

**MINUTES OF THE
2,217th REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

NOVEMBER 13, 2024 - 3:00 PM

Directors having been duly notified; Madam Chair Russo Baca called the regular meeting to order at 3:04pm. The following Directors and Staff were present:

DIRECTORS

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

STAFF

Jason Casuga	Chief Engineer/CEO
Lorna Wiggins	General Counsel
Jeff Wechsler	Chief Water Counsel
Pamela Fanelli	Secretary-Treasurer/CFO
Eric Zamora	Chief Operating 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

Clayton Padilla, CF Padilla	Jerry Montano	Blaine Smith, Frank's Supply
Amari Becker	Patrick Taber, BIA	Jennifer Faler, BOR
Christopher O'Connor	Martin Haynes	Josh Gamboa, MRGCD
State Rep. Kathleen Cates	Arcie Chapa	Luke Smith, WCI
Josh Hind, MRGCD	Christine Nardi, MRGCD	Amanda Molina, MRGCD
Tarah Jaramillo, MRGCD	John Thompson, MRGCD	Rebecca Thompson, MRGCD
Justin Tyler	Matthew Monjaras	Elaine Hebard
Jorge Garcia	Jeannine Hunter	Marta Moerch, MRGCD
Richard DeLoia, MRGCD	Mike Padilla, MRGCD	Steve Kinberger, MRGCD
Angelina Jimenez, MRGCD	Angel Enriquez, MRGCD	Matthew Chavez, MRGCD
Amelia Barrow, MRGCD	Casey Ish, MRGCD	

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Veteran Jerry Montano led the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

Vice Chair Dunning declared a quorum, and the meeting was publicly noticed. This meeting was a hybrid meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO.2 - APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Dunning asked to add Madam Chair Russo Baca to the Finance Meeting under Reports from the Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. Casuga changed October 30, 2024, to September 30, 2024, under Item 8(b),

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA WITH THE ABOVE CHANGES**. Seconded by Director Sandoval. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 - REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD - Lorna M. Wiggins, MRGCD
General Counsel

Chair Russo Baca nominated Director Kelly for Chair.

Vice Chair Dunning made the **MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF CHAIR.**

Director Kelly accepted the nomination of Chairman.

Vice Chair Dunning nominated Director Baugh. Director Duggins nominated Director Russo Baca. Director Russo Baca accepted the nomination, but said she had faith in Director Baugh as well.

Director Sandoval made the **MOTION TO CLOSE NOMINATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIR.** Seconded by Director Jiron. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

Director Baugh accepted the nomination of Vice Chair with a vote of 6 to 1.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 - CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification – November 13, 2024
- b. Consideration/Approval of October 2024 Invoice for Wiggins, Williams & Wiggins
- c. Consideration/Approval of October 2024 Invoice for Law and Resource Planning Assoc. 2024
- d. Consideration/Approval of September & October Invoices for Spencer Fane LLP
- e. Consideration/Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting – October 14, 2024
- f. Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for October 2024 (For Informational Purposes Only)

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.** Seconded by Director Jiron. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED.**

Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Russo Baca	Yes
Chairman Kelly	Yes	Director Dunning	Yes
Director Jiron	Yes	Vice Chair Baugh	Yes
Director Duggins	Yes		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 - REPORT(S) FROM THE WATER OPERATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION DIVISIONS

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

Ms. Marken gave a report on water supply conditions. She discussed the fall snowstorm they had last week and stated that with the non-pueblo irrigation season being over, river flows along the Rio Grande have increased. The USGS Rio Grande Otowi Gauge is at 925 CFS, which is up from 500 CFS at the beginning of the month. She noted that is mostly due to the end of Colorado's San Luis Valley irrigation season, so more water is coming over the Colorado border on the Rio Grande. She stated there is 20,000-acre

feet of water planning to move from Abiquiu to Elephant Butte to go towards New Mexico's 2024 Compact delivery, but there are flow restrictions below Abiquiu Dam from a sediment plug on the Rio Chama downstream, which could impact the ability to move that water before the end of the year. Ms. Marken added that the sediment plug could also impact the Rio Chama spring runoff management next year if the state is unable to restore the channel conditions back to normal. She explained that even though space in Abiquiu has been secured, Compact restrictions will continue to limit MRGCD's abilities to store water there for the foreseeable future. Due to the snowpack conditions, all four basins are above where normally are for this time of year, but there is still a long winter ahead and the basin needs to sustain snowfall for a solid spring runoff. Ms. Marken discussed the SNOTEL graphs for the Rio Grande Headwaters in Colorado and the Rio Chama and Upper Rio Grande. She stated they are likely to have above average temperatures and below average precipitation, and the National Weather Service is predicting weak to moderate La Nina conditions for late fall through possibly March.

Vice Chair Dunning asked if it would matter if they were not able to do the releases because of the sediment plug.

Ms. Marken responded that it does matter, because it will contribute to what their Compact debt will be at the end of 2024, which could impact storage and Article 6 restrictions, but the state is optimistic they will be able to move the sediment in time.

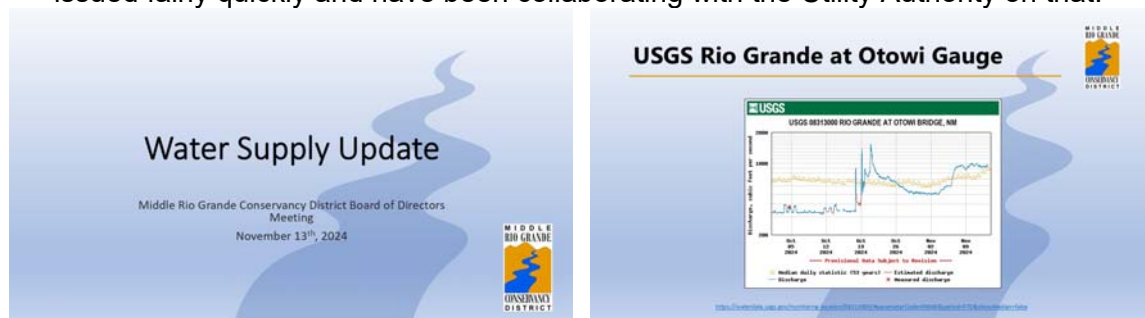
Vice Chair Dunning asked if they were optimistic on getting a permit for the spring runoff.

Ms. Marken answered they are optimistic they will get the permit to do work.

Mr. Casuga expressed that MRGCD will not be optimistic but be pleasantly surprised if they return to 1800 CFS, and the impact will depend on the amount of snowpack they have and the amount of water that comes down. He said they do have concerns and have raised concerns to the Corps on locking up a ton of water. He added they are looking at the role and authority that Army Corps have along the Rio Chama and may need to have a conversation about seeking some authority for the Corps to do some actions along the Rio Chama to make releases from their dam.

Director Kelly asked if the state is submitting a 404 permit to the Corps and if it would be covered under nationwide or be an individual permit.

