the main problem is too little water and too many irrigators. He said last Thursday they only had 6 CFS. He mentioned that he has also heard the federal government and other agencies are working on taking back the land the siphon is on.

David Montoya

Mr. Montoya reminded everyone that the budget MRGCD survived on for 2023 was almost \$22 million and \$2 million of that came from irrigators, and they will have an additional \$5 million for 2024. He said he feels that most of the money is coming from taxpayers that do not irrigate. He said it was not fair because they are allowing their acequias to be closed and people were going to start wondering why they are paying for work that got done in the 30s. He said if they have people that do not appreciate the acequias and allow them to close, they were going to have a rebellion.

Kim Murphy

Mr. Murphy said he was pleased to see their opposition of the land transfer from the State Land Office to the US Fish & Wildlife Service within the Bosque on their agenda today. He believes the acreage either needs to remain with the Land Office or be transferred to the Conservancy District and operated by City Open Space jointly.

Rudy Perea

Mr. Perea asked if they have gotten a contractor yet to do the siphon and asked if the \$60 million they got would help any.

Anthony Wagner

Mr. Wagner said the farmers in Corrales are very concerned with the pumps, as they have been going down a lot lately and throwing off the schedules. He requested having a Q&A session with the farmers of Corrales to answer some questions.

Russell Trujillo

Mr. Trujillo talked about an article he read in the Corrales Comment about both of the pumps at siphon beach being damaged by lightning, but he asked an ISO who said lightning was not the cause of the pump outage. He said in Corrales they feel they are being purposely confused all the time and wanted the truth. He added he has been hearing the same story on El Vado since he was a kid and he's afraid his children will still be discussing this when they are his age.

