MINUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024
12:00 NOON

The Regular Meeting of the Southeast Water Coalition Joint Powers Authority Administrative Entity was held in-person at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650. The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by AE Chair Glen Kau. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

Ms. Traci Gleason took attendance, and the following Administrative Entity members were present:

ITEM 1 - ROLL CALL

Jose Arroyo-Gutierrez	City of Cerritos
Andrew Caraveo	City of Commerce
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood
Glen Kau, AE Chair	City of Norwalk
Michelle Müller	City of Paramount
Adrian Rodriguez	City of Pico Rivera
Joanna Moreno	City of Vernon
Ray Cordero	City of Whittier

STAFF AND GUESTS ON SIGN-IN SHEET:

Traci Gleason	SEWC Staff
Nicholas Ghirelli	RWG
Brian Tripoline	DTSC (virtual)
Cheryl Prowell	DTSC (virtual)
Ajit Vaidya	DTSC (virtual)
Kyle Cason	City of Whittier (virtual)
Esther Rojas	WRD

Angie Mancillas	WRD
Stephan Tucker	WRD

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ITEM 3 - CONSENT CALENDAR

Ms. Moreno moved to approve the consent calendar.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Kau and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Arroyo-Gutierrez, Caraveo, Nguyen, Kau, Müller, Moreno, Rodriguez, Cordero**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 4 - FY 2023-24 AUDIT UPDATE

Mr. Kau began the conversation by recalling that earlier this year, the previous lead agency (Vernon) received a proposal from the Pun Group LLC which had conducted the preceding year's annual audit for SEWC. In an effort to retain the most cost-effective and independent auditing firm for SEWC, the AE previously requested that the AE Chair, Glen Kau seek quotations from multiple firms.

Mr. Kau noted that following the September AE Meeting, he prepared and posted a Request for Quotation "RFQ" for the FY 2023-24 Audit of SEWC through PlanetBids. The AE Chair also reached out to various auditors, requesting them to submit a quotation.

Mr. Kau noted that SEWC received one quotation via the solicitation process, Price Paige & Company, and opened a discussion regarding whether or not to bring this one option to the Board. It was ultimately decided that this option should be brought to the Board for approval.

Mr. Nguyen moved to approve the following:

- Review audit services solicitation process and make recommendation to the Governing Board.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Moreno and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Arroyo-Gutierrez, Caraveo, Nguyen, Kau, Müller, Moreno, Rodriguez, Cordero**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ITEM 5 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING WHITTIER NARROWS OPERABLE UNIT (WNOU)

Ajit Vaidya, Dept. of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), began the discussion by virtually presenting an overview of the San Gabriel Valley Superfund Sites, highlighting it as one of California's largest groundwater cleanup efforts. The Main San Gabriel Basin (Main Basin} serves as a critical drinking water source for over 1 million residents but has been contaminated by activities such as chemical storage, metal cleaning, rocket fuel manufacturing, and chemical recycling. The primary contaminants of concern are volatile organic compounds (VOCs), along with emerging contaminants like 1,4-Dioxane and PFAS that are not currently part of the Superfund/CERCLA remedy. The Whittier Narrows Operable Unit (WNOU), encompassing two square miles of contaminated groundwater, focuses on treating chemicals like PCE and TCE. Cleanup efforts, initially funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)(2003-2013), are now managed by DTSC at an annual operational cost of $1-$2 million. The interim remedy aims to treat VOC contamination, contain the groundwater plume, prevent its migration from the Main Basin to the Central Basin, and protect downgradient drinking water wells.

Mr. Vaidya noted that DTSC has received $7.1 million through Proposition 1 funding to enhance the cleanup efforts, including increasing groundwater pumping rates, improving plume capture, and providing treated drinking water to local communities. Construction for this project is expected to begin in early 2025, with a drinking water permit anticipated by early 2026. Mr. Vaidya noted that the WNOU remedy has contained contamination, preventing its spread into the Central Basin and safeguarding drinking water wells. He also noted that DTSC will continue optimizing the remedy to prevent downgradient migration of contamination, degrade the VOC plume in groundwater, and ensure treated water is used beneficially.

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Vaidya noted that any comments on the DTSC's plans for WNOU should be sent to him via email.

ITEM 6 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SEWC FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO THE

DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER (DDW) – HOLLYWOOD DISTRICT

Mr. Kau provided a recap, noting that following the issuance of the original letter to DDW, the DDW Southern California Branch Deputy Director, Sean McCarthy and Section Chief, Ashley Dummer met with four (4) AE staff members from the Cities of Norwalk, Whittier, Pico Rivera and Lakewood to review the content of the letter. The AE members expressed collective concerns regarding permit delays and unnecessary requirements. Both the DDW Deputy Director and Section Chief agreed in concept with the AE that DDW needed to provide better assistance in streamlining permit issuance and in assisting to find ways to improve the process.

Since then, members of SEWC have seen more involvement from the new Section Chief in the permitting process and an improvement in DDW's willingness to work with SEWC member cities; however, it is noted that there are continuous attempts from the local District Engineer to impose unwarranted permit conditions on member cities.

To address these concerns, legal counsel from the City of Lakewood prepared a draft letter to send to the State Water Resources Control Board.

Mr. Cordero noted that they have seen more cooperation from SWRCB after the April letter was issued. Mr. Nguyen noted the new letter states that SEWC members have seen progress and is aimed to have continued conversations between SWRCB management and Staff. It was also noted that the Board previously decided they did not want the letter to come from a single agency.

Adrian Rodriguez left the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Mr. Nguyen moved to approve the following:

Recommend to the SEWC Governing Board that the attached follow-up letter be sent to the State Water Resources Control Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arroyo-Gutierrez and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Arroyo-Gutierrez, Caraveo, Nguyen, Müller, Moreno**

NOES: **Cordero**

ABSTAIN: **Kau**

ITEM 7 – LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON BILLS RELEVANT TO SEWC

Mr. Kau updated the AE on AB 1827, which has been approved by the Governor. He noted that AB 1827 outlines requirements for how local agencies can levy assessments and property-related fees, including public notice and approval by property owners or voters.

ITEM 8 – WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ITEM 9 - ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Nguyen brought up a potential issue regarding the Water Replenishment District's (WRD) Budget Advisory Committee (BAC). He noted that since 2018, the BAC reviewed the budget, and three new members were elected this year. Mr. Nguyen continued by stating that immediately after the election, WRD decided to change the committee structure and process for appointments/elections, even though they promised publicly not to do so. He also noted that the Board approved an ad-hoc committee structure of 7 members. Mr. Nguyen asked that SEWC consider sending a letter opposing the new structure formed by WRD. Mr. Ghirelli clarified that the decision to send the final letter would have to occur at a future meeting because this action item was not on the posted agenda.

Mr. Cordero moved to approve the following:

- Due to the need for action before the next AE Meeting, place a discussion/action item on the next Policy Board Agenda regarding the WRD Budget Advisory Committee issues as described by Mr. Nguyen. As part of the staff preparation of this item, staff should include a proposed draft letter developed by the Cities of Whittier and Lakewood for inclusion in the next Policy Board Agenda packet.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Nguyen and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Arroyo-Gutierrez, Caraveo, Nguyen, Kau, Müller, Moreno, Cordero**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 10 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity Meeting will be held on March 20, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts

& Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650.

Chair

1.16.25
Date