Ms. Marken said the state is applying for a 404 and they are streamlining it so it can be issued fairly quickly and have been collaborating with the Utility Authority on that.





Chair Russo Baca thanked Mr. Martinez and Ms. Marken for the NWRA Tour and the ISOs and staff that helped with that.

Director Duggins gave a shoutout to the farmers, as they are the ones that put it all on the line, but noted the staff in his area could not be better. He added that every year they talk about how bad it is going to be, but always seem to make it. He noted while they do not have the storage and amount of water they want; they still make it every year. He suggested to have a more positive attitude in the future on that.

Director Jiron expressed gratitude to Mr. Martinez, Ms. Marken, and the staff for having weekly meetings at times with the pueblos. He said it really helped the pueblos, and he appreciated them listening to their concerns.

Director Kelly also thanked the people that participated in the Fallowing Program to make water available for the farmers and the river.

Director Duggins expressed that some people got hurt by the Fallowing Program, as there are farmers that rely on leased property. He said he does not like that program, and it is very difficult for a farm to come back to life after taking that money.

Mr. Casuga stated that if people were harmed by that, he would like to know who they were because the program is not meant to target farmers who have existing contracts with landowners.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 - ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are limited to three (3) minutes)

Justin Tyler

Mr. Tyler, a pararescueman and hunter, stated that hunting is a very important way of life for him, a vast majority of New Mexicans, and hunters from out of state. He noted that he and a group of fellow pararescuemen get together and go on a duck hunt to talk and remember the guys they have lost, so it is concerning to hear the La Joya and Bernardo Wildlife management areas are not getting the water they have in the past. He said he wanted to make sure the sportsmen, specifically waterfowlers, of New Mexico have a voice in this fight. He asked what that looks like far as water rights for those wildlife management areas and how it will be affect regarding water rights.

Matthew Monjaras

Mr. Monjaras stated that he runs a nonprofit in New Mexico that takes youth, veterans, and service members into the field, and they host the Youth Sand Hill Crane hunt for Game & Fish. He added that last year his program planted 269 trees at Bernardo and finished four ADA blinds. He is aware there are obligations they have with water and understands the demands, but if they do not have people to experience these resources, habitats, and birds, they will lose the people fighting for biodiversity in the valley. He shared if they are only worried about water transfer, then habitat does not have much meaning, but it does for their kids, culture, and state.

Jorge Garcia

Mr. Garcia expressed that as the Director of the Center for Social Sustainable Systems he thanks MRGCD for their support and collaboration with the good work that has taken place over the years, but as the Secretary of the South Valley Regional Association, he was there to discuss the resolution that was sent to New Mexico Acequia Association to be incorporated into the Congreso de las Acequias.

Elaine Hebard

Refer to Appendix I for Ms. Hebard's written comments.

Jerry Montano

Mr. Montano asked for an update on the project where they are supposed to get water from the Bosque Drain to Feeder 3. He also asked about getting a meeting together with the farmers to discuss it.

Mr. Casuga stated that Director Jiron had already reached out to him, and he has offered to set up a meeting to meet with the community to give an update on the progress of that.

Glen Duggins

Director Duggins pointed out that years ago there was crane everywhere and Bosque del Apache had one of the best famers this valley has ever known. He said there was 2,000 to 3,000 acres of good farming going on and even more critters. He stated that the feds decided to farm it and now it is a complete failure, and the crane, ducks, and geese are not there anymore. He noted that as they keep losing farmers, the environment is going to go out of the window. He said there is also very little pumping that farmers do in the MRGCD area and if they did not have drain ditches, they could not even live in the valley.

AGENDA ITEM NO.7 - REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

a. Bureau of Reclamation - Jennifer Faler, Area Manager

Jennifer Faler discussed El Vado and stated they are building momentum towards finding solutions and homing in on a new alternative. She said they are working on streamlining the Safety of Dams process and will be doing a public meeting tomorrow. They are down to about four alternatives right now and they are reevaluating the overall project goals. She expressed there is a meeting on Friday to determine a formal decision on whether to provide cost estimates and decide if they should go up to the next level in El Vado, as they have been at 6800 for several days now. She thanked the crews that have been doing the monitoring. Ms. Faler noted they learned that the ordinary high watermark is not the ordinary high watermark, and the Corps of Engineers interpreted that it moves. She stated it is not the worst thing in the world to not be able to move water, and they have been advocating for a long time for carryover water to move during spring runoff to help with ESA compliance purposes, but it could have an impact on EBID, as the first year doing that could result in allocation issues. She said they have come a long way in figuring out when to release water and how to prevent farmers from diverting the water as it moves through the Middle Valley. Ms. Faler then talked about the Abiquiu storage agreement and acknowledged the historic effort of water management agencies coming together to come up with an agreement that is good for all of us. She shared that there has been very little maintenance on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel since they transferred O&M to MRGCD and that is concerning and will make it harder to do maintenance. Regarding the Clean Water Act, she added they have talked with the Corps many times on providing them an annual training on their interpretations, and they plan to do it next month. MRGCD is invited to that.

Mr. Casuga added he will attend the Clean Water Act training and will explain their operations in detail so they can better understand us. He thanked Reclamation and stated the Abiquiu storage agreement is much needed and will allow the necessary steps to analyze El Vado and focus on what will prevent them from using physical space. He noted that they have been so focused on getting El Vado done that conversation on the state of New Mexico being able to get water to Elephant Butte has disappeared at times, so he hopes they can have more thorough and realistic conversations about all depletions. He is also wants to hear how an ordinary high-water mark changes.

Ms. Wiggins noted her regional director was also puzzled by that.

Director Russo Baca encouraged people to look at the new buckets page that has a map and better understanding of how storage works and how P&P is done.

Director Dunning inquired if it would help or hurts EBID if water is not moved before the end of the year.

Ms. Faler answered that it does hurt the debit, but the water will still be stored and be released, so you can catch up the next year, but it will hurt this year.

Mr. Casuga asked what would happen if they got 125% of a season and get a ton of water stacked up there. He said he is concerned on stacking more than a reasonable quantity as they try to rebalance the basin.

Ms. Faler noted to keep in mind that they are planning on doing water exchanges in Heron, so they plan to store more water there than they have in the past.

Director Duggins expressed he too wants the Low Flow cleaned up and functioning but asked where that has been in the past. He added that lack of maintenance is what caused it in the first place.

Ms. Faler responded that before Reclamation transferred it, they mowed it all and handed it off completely maintained.