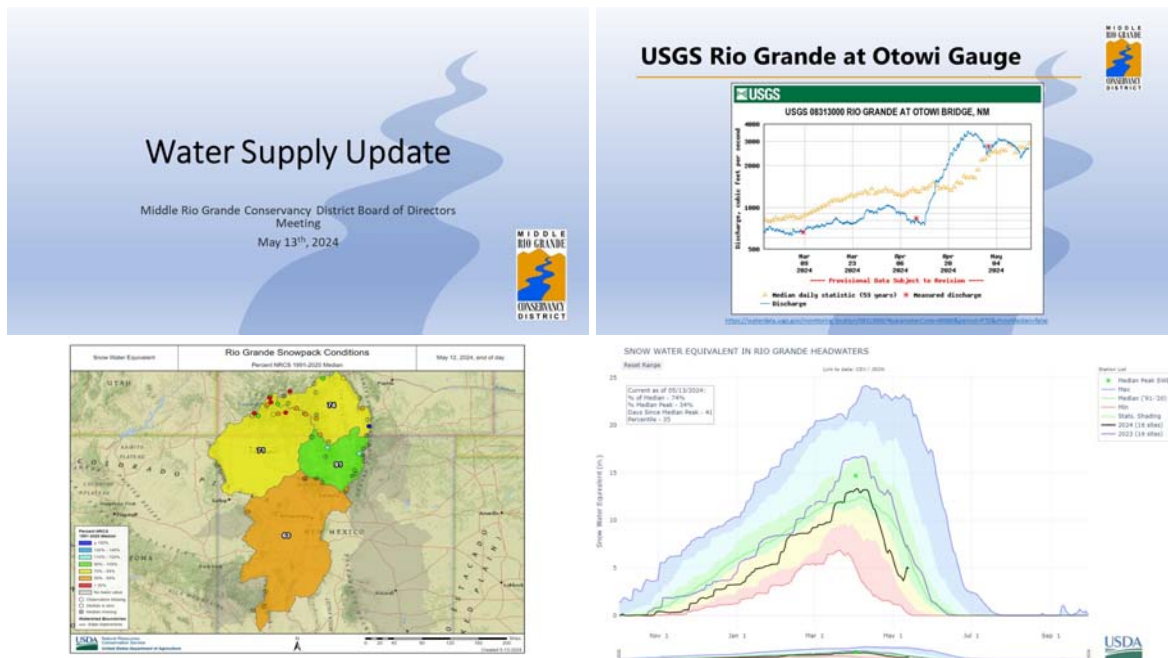
Director John P. Kelly

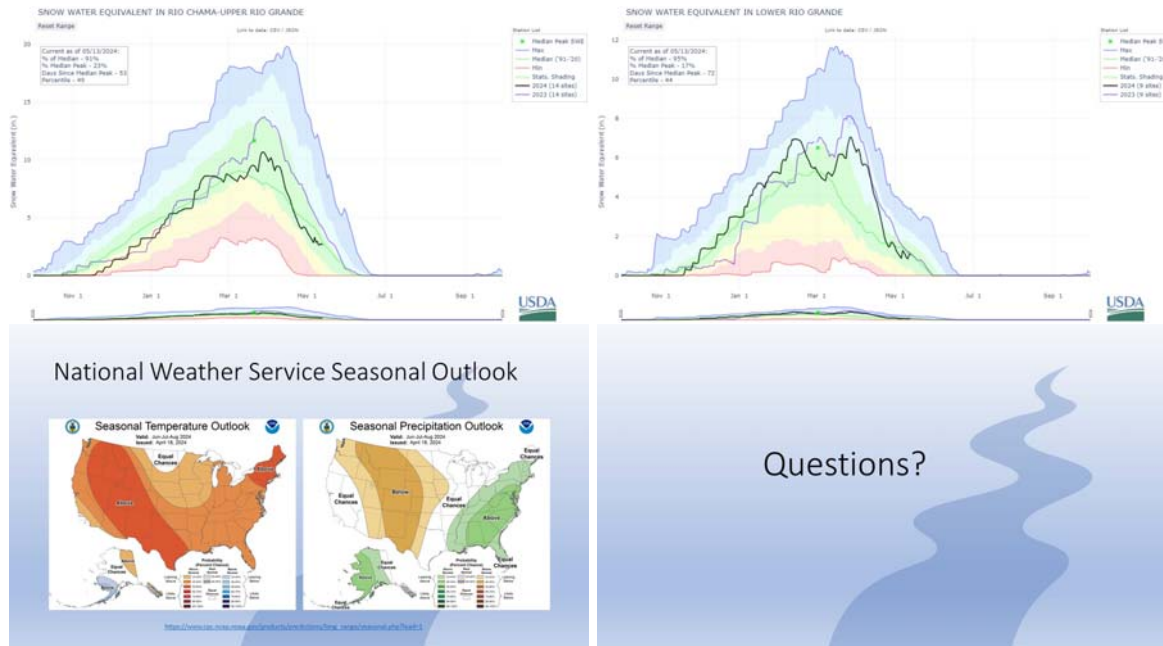
Director Kelly recognized Alicia Lopez taking a position with the US Army Corps of Engineers and asked her to remember all the farmers on the other side of the turnout when working on big projects. He said he appreciated her service at the District and they would miss her.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - REPORT(S) FROM THE WATER OPERATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION DIVISIONS

a. Report on Water Supply Conditions - Anne Marken, Water Ops Division Manager

Ms. Marken reported on the water supply conditions and said the Rio Grande Basin received some late spring snow that pushed the snowpack above average, but in mid-April it was 10 degrees above average, which resulted in an above acreage snowmelt rate. The Otowi Gauge went above 3500 cubic feet per second on April 25th. Now, temperatures have remained below average, which has slowed the snowmelt and brought river flows down. She gave an overview of the SNOTEL for the basin, including the Rio Grande Headwaters at about 74% of median, Rio Chama/Upper Rio Grande Basin at 91% of median, and Lower Rio Grande at 95%. Ms. Marken stated MRGCD is not going to be able to store any native water this year due to Rio Grande Compact restrictions and repairs to El Vado Dam, with the only water available being the San Juan Chama allocation. She expressed without native storage, MRGCD could expect native water to sustain irrigation deliveries through May and early June, and likely out of San Juan Chama water by early July. She noted the weather forecast was showing a warmup within the next couple weeks with some chances for mid-week rainstorms, but the seasonal outlook through August looks to be warmer and drier than average.





b. Status Report on Water Distribution - Matt Martinez, Water Distribution Division Manager

Mr. Martinez presented a status report on Water Distribution. He said they have had ample water supply over the past month and most water users have received three to four irrigation deliveries. He stated this season has seen notable increase in spring planting activity and hay farmers have commenced harvesting. He commended the ISO team for their hard work and dedication despite being short staffed. He announced that starting May 1st, properties enrolled in the partial season irrigation demand management environmental leasing program are prohibited from irrigating until September 1st, and starting May 11th, properties that did not pay the second half of the water service charge will be considered delinquent and will not be able to irrigate until that is paid.

Director Jiron noted he has been asked by a couple of people how to find out if the land they bought had water rights and who could help with this.

Mr. Casuga stated the place to start would be the Mapping Department and Assessments Office, which then later may need to be referred to the Office of the State Engineer.

Madam Chair Russo Baca asked if they have any farmers meetings committed yet on the calendar or if that will be presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Casuga responded that they have tentative dates set and looking for venues.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - MRGCD RIO GRANDE AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST (RGALT) MOA ANNUAL REPORT AND MARCH 2024 INVOICE - Cecilia Rosacker, Executive Director

Ms. Rosacker went over the 2023 annual report. She voiced that MRGCD's support has been tremendous for their organization. She said last year they did six outreach events, completed three easements, with two more slated to close in the next two months, and 15 conservation

easements that are in the discussion and development stage right now. She noted they had 15 partner initiatives this year, worked with the Colorado Land Trust, the Intermountain West Joint Ventures Group, and Senator Heinrich's Office on NRCS issues. She highlighted some of their policy initiatives, including being a part of a coalition of partners working on the passage of the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, being involved in some of the NRCS easement policy initiatives, working with American Farmland Trust, and continuing to work with Senator Heinrich's Office.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 - REPORT(S) FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT - Christine L. Nardi, MBA

a. Introduction of MRGCD New Hires

Ms. Nardi announced the new MRGCD hires, including a field maintenance technician and light equipment operator in Albuquerque Division, field maintenance tech in the Belen Division, and an ISO and hydrology tech 1 in the General Office, with a vacancy rate of 7.4%.

