

Minutes of the Casitas Municipal Water District  
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Held  
August 10, 2005

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held August 10, 2005 at Casitas' Office, Oak View, California. Directors Hicks, Kaiser, Baggerly and Word were present. Directors Bennett was absent. Also present were Chief Principal Engineer, Steve Wickstrum, Rebekah Vieira, Clerk of the Board; and Attorney, Rob Sawyer. There were three staff members and one member of the public in attendance. Director Hicks led the group in the flag salute.

1. Public comments.  
None

2. Board of Director comments.

Director Kaiser commented about an e-mail that was received by Board members from a concerned resident and rate payer on Blue Heron Circle in Rancho Matilija. He was trying to get information back from one of our staff members who may have been on vacation or was out of the office for a day or two. He didn't get any response back for four days. Since we do provide service to the public and we try to get back as soon as possible in the way of information or questions or concerns they may have. I think it is important that we have something to recognize that if somebody is on vacation or out of the office that there is somebody that is acting that can provide some assistance or guidance if their manager's on vacation. Fortunately this was just a general question. But again if there is something of an urgent nature or they are trying to get a hold of someone specifically, days could pass by where they are not responded back to in a timely fashion. I could understand why a resident or a rate payer would get upset. We need to look at this more seriously and make sure that in the absence of somebody there is somebody that could fill in when a person is on vacation.

Director Baggerly commented that on the web site the directions to Lake Casitas only direct people to take Highway 150 from Ventura Avenue and Highway 33. The landmarks that are pointed out are McDonalds and Taco Bell. It might be helpful if we added a second route on Santa Ana Road. It is even shorter. Brian Roney said that we actually had pursued that with the City of Ojai and the County of Ventura coalition that opposed that action. Residents did not want that. I have talked to the liaison with the county since we had asked for some additional signage to do just that but they said that the residents were opposed to it.

Director Baggerly continued that when he was looking for something else in the engineer section of the yellow pages, he saw a listing for Engineers water supply, Casitas Municipal Water District. The address is listed as 1055 N. Rice Road and the phone number is listed as 640-2423. It is under Engineers. There is a special section for water engineers and it is totally wrong for Casitas. I don't even know why we are in there. Steve Wickstrum said we should not be listed as engineers as we do not offer to the

public engineering services. He added that he might give them a call. Director Baggerly said that the phone number does not work.

Director Baggerly said because we really are in a water conservation program that we need to do something out in front of our building. We have a prominent spot where everybody who goes up and down this road and we could tell them that water conservation is an important issue for us. I don't care if it is a sign. We need to think of some kind of eye catching thing for water conservation. Director Word added that some time ago we had plans drawn up to redo the front in natural plantings to help get that point across and it was killed because of other financial concerns. Director Baggerly said he knows that different kinds of grass were planted out there. We ought to do something in front of our building to remind people about water conservation. It doesn't have to be expensive and it doesn't have to be all encompassing. President Hicks said that a few years ago we replaced all of the grass with a different type of landscaping. It is all low water usage landscaping. Director Word said we didn't do it. President Hicks said we did do it. There are a lot of succulents now. We spent quite a bit of money redoing it. Steve Wickstrum said we did. Director Baggerly said maybe we could have two or three different signs we could put up. I don't know; send it to water resources committee to come up with something. There ought to be something we could do.

Director Baggerly continued that as I recall the minutes for the executive committee we did review the newsletter survey but we want it to go on the full board agenda. Last month it was sort of an informational item and we didn't get a chance to discuss it with Ron Merckling.

As I am looking at the web site for recreation the section that talks about the concessionaires is lackluster. Maybe we could get them to put some money up to make their concessionaires section look a lot better. Brian Roney said that we have not spent a lot of time updating the old site because we are working on the new site. We are going to present the new site to the board. Director Baggerly said that is good.

Director Word said he spent some time with Chuck Chrisman and it would be good if we can show up to his retirement breakfast. He has given Casitas 41 years of service. President Hicks said he would be in Los Angeles. Director Word continued that he told Ron he would bring this in. This is the city's future focus as an example of their water quality report. Bill you and I met with Audra Strickland this week and we will be meeting with the State Water Quality Control Board on Friday. She was very interested, sympathetic and willing to work with us. President Hicks said she is a sharp lady and understood the issues. Director Word said she had spent some time going over the data.

