

**MINUTES OF THE  
2,157<sup>th</sup> REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE  
MIDDLE RIO GRANDE CONSERVANCY DISTRICT  
DECEMBER 9, 2019**

Directors having been duly notified, Madam Chair Dunning called the regular meeting to order at 3:07 pm at the MRGCD General Office. The following Directors and Staff were present:

<b>DIRECTORS</b>		<b>STAFF</b>	
Karen Dunning, Madam Chair	Present	Mike Hamman	Chief Engineer/CEO
Joaquin Baca, Vice-Chair	Absent	Dr. Chuck DuMars	Chief Water Counsel
John Kelly, Director	Present	Lorna Wiggins	General Counsel
Valerie Moore, Director	Present	David M. Fergeson	Secretary-Treasurer
Michael T. Sandoval, Director	Present	David Gensler	Water Operations Manager
Barbara Baca, Director	Present	Jason Casuga	Engineer Manager
Stephanie Russo Baca, Director	Present	Santiago Chávez	Secretary-Treasurer
		Alicia Lopez	Engineer I
		Adrienne Martinez	Engineer I
		Christina Nardi	Human Resources Director
		Joe Brem	Albuquerque Division Manager
		Becky Burnham	Budget Analyst
		Judy McSweeney	Accountant

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

Glen Duggins	Viola Sanchez, BIA
Sonja Schroeder, Chile Association	Elias Martinez
Joan Hashimoto, Corrales Bosque Commission	Eugene Pickett

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Being his last MRGCD Board Meeting, David Fergeson was asked to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at today's meeting.

There was a moment of silence for the passing of John Thompson, Sr. John Lee was a long-time lobbyist for the MRGCD and did an outstanding job for the District for well over 30 years being a part of the District's family along with his son, John Thompson, Jr., now our lobbyist. The Board all sent their condolences to the Thompson family.

Madam Chair Dunning declared a quorum and welcomed guests, as well as noted that the meeting was publicly noticed.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – APPROVAL OF THE MRGCD BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

Since Viola Sanchez will be running late today, the only change to the agenda is that her report will be moved to begin after the recess for the holiday reception.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING AGENDA WITH THE ABOVE-NOTED CHANGE**. Director Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously**.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 – CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Consideration/Approval of Payment Ratification - December 9, 2019
- b. Consideration/Approval of November 2019 Invoice for Wiggins Williams & Wiggins
- c. Consideration/Approval of November Invoice for Law & Resource Planning Associates, PC
- d. Consideration/Approval of Minutes for Regular Board Meeting - November 12, 2019
- e. Discussion/Approval of 2020 MRGCD Holiday Schedule
- f. Memo on MRGCD Approved Licenses for November 2019 (For Informational Purposes Only)

Director Sandoval made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA**.  
Director Moore seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously**.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 – DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT** - David M. Fergeson, Secretary/Treasurer

David Fergeson discussed the First Quarter Financial report stating all in all, nothing different or major in terms of where MRGCD sits financially since it is still early in the year (first quarter). Director Kelly stated the Finance Committee reviewed it on November 18<sup>th</sup> and recommended approval as presented.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT**. Director Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously**.

David Fergeson continued with his report. He pointed out revenues will be less in January due to House Bill 407 which delays property tax collections. Mr. Fergeson believes MRGCD is sitting in a good financial position, however.

Mr. Fergeson reported that the Audit Committee met prior to this Board Meeting. MRGCD has gotten a clean audit from the auditors, and there were zero findings.

Mr. Fergeson, at the request of Director Moore, compiled a list of newly-purchased equipment the last couple of years. This report was broken down by Division and placed in the Board packets for review. Mr. Fergeson noted that we are at about 49%-50% in newer equipment (2015 forward). Madam Chair Dunning asked if there was a mechanism to track the productivity savings with the newer equipment. Mr. Fergeson responded that one way would be to look at the repair costs. Mike Hamman added that they will be implementing an in-depth maintenance history tracking system for every vehicle. This system will notify drivers when to bring their vehicle in for routine maintenance, i.e., oil changes, etc.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 – ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR (Comments are held to six (6) minutes)**

#### **Director John Kelly**

Director Kelly received an email from Ray Powell, Former State Land Commissioner, thanked the District for positive efforts and strong leadership in the Middle Valley. He noted a special thanks to Lawrence Otero, his ditch rider, and his MRGCD team for their "great work in bringing the lifegiving water from the north." Director Kelly asked Mike Hamman to place the note in Mr. Otero's personnel file.