Albuquerque Division

JANICE	MEEK	FIELD MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN	04/29/2024
JARED	CHILIMIDOS JR	LIGHT EQUIPMENT OPERATOR	04/29/2024

Belen Division

KEVIN	HARRIS	FIELD MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN	04/29/2024
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General Office

JAY	JARRETT	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	04/29/2024
KELLEY	OFFUTT	HYDROLOGY TECHNICIAN I	04/29/2024

b. MRGCD Management Development Program Evaluation

Ms. Nardi discussed the MRGCD Management Development Program Evaluation. She said there 19 attendees and she conducted a training needs assessment prior to the training to guide and build the curriculum. She said the final course curriculum consisted of six 4-hour courses with topics on interviewing techniques, performance management, handling and resolving conflict, and making good use of time. She noted that based on the evaluations, she is pleased to see participants see the value in the program and received benefits from it.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 - REPORT(S) FROM THE PROCUREMENT OFFICER - Richard DeLoia

a. Consideration/Approval of the ER&T Division's New Women's Restroom and Men's Remodel - Richard DeLoia, CPO

Mr. DeLoia presented approval for the equipment and repair and transportation divisions construction of a women's and men's restroom remodels. They recommend award to SDV Construction for \$117,343 including NM gross receipts tax through the MRGCD on-call contractor contracts.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT WITH SDV CONSTRUCTION**. Seconded by Vice Chair Dunning. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

b. Consideration/Approval for Two (2) Half Ton ISO Trucks - Richard DeLoia, CPO

Mr. DeLoia presented for approval for ordering two Ford half ton 4x4 pickup trucks. They recommend award to Power Ford for a total of \$83,542 through the New Mexico State price agreement.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE FORD TRUCKS**. Seconded by Director Jiron. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 - REPORT(S) FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER/CFO - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

a. Presentation of the FY25 Budget - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

Raquel Dawson, MRGCD Budget Analyst, presented on the FY25 budget, which included every governmental fund the District has. She explained ad valorem is a significant percentage of the District's General Fund and Capital Investment Fund, and the increase in projected revenue from FY24 is 2.8% in both funds. Total expenditures for the General Fund is \$28,198,000. The District budgeted for an 8% vacancy, which will lower salary savings in FY25, health insurance costs were budget to increase by 5%, insurance and legal cost projected to increase by 14%, and maintenance, construction, rehab costs, and vehicles and equipment operations are budgeted to increase by 4.3%.

Director Duggins and Vice Chair Dunning commended Director Kelly for his work on the finance committee.

The chair suggested that they approve all the resolutions once they were all reported on.

b. Consideration/Approval of the Budget Adoption Fiscal Year 07-01-2024 to 06-30-2025 Resolution BA-05-13-24-93 - Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM

Ms. Fanelli asked the board to consider approving the fiscal year 2025 budget with resolution BA-05-13-24-93.

c. Consideration/Approval of the Adoption of Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (07-01-23 to 06-30-24) Resolution BA-05-13-24-94

Ms. Fanelli stated the resolution is asking for the FY24 budget, and they are seeing higher actual revenue coming in and projecting a \$400,000 revenue surplus for FY24, so they asked for a budget adjustment for revenue and appropriation. In addition to that, the District would like to appropriate moneys for the Feeder 3 design for \$200,000, those ISO trucks for \$86,000, and some other capital expenditures that we would like to get done this year.

d. Consideration/Approval of the Adoption of Amended Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (07-01-23 to 06-30-24) Grants Fund Resolution BA-05-13-24-95

Ms. Fanelli asked for consideration and approval of the budget amendment for FY24 for the Grant Fund, which is a life to date fund.

Mr. Casuga asked Ms. Fanelli to explain a life to date fund which is something new for the MRGCD. Ms. Fanelli stated the general fund is an operating fund and the appropriations expire annually. A life to date fund is where you create a project budget,

and then that budget can roll over from year to year. A life to date fund balance can roll from one year to the next and can be spent in future years.

Director Kelly added that the Finance Committee has met multiple times with the finance staff, engineering staff, and Director Duggins, and found this to be a good budget. He also reminded that they increased their mill levy a year ago and cannot for another four years. He said the big thing to look at in the budget is the \$38 million in grant funding coming in.