Director Word asked Ron Merckling when the newsletter would be going out. Ron answered that he was hoping to get board comments next week and then it will go out in September. His original schedule was the end of August. Director Word thought the articles were really good. He felt bothered with the tone that we take sometimes about the recreation area. It is as if we are trying to apologize that we have a recreation area. Constantly trying to justify it. This is more than 27% of our business and we were

charged with this. I think we should say in here where we state what was done and when it was built. The recreation area was established at the same time and it is part of our charge to supply water and recreation. I think we should not be ashamed of it. You talk about effecting people and it affects many. I went to October to find three campsites in a row to reserve. This gas war is probably really helping us. We are affecting a lot of people out there. It is paying for itself and then some. If we could make it as positive as we can in here we should not apologize for the recreation area. It is a vital part of us. Director Kaiser said the price of gas and with diesel being over three bucks a gallon you can't afford to drive any distance. It might be good to put in the newsletter. There is a local recreation facility right here in your backyard. Director Word said some time it should receive a good part of our newsletter. October is probably not the right time. Ron Merckling said he is at a stage where he could easily take out sections. Director Word thought the sections are good so put it in your thoughts for the future to feature the recreation area at some point. President Hicks said it is amazing that after five years of operation people still don't know that we have a water feature. Director Word said he talked with Brian and Joe yesterday and there might be a chance to keep that up a little longer.

President Hicks had some comments regarding the display at the fair could use some refreshing especially on the pictures and the picture of the lazy river. The way that one shot is it looks like that one section is the lazy river. If you backed up a little bit you could get the immensity of it rather than make it look like it is just that one little part. Brian Roney said it is a little picture. President Hicks said it doesn't give the affect of what it is. The second thing is if you haven't been to the museum to see the display of what is under Lake Casitas you have missed out. Steve Wickstrum said it will be open through January. President Hicks said the museum is only open Thursday through Saturday. You will learn a lot. Director Word said there is good promotion in here in the newsletter. Ron was there and did some interviews, they had a little opening thing that was well done and well attended. You will learn a lot of what is under the lake.

3. Consent Agenda. APPROVED
- a. Minutes of regular meeting held July 27, 2005.
  - b. Recommend approval to increment in the resale rate for the Senior Canyon Mutual Water Company.
  - c. Resolution authorizing approval of issuance of two separate 0.47 acre-foot allocations to Ojai Valley School.

On the motion of Director Word, seconded by Director Baggerly and passed the Consent Agenda was approved with the following roll call vote:

AYES:	Directors:	Hicks, Kaiser, Baggerly and Word
NOES:	Directors:	None
ABSENT:	Directors:	Bennett

Resolution is numbered 05-54

4. Bills.

APPROVED

On the motion of Director Kaiser, seconded by Director Word and passed the bills were approved.

5. Committee/Manager Report(s).

APPROVED FOR FILING

- a. Water Resources Committee Report
- b. Report on specific issues

On the motion of Director Baggerly, seconded by Director Word and passed the committee manager reports were approved for filing.

6. Information items:

Level of lake -08/01/05 - -562.73 feet above mean sea level (4.27 feet below spill elevation); present storage is 242,491 acre feet (11,509 acre feet below full capacity of 254,000 acre feet, 115,491 acre feet above half capacity, or 95.5% full capacity.

- a. Letter from Tom Bryan regarding Water Allocation Priority List.
- b. Letter to NOAA regarding questions on the Biological Assessment/Opinion for the Robles Fish Passage Facility.
- c. Letter from State Water Resources Control Board to California Trout regarding Water Right Complaint.
- d. News Articles of Interest
- e. Investment Report of August 3, 2005.

Director Word asked if there were any comments regarding item 6 c, the letter from State Water Resources Control Board.