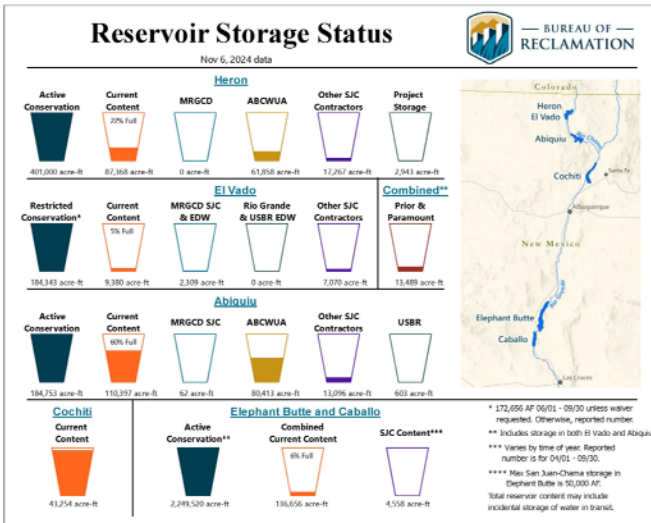
Director Duggins stated that he lives there and has not seen any maintenance for years. He said the federal government needs to own it.

Ms. Faler clarified Director Duggins was speaking about the River Mile 60 area, and said they have adaptive management and are pushing the envelope as hard as they can with these environmental compliance laws to use the adaptive management process to get as much of that water in the channel as they can. She noted that will require more monitoring to make sure they are not causing harm to the marsh. She explained that BOR is given a budget by Congress to do the job they need done, but it is not enough to do everything that everybody wants them to do every year.

Chairman Kelly stated the Bureau's most important mission in the Middle Rio Grande is Compact compliance and not ESA issues, because if they do not have enough water to go through the system, there is nothing for any other incidental uses.

Ms. Faler expressed that not addressing ESA issues would take them to litigation where a judge would decide where the water goes, which usually results in a lot of farmers losing entire farms when a judge weighs in on how to use the water. Therefore, if they are not complying with the ESA, they will end up losing more water because the judge will take it from you.

Chairman Kelly understood that but said that none of the good work they are doing with El Vado reconfiguration and storage in Abiquiu means nothing until they get into Compact compliance.



MRGCD BOARD MEETING (11-12-2024)

1. Heron Summary

Content: 87,200 ac-ft (11/12/24)
Azotea tunnel: 0 cfs
Total SJC inflow year-to-11/6/24: 73,600 ac-ft
Currently releasing: 40 cfs
Current MRGCD storage: 0 ac-ft

2. El Vado Summary

Total storage (all contractors and natural): 9,436 ac-ft (11/12/24)
Native in El Vado: 0 ac-ft
MRGCD's SJC storage in El Vado: 2,309 ac-ft
P & P: 0 ac-ft
Other SJC contractors: 7,127 ac-ft
Current release is 100 cfs RG inflow is 25-45 cfs

3. Storage in Abiquiu

Content: 111,178 ac-ft (11/12/24)
MRGCD's SJC storage: 62 ac-ft
P&P: 13,489 ac-ft

Total supplemental water released in 2024: 9,761 ac-ft

Total Precipitation/Snow Water Equivalent at SNO-Tel Sites as of 11/12/2024 (% of median)
*Beginning of water year values may not be representative of actual conditions because of the limited data available.

Basin	% of Median
Rio Chama Basin	141% / 197%*
Upper Rio Grande Basin	181% / 259%*
Sangre de Cristo Basin	238% / 416%*
Jemez Basin	221% / 1375%*
San Juan River Basin	155% / 227%*

- The State of New Mexico expects their contractor to begin work in the Rio Chama channel below Abiquiu Dam this week. The channel may safely allow a release of about 500 cfs by early December.
- The El Vado "first fill" evaluation is under way. Depending on the results, a small amount of storage may be allowed in El Vado Reservoir in 2025.

b. Bureau of Indian Affairs - Patrick Taber, Acting Designated Engineer

Patrick Taber thanked MRGCD and staff for being observant and quick to resolve any issues or conflicts that have come up. He stated that while they are at the end of the season, work does not stop, and he has started the consultation process with the pueblos on the upcoming season. He shared that he has been having meetings with Mr. Zamora on some of the irrigation canals and issues on the pueblo lands for offseason maintenance. He did a comparison for this season compared to the last 5 to 10 years, and we came out in the middle as an average year.

Director Dunning asked if they have advertised the position for engineer.

Mr. Taber responded that they have sent that up to Human Resources and are awaiting processing, but he will maintain his position and assist with whatever happens moving forward.

Chairman Kelly asked if the 20,000-acre feet of water to be moved through this system is remaining P&P water.

Mr. Taber believe that, and said it looked like about 13,000 from the bucket chart.

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

a. Introduction of MRGCD New Hires

Ms. Nardi introduced the new hires in the General Office, including three new ISOs and a water resources specialist.

JACOB	CORONADO	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	11/12/2024
WILLIAM	LUTHER	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	11/12/2024
AMELIA	BARROW	WATER RESOURCES SPECIALIST	11/12/2024
RYAN	LOPEZ	IRRIGATION SYSTEMS OPERATOR	11/25/2024

b. Report on the AI Whisperer for Business Meeting, September 30, 2024

Ms. Nardi discussed the AI Whisperer, a machine-based system that can make predications, recommendations, and decisions for any given set of human defined objectives influencing real or virtual environments. The management team was afforded the opportunity to attend a presentation and training on AI from ePraxis LLC. She said the session marked a fundamental and important step for MRGCD towards integrating AI thoughtfully and responsibly into the District's operations that align with MRGCD's mission to enhance service to constituents while safeguarding the public's trust.

Mr. Casuga added that AI tools are beginning to integrate into many of the services they provide, but with technology comes a good understanding of how they should use it and rely on it. He said they felt compelled as a management team to make that training available to our supervisors and managers and create an AI use policy.

Ms. Fanelli expressed she is working with AI right now to input raw data and recreate a budget to actual, and eventually use it for financial statements.

c. Discussion of the AI Use in the Workplace Policy

Ms. Nardi voiced that because AI is powerful, they must be extremely cautious, prudent and responsible, so they are drafting an AI Use in the Workplace Policy that will outline guidelines and best practices for responsible use of AI within MRGCD, and will address compliance, ethical considerations, and data privacy. She said that before employees have access to the private ChatGPT, they must read and sign the acknowledgment stating they will comply and use AI responsibly. She explained that AI tools are designed to support but not replace decision making and employers are required to always review AI generated content carefully to ensure it meets our standards, is in the right context, and is professional. Employees are also required to protect confidential information to sure that no sensitive or confidential information is put into the AI system, unless allowed under the policy, including personal data, proprietary, MRGCD information, or trade secrets. Ms. Nardi noted employees will also be required to complete training sessions on how to effectively, safely, and ethically use AI.

Director Dunning asked if any employees have expressed fear about AI replacing jobs.

Ms. Nardi responded that no one has come to her with that, but with AI you still must have human oversight, so it will not take over any jobs.

Mr. Casuga explained AI has a lot of power and analytical ability but no wisdom and does not replace experience and knowledge.

Director Sandoval asked what the cost would be for a third-party training.

Ms. Nardi answered they do not know yet, but they are looking to do it virtually.

d. Consideration/Approval of the 2025 Holiday Schedule

Ms. Nardi presented the 2025 holiday schedule and asked for approval.