Director Duggins made the **MOTION TO APPROVE EACH RESOLUTION IN 10(b), (c), and (d)**. Seconded by Director Kelly. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER - Eric Zamora, PE

a. Report on the Homelessness Initiative - Eric Zamora, COO

Mr. Zamora reported on the homelessness initiative, a project begun by Valencia County. He said they have attended multiple meetings with Valencia County to discuss the issue, but Valencia County has taken a step back due to a lack of participation and support from the communities there. He stated they have been in regular consultation with the Los Lunas Open Space on how to deal with the illegal camps in the Bosque area and Los Lunas area, and they evaluated processes and outcomes. He noted they would be developing signage, coordinating with law enforcement and resources available for homeless people, coordinating with Los Lunas Open Space to begin more direct talks with campers, and develop a plan to move forward with the removal of possessions. Mr. Zamora mentioned they would have to tread lightly due to legal issues.

Director Duggins advised them not to do it, because they would be setting themselves up for lawsuits.

Mr. Zamora said their main concerns is to prevent fires in the Bosque from these camps.

Director Kelly asked if there was a way to split this where MRGCD's reaction is to protect their properties by moving things to eliminate a fire hazard. He said he did not want to expand the role to be sheriff of the levees and encampments down the valley. He asked Ms. Wiggins for her advice on the matter.

Ms. Wiggins responded it was important to recognize they are not attempting to criminalize the status of the unhomed, and they do not have certified law enforcement on staff to deal with the conduct portion, so they would need to partner with law enforcement. She added that if they were to take on the law enforcement part, they would be taking on services that could be deemed uninsurable by current carriers.

Mr. Casuga explained they understood that MRGCD is not in a position to be law enforcement or push people out, so that is why they are trying to build a relationship with Valencia County. He said they would not get any assistance or input from Valencia County if they do not begin to provide signage and information to the public.

Mr. Zamora added their intent is to softly begin the process with Los Lunas Open Space.

Please note at this time that the chair left the meeting and the vice chair finished conducting the remainder of the meeting.

b. Report on the Belen Public Meeting, May 10, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Eric Zamora, COO, Amanda Molina, PIO, and Directors Russo Baca and Jiron

Mr. Zamora reported on the Belen Public Meeting. He stated the discussion started out being revolved around alternatives recommended, but then veered off to Valencia County's flood control authority. He said there was concerns about funding.

Vice Chair Dunning suggested doing a PR campaign to inform voters whether Valencia County will have a flood commission or flood authority.

Mr. Casuga answered they have already started a conversation on that with their PIO.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12 - REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER - Jason M. Casuga, PE

a. Feeder 3 Pump Station Alternatives Analysis Presentation - Nathan Roberts, PE, Bohannon Huston, Inc.

Ms. Lopez explained they are presenting on their findings for the alternative analysis for the Feeder 3 Project that the consultants at BHI have been working hard on. She added they do have a grant application out to Water Smart for this.

Carl Dysinger explained the goal of the project is to reallocate available water within the riverside drain upstream of the Garcia Extension within Feeder No. 3, and the District would like to deliver water in increments of 5 CFS up to 60 CFS into Feeder No. 3 to support downstream laterals. He said they analyzed five alternatives.

Nathan Roberts said they looked at different pump alternatives and recommended some sort of submersible pump and motor assembly, which is similar to what was built and constructed at the Socorro Main Canal. They looked at operational flexibility, land acquisition, costs, construction, maintenance, and environmental considerations. They are recommending a submersible pump and transmission line installation with one outfall location and a single transmission line.

Director Kelly asked what kind of debris control they had in front of the submersible pumps.

Mr. Roberts responded they would be including that in the design but envisioned having screens over the top of the pumps to prevent some debris.

Director Kelly asked about using a concrete wall with incline ports going through it.

Mr. Roberts answered that would be what they would be looking to include in the design.

Mr. Casuga said the grant has been submitted and with this alternative everything can exist within MRGCD right of way and be discharged right back into MRGCD's right of way.

Director Kelly asked if they have looked at their license agreement to know if there's any licensed utilities crossing this.

Mr. Roberts responded they will be crossing two DOT roadways and a BNSF railway and would have to locate the utilities in order to get the property approval to cross those right of ways.

Director Duggins asked if they considered a turbine with a motor on top, because he uses both a submersible and turbine and the turbine is better from his experience.

Mr. Roberts stated they did take a look at that but there were concerns when it came to operations and maintenance of that and its accessibility. However, they could take a look and vet that one more time.

Director Jiron asked if it was solar paneled and if it would have a negative effect on any of the domestic wells.

Mr. Casuga answered they would have to bring three phase power there. Mr. Casuga explained this water is being pumped from the drain and they will be able to supplement that by diversions at Isleta Diversion Dam and any inflows back into the drain.

Director Jiron asked if they would see the issue with not having enough water to pump with this like they did with the Corrales pump.