**Sonya Schroeder**

Ms. Schroeder is with the New Mexico Chile Association and New Mexico Certified Chile. She was here today to thank the Board for supporting the New Mexico's first Chile Taste-Off in Socorro this past fall. The event went so well, that they are planning a bigger and better event in 2020. She had a special thank you to Director Moore in that she helped set up and had some volunteers there. She noted that there was participation from big and small farmers from all over the state, including a few tribal communities. She also noted that the town of Socorro was awesome in helping make the event a success.

Director Kelly noted that MRGCD will be sponsoring the event in the same manner for 2020. Ms. Schroeder was thankful. Director Moore had great fun and noted she will get more volunteers for the event and she herself will help where necessary.

**Glen Duggins**

Lemitar farmer and former MRGCD Chair, Glen Duggins came forward to represent the Board of the New Mexico Chile Association. He extended a heartfelt thank you to the MRGCD for supporting the Taste-Off. He noted how good of a job the MRGCD crew continues to do. He also noted that, thanks to the Taste-Off, they gained a few good farms in the Association. He believes it is very critical to educate the people of New Mexico to look for the label to know their chile is local and not from abroad. Lastly, gave his well wishes to Lorna and Bruce Wiggins and farewell to Mr. Ferguson.

**Elias Martinez**

Mr. Martinez resides in Belen. He is having a problem getting water from the ditch as there's not a check structure to help raise the water. He has spoken with Director Russo Baca, and is following up on the status of his request. Director Russo Baca responded that he, David Gensler, and Mr. Hamman have been having ongoing discussions about this. David Gensler noted that he has been out several times to the ditch and the property to assess the situation. This is not an uncommon issue within the District, wherein there is a small parcel of land requiring water and there are several options being reviewed. Mr. Hamman also mentioned the Irrigation Committee will take this up at their next meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 – REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****a. Bureau of Reclamation - Jennifer Faler, Area Manager**

Jennifer Faler reported that today Reclamation has just finished moving all the water down south. They will be cutting back releases from El Vado. So, the water will work its way through the system, get down to Elephant Butte, and the releases will be done, leaving the reservoirs fairly empty considering what a great water year it's been.

There will be more fish water coming in to next year than has occurred in quite a while. With the final leases this year, next year's leases, and what we have in storage, there should be about 30,000-acre feet of fish water. Stating they are prepared for a dry year next year if we should have one.

Ms. Faler estimated that, as of today, the deficit that New Mexico will owe Texas under the Rio Grande Compact will be about 35,000-acre feet. She also reported that El Paso Water District is planning to start up next year on March 11<sup>th</sup>, so New Mexico may start up at the same time.

El Vado Safety of Dams Project is moving right along, currently undergoing the environmental review. There is a draft NEPA document in place; however, it is not out for review yet. There

will be public meetings in Albuquerque and in Chama. Reclamation and the Corps are supporting the Water Authority's effort to get native storage in Abiquiu, which seems to be on track, at least at this point to get into the 2020 WRDA bill (the Water Resources Development Acts bill).

Ms. Faler acknowledged the District for all the hard work that it has been doing (the Drought Plan completion and the Socorro Hub Project completion). She is hearing great things about the water leasing efforts, conservation committee that is set up, and the ability to hire staff to support those efforts.

Regarding title transfer, Ms. Faler noted that Reclamation is trying to reduce the complexity as much as they can. There will be three phases that will be implemented: Phase one will be low-hanging fruit with properties that fit the streamline legislation and do not involve pueblo irrigation infrastructure beginning south of Isleta Pueblo down to the bottom of MRGCD. Phase two will then go north for the streamline legislation criteria. Phase three will be everything else that will probably require legislation from Congress. "Everything else" is being limited to canals and everything out of channel. Reclamation will not transfer El Vado. They will hang on to their dams.

Ms. Faler noted that one of the commitments in the 2016 Biological Opinion is to help the Bosque Del Apache with their irrigation infrastructure. Jason Casuga kicked off a meeting with Reclamation to share the lessons learned during the Socorro Hub Project. There will be transparency in BDA's irrigation system, much like MRGCD's irrigation system.