<u>HOLIDAY</u>	<u>APPROVED DATE</u>
New Year's Day	Wednesday, January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday	Monday, January 20
Memorial Day	Monday, May 26
Independence Day	Friday, July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 1
Veteran's Day (observed)	Tuesday, November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 27
Day after Thanksgiving Day	Friday, November 28
Christmas Day	Thursday, December 25
Day After Christmas Day	Friday, December 26

Director Russo Baca noted they did not include Indigenous Peoples Day on the schedule, as MRGCD Board meetings tend to fall on that day.

Ms. Nardi pointed out that they also offer two personal holidays that employees can use.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2025 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**. Seconded by Director Dunning. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

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

a. Consideration/Approval of Low Flow Conveyance Channel Maintenance Project Bid

Mr. DeLoia presented for the Low Flow Conveyance Channel Maintenance Project. MRGCD staff is requesting approval for the lowest bidder, CF Padilla, for \$4,957,030, with tax, as funded through the Office of the State Engineer. The award is recommended by Wilson & Company and bids were obtained through the request for bid process.

Mr. Casuga noted this is ARPA money that was given to MRGCD by legislative funding and that required additional steps to make sure they follow federal acquisition guidelines.

Chairman Kelly asked Mr. Perea if there was a unique geometry and site conditions to justify the price.

Mr. Perea responded that, yes, there is a lot of vegetation and obstacles with working around riprap within the channel.

Chairman Kelly asked Mr. Padilla if he is prepared to complete the project for the amount bid and the scheduled determined.

Mr. Padilla answered yes.

Director Jiron made the **MOTION TO AWARD THE BID TO CF PADILLA AT \$4,957,030 WITH TAX.** Seconded by Director Sandoval. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Perea added they have a mandatory completion date of June 30, 2025.

Vice Chair Baugh asked if they would be addressing the big rocks down there that were causing sparks when they were mowing.

Mr. Perea stated that was a concern, and sparks have ignited a fire before, so they will try to stay 6 inches above the rock and mow it down, and then apply an herbicide to kill the vegetation, and then do dredging.

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

a. Announcement of the Water Trust Board Feeder No. 3 Project

Ms. Fanelli stated that the District submitted Resolution M-08-12-24-2012, asking the Board to approve an application to the Water Trust Board for the Feeder 3 Pump Station. They applied for a \$6 million grant/loan match. She said the Water Project Fund received 9% of senior severance tax bonds and a distribution from the Water Trust Fund. The estimate for the funding is \$125 million and applications submitted totaled \$256,000,000. She voiced the application was approved by the Water Trust Board for legislative authorization, meaning they are eligible for funding but not guaranteed to be approved. She noted they will start the readiness application process in December and submit the application in January, and they must meet regulatory compliance to move forward. They will most likely need to ask for a waiver for the Water Trust Board grant. The final award will be determined in April of 2025.

b. Report from the Finance Committee Meeting, November 12, 2024 - Madam Chair Russo Baca and Directors Kelly and Dunning

Chairman Kelly discussed the Finance Committee Meeting, where they looked at the five-year schedule for MRGCD to cover operational costs, major rehab, capital costs, and equipment. He said they finished Union negotiations that raises payroll by \$1,000,000 and are looking at an increase in the water service charge of \$8 next year to maintain a balanced budget without dipping in the contingency fund. He added that they need to do the five-year schedule to maintain the services they have.

Director Dunning added that a lot of the increase in the budget is in personnel and most of that is for employees that are directly responsible for delivering irrigation water. It seems this is the only fair with the large increase that we ask irrigators to pay for the part of that increase. She pointed out that our water delivery service rates are low compared to other irrigation districts in New Mexico.

Director Russo Baca added she as an irrigator herself and having an ad valorem tax, it seems that she is getting double hit, but she also has not had an AG exemption on her land, so she's not taxed at the same level due to that.

Mr. Casuga stated the CID is \$99.10 per acre and EBID is slightly higher than that. He noted that this does not get acted on until January.

Director Duggins voiced that he did not care what anyone else was paying, but what matters is what is right here. He said that farmers can't pay that and farming in the Middle Rio Grande is on the way out. He expressed that someone needs to wake up because the birds, critters, and everything that everyone loves is going too. He said they voted for an increase on water delivery charge last year and now they're adding another one again.

Ms. Fanelli explained that operational expenditures must be matched by operational revenues and their two main sources of revenues are ad valorem and water service charges. She said ad valorem cannot be increased until FY29, so they have no other choice but to raise the water service charges

Mr. Casuga said the money they are leveraging for infrastructure was allowing them to bring in grant award money, and close to zero of that money is allowed to be used for employee labor. Labor for the MRGCD right now has gone up and more than 50% of their budget is labor, and that is why they are starting this conversation early. He noted that as CEO he is open to ideas, and they have several months to have conversations about it.

Director Duggins asked what they were going to do when those grants dry up.

Mr. Casuga responded that they continue the program, He said although they may get shrunk, state and federal grants are not going away. He asked him to imagine what would happen to the South valley if the Atrisco Siphon went, or if there was a catastrophic failure of a diversion dam and they cannot take water out of Angostura for all of Albuquerque, or if there was a major break in the Albuquerque Main. He said that those are all projects that came up in the \$675 million. He said the District can choose not to increase the water service charge, but that will mean cuts and reductions from other services. He expressed that he is aware that it is a hard decision and a tough conversation.

Chairman Kelly suggested that Director Duggins come sit down with him and Ms. Fanelli one afternoon to go through some of the details.

Director Duggins responded that he has total faith in them but they're sending a death certificate to a lot of people, and the costs of these projects are mind blowing.

Director Dunning agreed with Director Duggins that in the future there will be less grant funding, but this is a big push that they are doing right now because of delayed maintenance and infrastructure. She explained that they have old infrastructure right now, but fixing updated and fixing those will save money in the long run.

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

a. Update on the Off-season Winter Work

Mr. Zamora gave an update on the projects they will be working on in the offseason. He said they will begin in Cochiti division with installing a new weir at the Monica Heading to build a pool to keep the gate where it will not go into default mode. He discussed constructing a new check structure, and an NRCS grant was given to Santo Domingo Pueblo for the area where they installed new pipelines to better feed the pipeline with the new turnout, so they are installing a new check for them to allow more head pressure to move water more efficiently. He noted they will also be looking at some type of wildlife crossing, as wildlife has been getting stuck in the canal. Mr. Zamora talked about a lot of trees and limbs that went down during the recent snowfall, and they are still assessing

and having ISOs assess the damage. He expressed that one of the major projects will be the Bosque Lateral 2 Heading in South Bernalillo where they had a failure last year and did a quick patch, so a new heading needs to be installed. They will be replacing a new pipe behind the Bosque school. They will also be helping with installation of a new bridge that Corrales acquired for better access to the Bosque and safer access for hikers and equestrians. He discussed that they have about 3 miles of Highline Canal to reshape to its original cross section between Feeder 3 and Dump Road, which is part of their settlement on the project. He noted it is going to take a significant number of resources to reshape it and get it back to the original. He also discussed the Peralta Wasteway project, Algodones Road Crossing, and the check rehab project on the Socorro Main Canal. Mr. Zamora voiced they will be doing a lot of dredging throughout the District, vegetation removal, weed pile burning, and other things.