Mr. Casuga said they can control the facility with this project, but there may be a point where they cannot fully operate the pumps at their highest capacity if there is not enough water naturally arriving.


Director Duggins stated he did not know why they just cannot make a good pumping station in Corrales.

Feeder 3
Booster Station and
Transmission Line

Preliminary
Engineering Report
Findings


May 13, 2024

Bohannon & Huston




Project Need

- The Belen High Line and Feeder 3 are increasingly susceptible to drought conditions and lack of redundant feed limits the reliable supply which can be conveyed down Feeder 3.
- The surface water variance within Feeder 3 directly impacts irrigation water available within the Jaral, Sabinal, and Garcia laterals downstream of Belen High Line.
- Lack of redundancy within the existing system creates difficulties for MRGCD to increase service to irrigable acre lands when conveyance supply is limited.



Project Goals

- Reallocate available supply within the Riverside Drain, into Feeder 3 where it can be distributed to irrigators.
- Deliver water in increments of 5 cfs (2,250 gal/min) up to a maximum of 60 cfs (27,000 gal/min) into Feeder 3 upstream of all irrigation laterals.



Infrastructure Improvement Alternatives Analyzed

Alt	Description	Key Features
Alt 1: No Action	Does not provide improvements to the existing system.	
Alt 2: Submersible Pump and Transmission Line Installation	Includes three outfall locations, single transmission line.	
Alt 3: At-grade Booster Station and Transmission Line Installation	Includes three outfall locations, single transmission line.	
Alt 4: Submersible Pump and Transmission Line Installation	Includes one outfall location, single transmission line.	
Alt 5: Submersible (Dedicated) Pump and Dual Transmission Line Installation	Includes three outfall locations, dual transmission lines.	



Project & Design Considerations

- Transmission Line Capacity & Flowrates
- Pump Requirements (incl Net Positive Suction Head)
- Operational Flexibility
- Land Acquisition
- Cost
- Construction
- Maintenance
- Environment

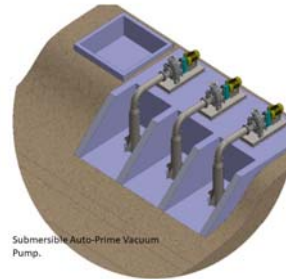
Pipe Capacity & Flowrates

Transmission Line Design criteria is based on delivering the required capacity, while keeping flow velocity below 10 ft/s to reduce pipe wear.

Condition	Pipe Diameter (in.)	Flow (cfs)	Flow (GPM)	Velocity (ft/sec)
Min. Flow	36	5	2,250	0.71
Avg. Flow	36	30	13,500	4.26
Max. Flow	36	60	27,000	8.51



Pump Alternatives

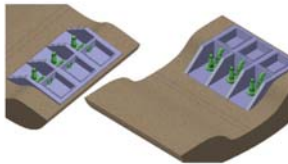


Submersible Auto-Prime Vacuum Pump.



At-grade Skid Pump

Pump Alternatives



Submersible Pump and Motor Assembly



Summary of Costs

Alternative	Total Construction Cost
1: No Action	\$0
2: Submersible Pumps and Transmission Line	\$9,444,611
3: Prefabricated Booster Pump Station and Transmission Line	\$9,607,759
4: Single Outfall	\$7,306,073
5: Dual Transmission Lines	\$11,094,284

Alternative Evaluation Matrix

Alternative	Operational Flexibility		Land Acquisition		Engineer's Probable Cost		Ease of Construction		Ease of Maintenance		Environmental Consideration		Total Raw Score (30 max)	Total Weighted Score (15 max)
	Raw	Weight	Raw	Weight	Raw	Weight	Raw	Weight	Raw	Weight	Raw	Weight		
1: No Action	0	0.0	5	1.5	0	0.0	5	2.0	0	0.0	5	2.0	15	5.5
2: Submersible Pumps and Transmission Line	3	1.5	5	1.5	3	1.8	3	1.2	2	1.2	3	1.2	19	8.4
3: Prefabricated Booster Station and Transmission Line	3	1.5	2	0.6	3	1.8	2	0.8	3	1.8	2	0.8	15	7.3
4: Single Outfall	2	1.0	5	1.5	5	3.0	4	1.6	4	2.4	4	1.6	24	11.1
5: Dual Transmission Lines	3	1.5	4	1.2	1	0.6	2	0.8	2	1.2	3	1.2	15	5.5



Conclusions & Recommendations

Alternative 4 (Single Outfall) scored the highest in the evaluation matrix due to:

- Lower capital investment.
- Least land disturbance required.
- Less pipe penetration modifications into Feeder 3.
- Ease of Maintenance and operation.



These improvements will meet the project goal of providing redundancy within the existing system allowing MRGCD to supplement flows within Feeder 3 when necessary

Questions?