Madam Chair Dunning asked Ms. Faler what the latest hurdle is that she has encountered. Ms. Faler responded that the latest hurdle is actually the greatest hurdle. Reclamation is not allowed to transfer "reserved works." So, if Reclamation is performing the O&M (like El Vado), they are not allowed to transfer under the streamline. Someone recently found in an old document that jetty jacks are reserved works. Therefore, discussion has been taking place with many questions coming up regarding jetty jacks.

One last thing Ms. Faler discussed was the determination of capacity for Elephant Butte which must be done every five years. The survey was done in 2017, and sits in Denver. They've updated the capacity, and it will become official in January, 2020.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 – RECOGNITION OF SERVICE FOR DAVID M. FERGESON, MRGCD SECRETARY/TREASURER**

Mike Hamman gave his thanks and gratitude for the years of service of David Fergeson who played a significant role in MRGCD having a sound financial system. Mr. Fergeson was presented with a few parting gifts, including a plaque.

Madam Chair Dunning explained that the Secretary/Treasurer is the one of two positions only chosen by the Board and, thus, has a special relationship with the Board. Director Kelly shared memories of when he first worked with Mr. Fergeson and went on to express his gratitude on behalf of the Board for the years of service to David Fergeson. Director Moore said that having David as our CFO and in Finance Meetings has always given her a sense of comfort; doing a good job with clean audits. Director Baca being new to the Finance Committee thanked him for his service also. Director Sandoval also being a newcomer to the board wished him success and happiness in his

retirement. Director Russo Baca also thanked him for easing her into the MRGCD finances and hopes he enjoys his retirement.

The Board meeting then recessed as everyone partook in a holiday reception and celebration of David Ferguson's retirement.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 8 – RECESS - HOLIDAY RECEPTION**

The meeting reconvened at 4:35pm welcoming Viola Sanchez to approach the board for her report.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 6 – REPORT(S) FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

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

Viola Sanchez reported that BIA is now in full-blown operation and maintenance season. The ditches were shut off November 15<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Sanchez is pleased with the work on road culverts in Santo Domingo. Things on the O&M front are looking good.

Details of a new O&M contract between the BIA and the District will start to be discussed soon, since the existing one expires February 28, 2021. Discussion ensued on the topic of the new contract. Vice-Chair Baca, Director Sandoval, and Director Russo Baca are on the BIA Negotiating Committee and will meet later in the year. Ms. Sandoval will be updating the tax data from the four different counties within the next six months. She discussed O&M indexing and suggested that the Board invite David Fisher, the head of BIA Irrigation, from Lakewood, Colorado, to present to the Board on irrigation budgeting.

Next year, water operations will be interesting in that for the first time since the '50s or '60s, BIA will operate storage for Prior and Paramount and possibly be in significant debit status under the Compact (Article VI and IV). There are different ways to handle this, and the BIA will be looking at the various ways.

### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 9 – DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION M-12-09-19-163 AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF ENGINEER/CEO AND STAFF TO ENGAGE IN A COOPERATIVE PLANNING INITIATIVE FOR THE ACEQUIA MADRE DE ATRISCO PARTNERSHIP - Director Baca and Mike Hamman, CE/CEO**

Director Baca explained small changes to the document. They also added that the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA) will also be a partner in the initiative. There are four entities that will sign companion resolutions: MRGCD, City of Albuquerque, County of Bernalillo, and the ABCWUA, all with matching \$25,000 contribution. Director Baca urged the Board's support stating with the seed monies will bring a greater commitment from the four partnering agencies.

Director Moore expressed her concerns. As a side note, later, on today's agenda, MRGCD will be discussing asking the State Legislature for capital outlay funds, which could be a match of the \$100,000 total seed money. Dr. DuMars added that the fact that it's taken years to get this far is a positive fact as Bernalillo County and ABCWUA were at odds in past with the South Valley and are now committing in principle to the project.

Director Russo Baca made the **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION M-12-09-19-163**. Director Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously**.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 10 – REPORT(S) FROM THE CHIEF ENGINEER (Mike A. Hamman)**

**a. Water Operations Report - David Gensler, Water Operations Division Manager**

David Gensler reported our winter officially begins in 2 weeks. So far, the late fall has been nice. There have been rains in the Middle Rio Grande valley, and snow in the mountains. Rains in the valley have not produced much runoff. Only a few small duration inflow spikes have occurred, from the north diversion channel we saw a couple to 500 cfs, and 1 to 1000 cfs. But these were very brief, a matter of hours, and didn't put much water in the river. On the other hand, soil moisture throughout the valley is great. It is wet everywhere and deep down. The moisture is a boom for farmers, and certainly hasn't hurt us in terms of keeping conveyance losses low.