Director Jiron stated that at the September board meeting he was quick to make some judgments without doing research and checking what had already been done on certain projects, so he apologized for those quick judgments to Mr. Zamora and to other board members. He noted that he was at meetings with farmers down in Valencia that were asking about the offseason work, so Director Jiron asked what the appropriate way to put in work orders was.

Mr. Zamora responded that the appropriate way is to let the front office staff and Tyler know so they are entered and logged into the work order.

Mr. Casuga asked that if they make a call to ask for the service request number to get entered our system, so it is trackable.



Sile Main Canal; new check Sta 799+00



Wildlife Crossing



Albuquerque Division



Bosque Lateral #2; new heading



Corrales Riverside Drain; replace culvert



Corrales Pedestrian Bridge



Belen Division

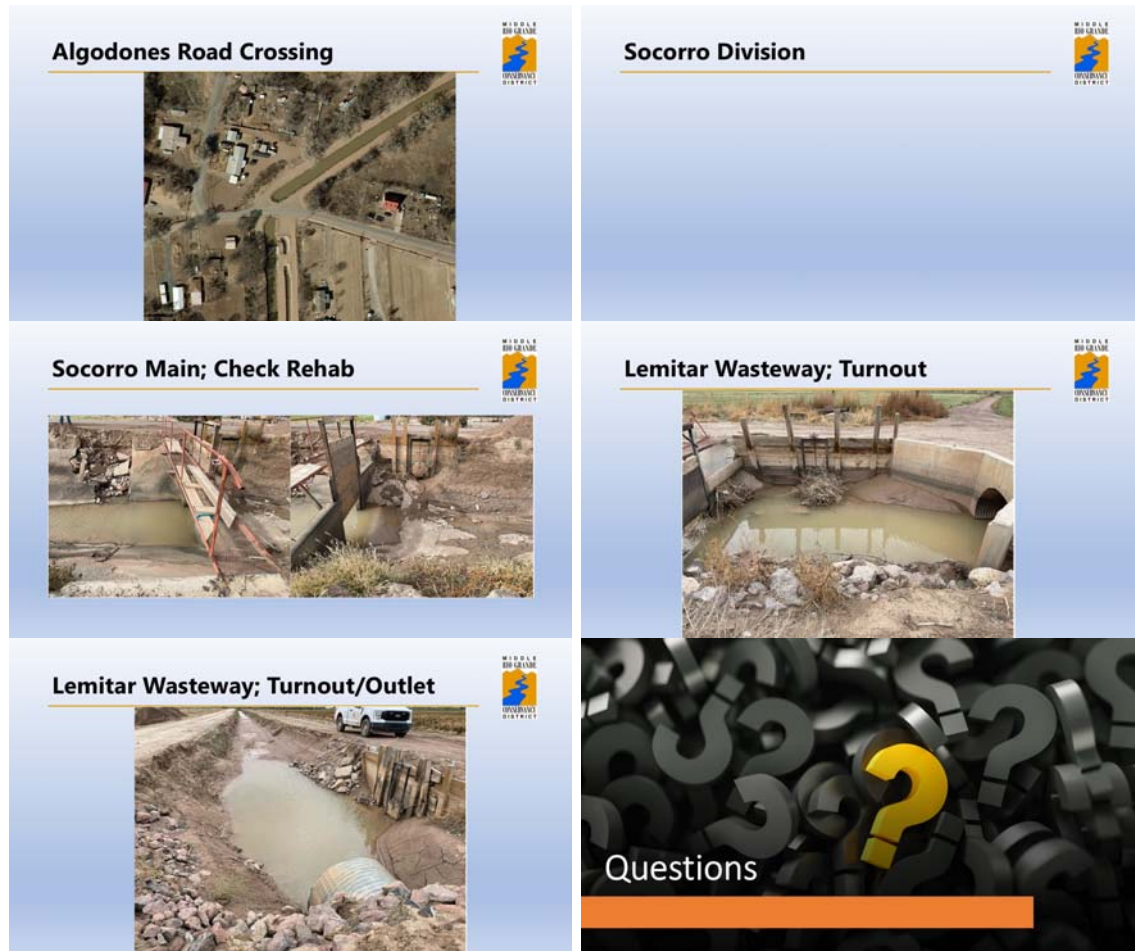


Belen Highline Canal



Peralta Wasteway; Rubicon Project





b. Homeless initiatives

Mr. Zamora gave an update on homelessness and camping issues in the Bosque and the Los Lunas area. He said they've issued 35 notices to campers in the area but did not proceed with any actions for a couple of weeks to give them a chance to gather their belongings. On July 6th, they started accumulating debris that they encountered and started hauling them off. To date, they have hauled off around 50 loads of debris from the Bosque. He stated they will continue clean-up efforts on November 18th and have reached out to multiple agencies to assist in issuing trespass notices.

Mr. Casuga stated that he presented at a conference about competing demands related to resources money and those kinds of things, and asked that representative Cates and others consider some of those initiatives that MRGCD does with that. He said that they grapple with the cost of doing this. He added that there is a small group of ratepayers and valorem payers that are paying a big bill along the corridor of the Rio Grande that the whole state benefits from. He voiced that this is a tough conversation that they need to have as a state. He added that the valley is huge and the people that live in the valley are not the only ones that that benefit from it, so others should contribute to the value.

Director Russo Baca suggested plugging in with the Breaking Bad habits campaign.

Mr. Zamora stated the last major effort they did was offer Valencia counseling services on site where they arranged transportation for people that wanted to come to the

facilities, but they did not have any takers. He said they understand that these are human beings and need to be sensitive to their situation, but they have given ample opportunity for them to stop breaking the law.

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

a. Report on the Action Number SPA-2024-00420; Corrales Acequia WOTUS - Jason M. Casuga

Mr. Casuga said they were copied on a letter from the Army Corps of Engineers and the language was quite shocking and has the potential to significantly affect the whole valley and how MRGCD can do business with them going forward. He expressed the Corrales Acequia is an irrigation canal which exhibits regular flow throughout the irrigation season and returns water to the Rio Grande and is considered Waters of the United States. He noted that the Corps is labeling our irrigation facility a jurisdictional waterway, which means it falls under needing 404 permits to do actions that would not be considered a germane action for operation and maintenance of our irrigation facilities. Therefore, many of our actions as MRGCD would be exempt if you applied an exemption, but projects like installing culverts for a family to get to their home would now be considered a primary roadway not needed for operation and maintenance, and they would need to get a 404 permit, and then have to apply to get a preconstruction notice to the Corps, meet with the Corps, and then submit an application and potentially have to wait 45 days to know if their process is a nationwide permit, so this has huge impacts. Mr. Casuga had a meeting with the Army Corps of engineers with the new Lieutenant and the Top Civilian, where he raised the issue and the impact of this. He said this would apply to every irrigation facility that runs through Pueblo land, roadways, utility lines, and anything not germane to irrigation. After meeting with the lieutenant and top civilian, he received an email that said they requested a second opinion from the geographic jurisdictional expert and a third opinion from a higher headquarters and they all agreed the Corrales Acequia is WOTUS, so the Corps is now doubling down on this. Mr. Casuga expressed that MRGCD could not protect the public from the Corps and there is nothing they can do if the Corps chooses to exert their authority on a project. And if that authority is not complied with, they have steep penalties they can apply to the public or to the governing agency. He said this is a big deal and it's going to hit us on major infrastructure projects coming forward. MRGCD will be informing local partners of new implications with the Corps determination while MRGCD figures out what we're going to do and what our response will be to this.