Ron Merckling asked if the item regarding Meiners Oaks was on the agenda. Steve asked if this was regarding the meeting you had. Norm Davis, 412 N. Rice Road asked about an item regarding Meiners Oaks allotment. Steve Wickstrum said I think John was going to try to get that on the agenda after he returns. There was nothing put together and I wasn't requested to put anything together. Ron Merckling said he recalled the meeting and it would not be on this agenda. Director Kaiser asked if he wanted to present anything to the board at this time. Norm Davis said I don't understand why our allotment has not gone up. Our allotment has stayed the same or gone down in years and not gone back up. We are considering withdrawing from our situation. We wonder why Meiners Oaks have been singled out and I think we will make changes. President Hicks said he is not familiar with the issue.

Steve Wickstrum explained that back in 1990 or 1991 that is a period of time when we recognized that we had reached safe yield at that time and we declared a water shortage emergency. In doing so what was occurring is that other water agencies were writing will serve letters on the back of casitas assuming that water would be available from casitas. At that time it was developed that if there was a need for allocation when

we did open up the door with the Mira Monte well. We approached the agencies that if they needed water supply from us that you would come in and get that supply from us thorough the allocation program. Meiners Oaks was one of those that I assume it was your boards policy not just Ron Singletons. In order to do additional water expansions they would send someone to our office to purchase an allocation from Casitas. I would write a will serve letter for that person having paid the fees and then write a letter to Ron saying your allocation has increased by ½ acre foot or whatever it was. That in turn goes to our administration and should have been included in that allocation documentation for Meiners Oaks.

Norm Davis added we went back through all our records and we have never received an increase. Steve Wickstrum asked what records are those. Norm Davis continued the records that we have in our office saying what our allocation is. There has never been an increase; the only thing we got was a decrease. We very rarely need to get water and we are looking into expanding our water supply. President Hicks said the issue needs to go to the water resources committee. Director Baggerly said we did hear about what Mike had to say about the situation and that we would try to get it on the agenda. Director Baggerly said one of the issues is leaving the door open for agencies to talk with one another. My concern is if we don't look in conjunction with the other agencies then when Casitas reaches stage two and the smaller agencies don't raise their rates to cause a water conservation measure to take effect what we do will only affect our direct customers and it won't cause a real conservation effort in the larger areas of our district. President Hicks said we will have to wait until John gets back and put it on the agenda. Norm Davis said that one time we did do some conservation and we sent letters to our people and it was when we had a severe drought and they cut back so much we had to raise the rates. We asked them to cut back but when they did it so will we didn't have enough money to pay the bills. Steve Wickstrum said he would try to find out about the allocation. We can get some documentation that shows. I know every will serve letter I ever wrote and sent to Ron should have ended up with an increase in allocation to Meiners Oaks every time that occurred. If there was a break down in that system I have all of the old letters. Rob Sawyer asked are we set up to make sure that Meiners Oaks is noticed of our meetings. Rebekah reported that all of our public meetings are noticed to the General Manager of Meiners Oaks.

Director Kaiser asked about the letter received from Tom Bryan. Rebekah reported that John asked that this be put on the agenda as an information item. Director Word said we took action at a previous board meeting. Rob Sawyer said that in Tom Bryan's situation he may have gone as far as he can administratively as he can with this board. The problem is all this is not a denial of service. It is a denial of a request for an extension of time on his current cycle.

Rob Sawyer reported that on the letter from the State Water Resources Control Board what is interesting is they are being very cautious. There is a federal and state jurisdictional squabble. They are saying that Cal Trout and to the federal government what we do in Sacramento is not necessarily the same duty or same area of concern that you have in Washington DC. I think the most interesting thing about it is Cal Trout has

the burden of proof in terms of showing the evidence. There is almost a hidden threat or it raises a different issue and that is where they do state that the scientific findings used by the federal government in the biological opinion are not binding on the state in a diversion permit. It is really two different things. They are almost saying if you want to come back up here and argue the science, o.k. There is some risk to that. It would not change the biological opinion but it would be interesting if the state made a ruling that the Federal government's evidentiary is incorrect. That is something that all the parties have to look at. Do we really want to mess with it? We can't just take a letter and automatically throw a federal order in essence a federal agency order as an extra layer. Director Baggerly said I don't see how any parties are able to do that. How would either Casitas or Cal Trout come up with enough scientific evidence? Director Word said NOAA couldn't come up with any either. They had their opinion and it was what counts. Steve Wickstrum added that is why there is five years.

President Hicks adjourned the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

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Secretary