Nathan Roberts, PE
505 923 3343
nroberts@bhinc.com

Karl Deissinger, EI
505 798 7861
kdeissinger@bhinc.com



b. Consideration/Approval of the Agreement between the NM Office of the State Engineer/Interstate Stream Commission Fund A23H2373 Capital Appropriation Project - Casey Ish, Conservation Program Supervisor

Mr. Casuga asked for consideration/approval of an agreement between the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer/Interstate Stream Commission Fund, A23H2373 Capital Appropriations Project, which is a follow on from the agreement they signed with the Interstate Stream Commission previously. He said MRGCD will be receiving money from the state through a funding agreement. He wanted clarification on whether or not they need to bring this kind of item to them in the future.

Ms. Wiggins suggested they may be able to take this issue to ensure that the first time a matter comes before the Board, the resolution is broad enough to include the next piece.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT** Seconded by Director Sandoval. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

c. Consideration/Approval of Resolution #M-05-13-24-207 Applying for a Bureau of Reclamation Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Grant - Casey Ish, Conservation Program Supervisor

Mr. Casuga explained this resolution was needing to take an administrative step by having a resolution to go with their application. He explained that the grant with the Bureau of Reclamation is to do snow water supply forecasting. He thought partnering with them to have as many modern tools as possible to be more accurate than the existing snow forecasting.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION SNOW WATER SUPPLY FORECASTING PROGRAM.** Seconded by Director Duggins. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

d. Discussion on the Proposal to Transfer a 212-acre parcel of State Land in the Bosque to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Jason Casuga, CE/CEO

Mr. Casuga said they noticed this as well when it first came to their attention. He stated from his understanding this effort has been going on for a long time and MRGCD was never directly contacted. He voiced that they took action under the first title transfer action to clear the way for the Bernalillo to Belen levee, so federal government's involvement in the area were eliminated, so having a federal landowner come back into the picture poses some problems to their levee project potentially. He noted they have passed this on to the State Land Office and they will have a meeting of public agencies at the site so people can get a better understanding. He assured there will be more to come on this.

e. Report on the NWRA 2024 Policy Conference, April 9-11, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Casey Ish, Conservation Program Supervisor, Vice Chair Dunning and Directors Jiron and Baugh

Mr. Casuga stated he had the opportunity to speak with the Deputy Secretary of the Interior in the hallway and they got a meeting scheduled. He said they had a specific meeting with the Corps of Engineers in the Pentagon, and a meeting with David Palumbo from the Bureau of Reclamation.

Vice Chair Dunning asked for a motion to extend the time of the meeting.

Director Baugh made the **MOTION TO EXTEND THE TIME OF THE MEETING.**
Seconded by Director Kelly. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Casuga then talked about his meeting with Mike Brain from the Department of Interior, highlighting the importance of issuing a negotiating team for the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos and mentioned meetings with their federal delegation.

Director Baugh said it was incredible to see them work their magic and that Jason (Casuga) and Casey (Ish) did a splendid job. He added he could not wait to go back.

Director Jiron expressed it was a great experience and said Mr. Casuga and Mr. Ish did a great job representing the District and hopes he gets the chance to do it again.

f. Report on the Compact Commission Meeting, April 25-26, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO and Anne Marken, Water Ops Division Manager and Chair Russo Baca

Mr. Casuga reported on the Compact Commission Meeting. He said Dr. Delavan orchestrated her report to allow a significant voice for the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos. He noted the compact and the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos are still working out the methodology of how the Coalition can give its voice to the compact commissioners.

Vice Chair Dunning asked if it was true that they are getting along better with Texas now.

Mr. Casuga expressed it is still the Compact. He noted that Texas did introduce EBID this year, when New Mexico usually does, which he found interesting.

g. Report on the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblo Coalition Meeting, May 2, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Eric Zamora, COO and Director Jiron

Mr. Zamora reported on the Six Middle Rio Grande Pueblo Coalition Meeting. He stated water supply is good and O&M is not high on anyone's priority list at this point, but there was much discussion on BIA. He noted that Ms. Marken gave an update on water and there were not many questions for the District.

h. Report on the Law of the Colorado River 24th Annual Conference, May 5-7, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO

Mr. Casuga gave a report on the Law of the Colorado River 24th Annual Conference. He talked about a PBS special that was presented discussing farmers in this country are 3½ times more likely to commit suicide, and that is what Colorado is fighting for. It was a tough conversation, but he said he was devoted to learning more about the Colorado River.

i. Report on the meeting with the Secretary of State

Mr. Casuga expressed that he and John Thompson, MRGCD Lobbyist, attended the meeting with the Secretary of State's Office to continue trying to ensure that the Local

Elections Act is implemented in a way that produces the least amount of harm to MRGCD voters. He said he received an email on Friday, after the meeting, citing Section B of §73-14-57 of the NMSA 1978, where Middle Rio Grande has to compile and deliver a qualified electors list to the appropriate county clerk no later than 180 days before an election. He stated the Secretary of State's Office thinks MRGCD needs to provide name, physical address, date of birth, social security number, and property address, but MRGCD does not collect this information on any irrigator or landowner in the valley. Mr. Casuga noted he has serious concerns about collecting that kind of personal information and turned it over to counsel for review. He said they may discuss it in executive session further. He also thought the Election Committee should meet soon on the matter.