Director Dunning explained that there is a family in Corrales that was trying to get a culvert to get access to their property and now they cannot do it. She said they have been waiting a long time for the permit, so how are they accessing their property now?

Mr. Casuga explained that it is a culvert that serves families and a public road up until a certain point, where it then becomes a private road on the other side, so the village of Corrales was upgrading the public portion of the road. He said there was an existing crossing there, but he does not believe any longer, based on permitting requirements, the project will be constructed before the end of the season and does not believe any PCN request from the village has been submitted to the court yet. He said his expectation is that the project is probably now a next year thing.

b. Report on the Off-season Capital Infrastructure Projects - Angelina Jiminez, Angel Madera Enriquez, and Matthew Chavez, Engineering Team

Angelina Jiminez stated that the engineering team managed the completion of the first phase of the channel lining of the Socorro main canal last year, and this offseason they are continuing with the second phase of the project. She presented on the Bosque Lateral No. 1 Wasteway located in the Santa Ana Pueblo, which is a construction of a new channel alignment that will be able to divert flows from the Lateral to the Atrisco Feeder. The project was procured using the on-call contract and was awarded to Lopez Precision, LLC, and the project broke ground on July 24, 2024. She stated that the first phase of the project was able to be constructed before November for areas that would not interfere with regular irrigation operations. The first phase involved construction of the culvert pipe inlet section to allow flows into a sand pipe and into the Atrisco Feeder.

Angel Madera Enriquez presented on the Socorro Channel Lining Phase 2 that will be funded using Water Trust Board money that was provided to MRGCD for \$8.2 million to conduct Phase 1 and \$10 million for Phase 2 of the project. The project will improve efficiency by decreasing seepage losses in San Acacia. It is estimated that Phase 2 will have a channel lining of 1.9 miles, with 1.6 miles of that being concrete cabinets and concrete canvas, and the other 0.3 miles being shotcrete or traditional concrete. Procurement was done by the Wilson & Company, and the project was awarded to Vital Consulting Group, with the final completion date of February 28, 2025. He presented on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel Maintenance Project that was funded by the federal passthrough from the OSE of \$6 million. The project consists of mowing, dredging, clearing, and grubbing of the Low Flow Conveyance Channel to get it back to its original capacity. The procurement was done by Wilson & Company and CF Padilla was awarded as the lowest bidder.

Matthew Chavez presented on the Las Cercas Pilot Project, which is located South of New Mexico 6 in Los Lunas, to improve water management and replace outdated gates with automatic gates from Rubicon that incorporate water measurement data. He noted that this project is MRGCD funded, at approximately \$99,433.31, and it was procured with the on-call contract awarded to Lopez Precision, LLC. They anticipate this project to be completed before irrigation season next year. He then presented on this Corrales Siphon Replacement. He expressed that the design and procurement phases were managed by Wilson & Company and the project is currently out for bidding.

Mr. Casuga noted that regarding the Corrales Siphon Replacement, they are having a difficult time finding a local GC to cover the overall project, because there are elements of general contracting and construction needed for it and a lot of people are busy, so an extension has been put out for the bidding process.

Director Dunning made the **MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING**. Seconded by Director Russo Baca. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Mr. Madera presented on the Belen Highline Canal Overflow Structure, which is in Belen within the Highline Canal between stations 1274 and 1276. The project will consist of building an MRGCD overflow structure and it is currently in the bid process. Bohannon Huston is overseeing the design and procurement of this project, and the bid will take place on December 3rd.

Construction Update

2024-2025 Capital Projects
November 13, 2024

Presented by:
Engineering Department



Overview

1. Off-Season Construction Projects
 - A. Bosque Lateral No. 1 Wasteway
 - B. Socorro Main Canal Reconstruction Phase 2
 - C. Low Flow Conveyance Channel Maintenance
 - D. Las Cerasas Pilot Project (Rubicon Gates)
 - E. Corrales Siphon Replacement Project
 - F. Belen Highline Canal Overflow Structure 1 Project



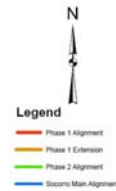
Bosque Lateral No. 1 Wasteway \$546,343.85 MRGCD Funded

- A new wasteway alignment will be constructed to divert flows from the Bosque Lateral No. 1 to the Atrisco Fender.
- Procured with MRGCD's on-call contract and awarded to Lopez Precision LLC on 7/8/2024.
- The first notice to proceed was given on 7/24/2024.
- Project expected to be completed by January 2025.



Socorro Main Canal Channel Lining Project Phase 2 \$6,044,913.13 (Bid Amount) WTB

- Improving water efficiency by lowering seepage losses. Continuance of phase 1.
- Procurement and project management conducted by Wilson & Co.
- Contract awarded to Vital Consulting Group, given first notice to proceed on 10/2/24 for mobilization.
- Second notice to proceed on 11/4/24 for construction.
- Final completion expected on 2/28/25.



Low Flow Conveyance Channel Maintenance \$4,957,030.00 (Bid Amount) Federal Passed Through From GSE

- Channel O&M consisting of mowing, dredging, and grub clearing.
- Procurement conducted by Wilson & Co.
- Upon Board approval C.F. Padilla can be awarded the contract.
- The work schedule is dependent on the funding deadline in June 2025.



Las Cerasas Pilot Project (Rubicon Gates) \$99,433.31 MRGCD Funded

- Coordination with Water Ops to enhance water management by replacing outdated gates with automated control gates equipped with water measurement data.
- Procured with MRGCD's on-call contract and awarded to Lopez Precision LLC on 10/15/2024.
- Realignment of the Las Cerasas heading upstream of the check structure.
- Estimated duration of 8 weeks for project completion.



Corrales Siphon Replacement Pending Procurement WTB

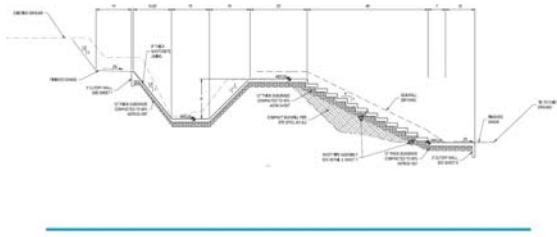
- Upon siphon failure, the selected alternative is a horizontal directional drill operation, which will convey irrigation across the river.
- Procurement services by Wilson & Co.
- Bid closing on 11/27/24, with Board Approval to follow in December 2024.
- Estimated 365 calendar days for construction.



Belen Highline Canal Overflow Structure Pending Procurement MRGCD Reserves

- Channel improvements, including overflow structures proposed for the Belen Highline.
- Procurement conducted by Bohannon Huston.
- Bid closing on 11/19/24, with Board Approval to follow in December 2024.





c. Report on the BIA Right-of-Way Determination for the Corrales Siphon, October 17, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO

Mr. Casuga noted he will combine 12(c) and 12(d) for this section. He stated they received a letter from BIA that found that MRGCD does not have a federally recognized Right-of-Way for the Corrales Siphon, and MRGCD respectfully disagrees. He said they have started having discussions with Sandia Pueblo on how to move forward and if there is a path forward. He stated that he, Director Russo Baca, and water counsel attended the Tribal Council Meeting where they began discussions on how to come to a reasonable solution to allow this project to go forward, and the substance of that should probably be reserved for executive session. He noted that the money to construct this project expires December 2025, but he believes there could be a path to an extension if they can already be in construction and spending the money.

d. Report on the Governor of Sandia's Review and Discussion on Irrigation with MRGCD, November 4, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO and Chair Russo Baca

Mr. Casuga intertwined items c and d.

e. Report on the Agricultural Water Conservation Roundtable, October 18, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO and Chair Russo Baca

Although Director Russo Baca did written reports, she mentioned that Damien Schiff, who presented at the NWRA conference was at the conference she attended in Memphis. He presented on the future for ag law, which she found very interesting.

f. Report on the National Water Resources Association (NWRA) Annual Conference and Leadership Forum, November 6-8, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO, Eric Zamora, COO, Chair Russo Baca and Vice Chair Dunning

Mr. Casuga said that it was an interesting NWRA Conference, where they had a lawyer argue the second case before the Supreme Court on the Clean Water Act presenting there. He said they had multiple presentations on funding and a unique panel post-presidential election. He stated that from MRGCD's perspective, there was a lot of value that came out of this and there was a lot of networking. He noted that this was also where they heard the idea of a temporary O&M change the Reclamation could do to help expedite O&M updates while still receiving the 75% of their cost share money.

Director Russo Baca noted Damien Schiff, that presented at the NWRA conference, was also at the conference that she was just at in Memphis, where he gave a presentation on the future for Ag law attorneys. She said the NWRA Conference was great and gave a written report on it.

Director Dunning voiced it was one of the better NWRA Conferences she has attended, and it was important to be there and raise the issue about ditches being WOTUS to another group that will have their backs.

g. Announcement of MRGCD Closure to the Public on December 12, 2024 - Jason M. Casuga, CE/CEO

Mr. Casuga announced that their Centennial kickoff event is on December 12, 2024, and while MRGCD will be open, the offices throughout the valley will be closed to the public. However, MRGCD will be available by phone in case of emergencies.

h. Information on Upcoming Events

1. **Latino Farmers & Ranchers Water is Life El Congreso 2024, November 20, 2024**
2. **Valencia County Famers & Irrigators Informational Meeting, November 21, 2024, Belen Public Library**
3. **MRGFCA Annual Breakfast, December 3, 2024 - Albuquerque Country Club**
4. **Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA) 2024 Conference, December 4-6, 2024 - Las Vegas, NV**
5. **Annual Irrigation Leaders Workshop, January 21-23, 2024 - Chandler, Arizona**

Mr. Casuga reported on the upcoming events.

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14 REPORT(S) FROM THE BOARD

- a. **Report on the NM Interstate Stream Commission Meeting, October 25, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**
- b. **Report on the Valencia County Soil and Water Conservation District Aldo Leopold Festival, October 26, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**
- c. **Report on the San Antonio Drainage Project, October 28, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**
- d. **Report on the Irrigation Committee Meeting, October 28, 2024 - Directors Duggins, Jiron and Sandoval**

Director Jiron stated that Ms. Wiggins went over the comparative and negligence with them in New Mexico, and it was a good meeting. He said they received handouts for their gate policies and Right-of-Way policies, and overall, it was a very informative meeting.

- e. **Report on the Semester in the West Tour of Los Chavez Outfall Site, October 29, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**
- f. **Report on the American Indian Law Center, Myka Curtis Interview regarding MRGCD, October 30, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca**

g. Report on the Centennial Committee Meeting, October 31, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca, Vice Chair Dunning and Director Baugh

Director Russo Baca said they finalized almost all the events and the only thing still up in the air was the venue for the anniversary film screening which is between three venues. She noted they are prioritizing parking availability as well as capacity.

h. Report on the Pre-NWRA Tour of MRGCD Facilities, November 5, 2024 - Chair Russo Baca

Refer to Appendix II for Director Russo Baca submitted written reports.

Vice Chair Baugh made the **MOTION TO APPROVE ALL THE REPORTS FROM THE BOARD**. Seconded by Director Jiron. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 6:20PM**. Seconded by Director Dunning. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Russo Baca	Yes
Chairman Kelly	Yes	Director Dunning	Yes
Director Jiron	Yes	Vice Chair Baugh	Yes
Director Duggins	Yes		

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15 EXECUTIVE SESSION (cont.)

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

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO GO BACK INTO REGULAR SESSION AT 6:59PM**. Seconded by Director Dunning. Rollcall vote was administered with all members voting yes. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

Director Sandoval	Yes	Director Russo Baca	Yes
Chairman Kelly	Yes	Director Dunning	Yes
Director Jiron	Yes	Vice Chair Baugh	Yes
Director Duggins	Yes		

With no further comments, questions, or concerns, Chairman Kelly adjourned the meeting at 6:59pm.

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

ATTESTED:

Pamela Fanelli, CMA, CGFM
Secretary-Treasurer/CFO

John P. Kelly, Chairman
MRGCD Board of Directors

APPENDIX

Elaine Hebard Public Comment 11-13-2024

Good afternoon.

I sent in my comments last month, due to the large number of folks signed up already. But I didn't see them in the minutes.

As such, I want to second the resolution of the South Valley Regional Association of Acequias. Repeating what I said in January, when I was interviewing to be a Director, there's no need to remind Board members and rate payers just how difficult the past few years have been in terms of meeting the water needs of all for whom the District is responsible. Lack of storage space in El Vado Reservoir will continue to make deliveries more vulnerable to the whims of Mother Nature, as we saw with the lack of a monsoon in 2023. Compact debts will continue to drive timing of releases of what water is in storage, that and compliance with ESA requirements. Already-declining river flows will continue to decline due to climate changes, not to mention that increasing temperatures will result in increased demands. Increased groundwater pumping to meet those demands will result in additional declining river flows.