Vice Chair Dunning added she did not know if they could comply with that and it would put them in a dangerous situation, because they do not have the infrastructure to collect that information.

j. Information on Upcoming Events

- 1. Water Leaders Workshop, May 22-24, 2024 - Ghost Ranch, NM**
- 2. El Vado Site Visit & Tour SOD Project, June 25-26, 2024**
- 3. Coalition of Rio Grande Water Users 2024 Conference, October 1-3, 2024 - Santa Fe, NM**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13 - REPORT(S) FROM THE MRGCD ATTORNEY(S) - Chief Water Counsel or General Counsel

Ms. Bruff nor Ms. Wiggins had anything to report in the regular session.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13 REPORT(S) FROM THE BOARD

a. Report on the Valle Vista Elementary School Design Meeting, April 4, 2024 - Director Baugh

Director Baugh stated the Valle Vista Elementary School project is doing very well, the meeting was well attended event, and they received good feedback.

- b. Report on the MRGCD Washington DC Prep Meeting, April 5, 2024 - Directors Baugh, Jiron, and Vice Chair Dunning**
- c. Report on the Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, April 9, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**
- d. Report on the Belen Watershed Study, April 10, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**
- e. Report on the Law of the Rio Grande Conference, April 11-12, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca and Director Sandoval**
- f. Report on the Valle Vista Elementary School Feedback Meeting, April 16, 2024 - Director Baugh**
- g. Report on the Finance Committee Meeting, April 17, 2024 - Directors Kelly and Dunning**
- h. Report on the Valencia County Board of County Commissioners, April 17, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**
- i. Report on the Centennial Committee Meeting, April 22, 2024 - Directors Baugh, Russo Baca and Dunning Report on the Conservation Advisory Committee Meeting, April 22, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**

j. Report on the Middle Rio Grande Pollinator Networking Group, May 9, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca

Refer to Chair Russo Baca's submitted written reports in the appendix.

Director Baugh made the **MOTION TO APPROVE ALL THE REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**. Seconded by Director Jiron. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY** with the chair attending virtually.

The vice chair requested a motion to go into the closed session at 6:18 p.m.

Director Duggins made the **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**. Seconded by Director Kelly. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Jiron	Yes	Vice Chair Dunning	Yes
Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Duggins	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Director Baugh	Yes
Madam Chairwoman	Yes		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15 EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. **NMSA 1978 Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1(H)2**
 1. **Limited Personnel Matters**
- b. **NMSA 1978 Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1(H)7**
 1. **Threatened or Pending Litigation**

The vice chair stated pending litigation was discussed and no decisions were made. She then requested a motion to go back into the regular session at 7:17 p.m.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION**. Seconded by Director Jiron. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Jiron	Yes	Vice Chair Dunning	Yes
Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Duggins	Yes
Director Kelly	Yes	Director Baugh	Yes
Madam Chairwoman	Yes		

With no further comments, questions, or concerns, Madam Chair Russo Baca adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of May 13, 2024.

ATTESTED:

Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary/Treasurer

Stephanie Russo Baca, Madam Chair
MRGCD Board of Directors

APPENDIX

Stephanie Russo Baca Board Reports 5.13.24

Report on the Farmers for Future Farmers Meeting, April 9, 2024

This meeting took place at 4Daughter Land and Cattle. Discussions included El Vado Reservoir status, the upcoming irrigation season, and the water outlook. Additionally, there was discussion about the Valencia County Commission putting an arroyo flood control authority on the agenda for the ballot in November. I asked Commissioner Richardson to attend the Belen Watershed meeting on April 10th and how MRGCD could support the county's efforts.

Report on the Belen Watershed Study, April 10, 2024

In an effort to improve the process of capturing and conveying stormwater in the area, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Valencia County, and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District are working together on a flood prevention study. This was a public meeting discussing the study and its elements, and more information can be found at <https://www.mrgcd.com/belen-watershed-project/>

Mr. Zamora with the MRGCD assisted in the presentation and answered the community members' questions about this phase of the project and the various options for the project.

Report on the Law of the Rio Grande Conference, April 11-12, 2024

As always, this conference was about the hot topics of legal issues in the Rio Grande. Topics included Indian water rights settlements, flooding and mitigation, and Texas v. NM. A farmer and President of EBID presented this hot topic on the TX v. NM panel. He invited board members from MRGCD to attend one of their board meetings.

Report on the Finance Committee Meeting, April 17, 2024

The other board members will be giving a more in-depth report, but there was a general discussion about the MRGCD's overall budget and discussion about the upcoming fiscal year and future audits.