Such concerns would seem to be overwhelming in and of themselves, but the difficulties don't stop there. For decades, we in the middle Rio Grande have been consuming more water than is renewably supplied, making up the difference with groundwater. As an invisible deficit, consequences of living beyond our means may not show up by any specific date.

A major trigger to the litigation with Texas was that our State had permitted too many ground-water uses, which use in turn drew down river flows. In the LRG, the State is encouraging a reduction of surface uses --so as to make deliveries now-- but ultimately depletions will have to be permanently reduced. Which means that groundwater pumping will need to be reduced.

The LRG will be keeping a closer eye on the deliveries to the Butte from the MRG. Since our region has been under-delivering for years, there is no option but to reduce depletions here.

And yet we keep adding more. Consider the Maxeon application -- initially 5,600 af per year (to be reduced to approximately 560 af per year) of fresh water. Niagara Bottling requested permission to triple its pumping, relying on leased water rights from PNM. We continue to act as if there will be new fonts of water to bail us out.

Much of those new users are relying on a system of paper water permits, which when used, will ultimately require wet water rights to offset the subsequent depletions. That's on top of vested water rights, awarded by the SE to urban areas and ESA requirements and water bank demands. There is no way to serve all of the needs of the users, keep a flowing river and deliver what is required to the lower part of the State and to Texas.

The MRG is in trouble. Depletions must be reduced. That's why I would urge the MRGCD to

1. As part of a reduction in depletions program, request the SE to require an offset for vested rights in the MRG for depletions appearing subsequent to 1907.
2. As part of a reduction in depletions program, request the SE to recall a substantial portion of the unused outstanding paper water permits.
3. In preparation for the upcoming Regional Water Planning effort, request that the Water Resources Board of the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments to either fund a regional water model which includes depletions and is spatially based, and/or make a request for funding from the legislature for such a model.

Thank you.

APPENDIX II
Director Russo Baca Board Reports November 2024

Report on Agricultural Water Conservation Roundtable October 18, 2024

Jason Casuga and Eric Zamora also attended. This event was hosted by the Office of the Governor of NM, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and Office of the State Engineer. This was a roundtable discussion among agricultural producers on Friday, October 18 in Socorro to provide input on strategies to enable implementation of the Governor's 50-Year Water Action Plan to ensure agricultural communities can continue to thrive in the context of a hotter, drier future that is predicted for New Mexico.

Report on NM Interstate Stream Commission Meeting, October 25, 2024

The NMISC requested the Commission approval to enter into a financial assistance agreement with the United States of America Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation for the NMISC to be the recipient of Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding in the amount of \$65 million for the implementation of water conservation and ecosystem restoration projects in the Rio Grande Project area and Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act water acquisition, delivery, and habitat initiatives.

Report on The VCSWCD Aldo Leopold Festival, October 26, 2024

The VCSWCD hosted a free family event where Steve Morgan gave a talk in the persona of Aldo Leopold on the Kandy Cordova Trail, there were activities for the kids including pumpkin painting. The VCSWCD partners with MRGCD on conservation programs.

Report on the San Antonio Drainage Project October 28, 2024- Socorro

Jason Casuga and Eric Zamora and Director Duggins are also attending this meeting. It was in reference to the San Antonio Drainage Project that is to be tied into MRGCD facilities through a license agreement. This meeting was to go over that Socorro County will ensure that the engineering meets MRGCDs standards under the licensing agreement.

Report on the Semester in the West Tour of Los Chavez Outfall Site, October 29, 2024

Casey Ish presented to the Whitman College Semester in the West students, and we toured the Los Chavez Outfall Site and visited the Rio Grande River where we saw beaver habitat and spoke about the impact of the MRGCD outfall projects in this area. The students were extremely engaged and asked questions about MRGCD and the bosque.



Report on the Meeting with AILC, Myka Curtis regarding MRGCD, October 30, 2024

This interview was to describe how MRGCD works with and coordinates with tribal governments for a presentation. I explained how MRGCD is an organization that operates, maintains, and manages irrigation, drainage, and river flood control in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. MRGCD delivers water to six Pueblos that reside along the Middle Rio Grande: Cochiti Pueblos, San Felipe Pueblos, Isleta Pueblo, Sandia Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, and Santo Domingo Pueblo. The MRGCD has an operation and maintenance agreement with the Pueblos through the BIA. There is a Designated Engineer that represents the Pueblos interests and works with MRGCD to ensure the O&M agreement is fulfilled.

Report on the Centennial Committee Meeting, October 31, 2024

At this meeting, there was an update on the new MRGCD logo for the centennial. The events for the upcoming centennial were confirmed, although the final details of the MRGCD film screening have to be finalized based on availability of venues. The board and executive staff have decided to donate personal funds to the staff appreciation luncheon for door prizes.

Report on the Governor of Sandia's Review and Discussion on Irrigation with MRGCD, November 4, 2024

Jason Casuga, legal counsel, and I presented to the Pueblo of Sandia Tribal Council regarding the letter that MRGCD sent to the Governor of Sandia about the Corrales Siphon about the response letter from the Bureau of Indian Affairs about the status of the Right-of-way for the Corrales siphon.

Report on the Pre-NWRA Tour of MRGCD Facilities, November 5, 2024

MRGCD staff gave a tour to some of the NWRA attendees, the Isleta Diversion Dam as well as the New Belen Outfall Site. Most of the attendees were from out of town and had never visited the facilities before. The first stop was at the Isleta Diversion Dam. Matt Martinez and Anne Marken gave a presentation on the history of the dam. The tour continued on to Belen where another presentation was given and then the attendees walked down to the Rio Grande through the bosque.

Report on the NWRA Annual Conference and Leadership Forum, November 6-8

Jason Casuga, Casey Ish, Anne Marken, Amanda Molina, and Vice Chair Dunning were also in attendance. NWRA is the National Water Resources Association, and this was the 93rd annual conference and leadership forum. On Thursday Jason Casuga presented on a panel of Top New Mexico Issues with Tanya Trujillo, Deputy State Engineer and Senior Water Policy Advisor to the Governor and Mark Kelly, Water Resource and Conservation Program Manager for the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority. Additionally, MRGCD met with Wayne Pullman, the Upper Colorado Basin Regional Director for the Bureau of Reclamation. Topics discussed included El Vado reservoir, River Mile 60 Outfall, and the Abiquiu Storage Agreement.

Report on the Finance Committee Meeting, November 12, 2024

Ad Valorem Assessments- Ad Valorem Assessments include an assumption that valuations will increase by 3.3% in FY 2026- FY 2029. FY 2025 budget was based on an analysis of the notices of values multiplied by the mill rate less allowances for protest and delinquencies. **Water Service Charge Revenue -** Contemplation of increase of water service charge by \$8 per acre in FY 26 and \$8 per acre in FY 27 and 3% in FY 28 & FY29. **Project Revenue Federal-** for the BIA is based on the "in Lieu of Ad Valorem" and WSC method. The actual amount will depend on the amount approved by congress. Please refer to the BIA Revenue Analysis for the details. Investment income is currently being reinvested.