Report on the Valencia County Board of County Commissioners, April 17, 2024

Item 19) Approval of Resolution 2024-__ : Supporting the Creation of the Valencia County Arroyo Flood

District. Presenter: County Attorney Dave Pato; Sponsor: Vice-Chairman Troy Richardson

Mr. Pato stated that the proposed resolution would allow him to file a petition with the district court to create the Valencia County Arroyo Flood Control district; the district court will set a hearing no less than 60 days after filing the petition. The court will decide whether to direct the question of creating a flood district to voters in this upcoming election. The voters will decide on whether to create the district and who to elect to the district. Each candidate will need to submit a petition which includes five qualified electors. If the district is created, only five individuals will be seated. Commissioner Bizzell stated that he believes in a smaller government, but in this case, this is necessary as there has been a lot of flooding over the past few years. While there are a lot

of questions and unknowns, this is the best way to let the voters decide if they want this. Commissioner Richardson stated that NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) presented a design project right now, which will cost tens of millions of dollars. NRCS has voiced willingness to fund the project but needs an entity to take ownership of the completed project and future maintenance. Commissioner Richardson moved for approval of the petition to create the Valencia County Arroyo Flood Control District. Seconded by Commissioner Sparkman. Roll call vote. Commissioner Richardson voted yes. Commissioner Bizzell voted yes. Commissioner Sparkman voted yes. Chairman Saiz voted yes. Motion carried 4-0.

Report on the Conservation Advisory Committee Meeting, April 18, 2024

Topics for Discussion

Current Hydrology Update – Casey Ish Del Norte (S L Valley)– 180 (January) – 305 (February) – 196 (March) – 1,040 (April)

Lobatos (NM/CO Line)– 275 (January) – 310 (February) – 314 (March) – 203 (April)

La Puente (Chama)– 0 (January) – 31 (February) – 70 (March) – 756 (April)

Below Abiquiu (Chama)– 56 (January) – 56 (February) – 94 (March) – 756 (April)

Otowi (Main Stem)– 500 (January) – 662 (February) – 748 (March) – 1,700 (April)

Below Cochiti – 552 (January) – 664 (February) – 856 (March) – 1,560 (April)

Bosque Farms– 461 (January) – 516 (February) – 431 (March) – 760 (April)

Narrows (Just above EB) – 539 (January) – 788 (February) – 652 (March) – 218 (April)

On-Farm Program Updates – Jose Contreras

- The first watering from OFP5 was recorded last week. It took 1.5 hours to irrigate the 3.5-acre property. This will likely change as the crop grows, increasing friction and getting us closer to the 2.5-3 hour mark, which is expected to be the average time to irrigate for the property.
- Historical time to irrigate was anywhere from 15-17 hours. 2024

IDM-EWLP – Ashley Veihl

- The Program has approximately 3,038 acres enrolled.
- Staff are working to wrap up contracts by the end of the month.

Report on the Centennial Committee Meeting, April 22, 2024

MRGCD is celebrating the Centennial of the district's creation. One of the planning steps that Amanda Molina is working on is collecting all the upcoming events within the district and how MRGCD could join these events to highlight the district. She presented a list that she had put together, and MRGCD board members, during the committee meeting, helped select some of the events that MRGCD should attend.

Report on the Compact Commission Meeting, April 25-26, 2024

Mr. Casuga and Anne Marken will give an in-depth presentation

The Eighty-fifth annual meeting (109th) of the Rio Grande Compact Commission was held on Friday, April 26, 2024, at The Plaza Hotel Pioneer Park, 106 W. Mills Ave, El Paso, Texas.

There was also a virtual option at

<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/compacts/riogrande.html>

https://www.ose.nm.gov/Compacts/RioGrande/isc_RioGrande.php. The agenda and report of the engineer advisors will be available on the website when they are posted.

There were reports given by the Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado Engineer Advisers, Legal Advisers, and Commissioners, as well as reports of the Federal Agencies, including the Bureau of Reclamation, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, International Boundary and Water Commission. Other presentations included the budgeted costs of operation for FY 2023 (July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023) and the Budget for FY 2025 (July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025), as well as the Cooperative Agreement with the U. S. Geological Survey (Accounting Services).

Report on the Middle Rio Grande Pollinator Networking Group, May 9, 2024

MRGCD was asked to join this networking group as members include ABQ Backyard Refuge Program, Rio Grande Agri Nature Center, ABQ Biopark, Bernalillo County, City of Albuquerque, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, to name a few. This month's discussion was held at the Santa Ana Native Plant Center. There were over 20 attendees. Discussion included how the Valencia County Soil and Water Conservation District used the Groasis Water Boxx (pictured below) to replant vegetation from the Big Hole fire. Additionally, there was a discussion about all of the upcoming events happening in the community. I asked if MRGCD could be a part of these events and passed along the information to Amanda Molina, MRGCD's PIO.