Snow is off to a good start too. Our old friend Cumbres Trestle SNOTEL is showing 9.1" of Snow Water Equivalent today. That's not bad, about 132% of average. For comparison, we only had 5" at this time last year. But it's early in the winter, and way too soon to get excited about any of the snow numbers. They can go up, or they can go down. Still, it is always nice to have some snow numbers early in the season to report. For a few more, Santa Fe is 7.3" and 194% of normal. Jemez is 3.6" and 150% of normal. Taos is 7.7". But up at Wolf Creek pass, only 8.8" and 97% of normal.

We will need some snow in the spring. El Vado is effectively emptied now. There should be only a few hundred AF of MRGCD RG water still in storage, and that will be coming out the next day or two. As feared, every drop has been sent to get our 2019 RGC delivery at least somewhat close to par. That's the downside to the sort of runoff we had last spring. We haven't done as well as I hoped either. As of Nov 30, we still had a deficit of 52,000 AF. NM ISC is now predicting an end of year deficit of 35K AF. He's still optimistic and hopes we get down into the mid 20's. It is disappointing to have released so much water and still not been able to close the gap. Our conveyance efficiency through the valley, at least down to below San Acacia, has seemed very good, but every day there is less water arriving at Elephant Butte than we expect.

So we are still behind the curve, and barring a precipitation or accounting miracle, we will have to tag the first water into El Vado next spring as Rio Grande Compact reserve per ART 6 of the compact. On the other hand, RGC project storage is now closing on 550K AF and it seems possible we will be able to store normally next spring.

On the other hand, project storage is now hovering right around 550,000-acre feet and climbing. There's going to be a lot of water down there come March 1, 2020. Mr. Gensler believes as of March 1, 2020, we are going to be well out of Article 7 Restrictions. What happens when the districts down there start releasing, it is hard to say; however, Mr. Gensler thinks there is some room to hope that we will be storing normally through at least a good portion or maybe even all of next spring, depending on what the snowpack does for us.

Madam Chair Dunning asked Mr. Gensler about an *Albuquerque Journal* article that noted 2020 will be neither an El Nino year nor a La Nina year. She asked if the forecasts were good for precipitation in 2020. David Gensler responded that his experience with forecasts is that they are all over the map. Mr. Gensler stated that if the forecasts are true, he would be happy to

have La Nada. He would be happy to just have a normal year with no extremes one way or the other.

Director Moore, in reviewing the minutes from the last meeting, noted that we were having problems with sediment in the water going down to the Butte and that all of the water is not getting to the Butte. She asked if anyone was doing anything about that since it is cutting into the Compact distribution. Mr. Gensler responded that they have been watching this for the last eight weeks. It actually seemed like the conveyance efficiency through that project has worked better than he expected. There does seem to be some water missing. We seem to consistently have about 400-acre feet less arriving at the Butte every day than he thought we would have, based on our release. Mr. Gensler does not know where the water is going. He is hopeful that some of it is going into bank storage, and it will continue to come out. He thinks Reclamation's hope on that channel realignment project down there was that the channel would reform and reshape itself after they will open it up with their machines. So far, that seems to be happening. There is a period of adjustment. He thinks it will correct itself over time, so he doesn't think there is anything that actually has to be done manually.

Mike Hamman commented that they are estimating that the total flow at Otowi will be right around 1.4-million. The District is supposed to get approximately one million-acre feet down to reservoir. Mr. Hamman noted that Mr. Gensler has done a good job with 35,000 out of a million. David Gensler noted that he has been pondering if there was anything the District could have done differently in 2019. The only thing that came to mind was the District could have stored more water at El Vado, had we had the fully functioning reservoir. We were capped on our storage this year, and so we had to bypass some of that water through the valley at an inopportune time of the year.

**b. Report on Winter Work Plan and Projects - Jason Casuga, Engineering Manager**

Jason Casuga reported that all is going well for the winter work projects. The crew is building weirs, building checks, rebuilding culverts, shaping bank lines, and removing trees. This year they are working in a more coordinated effort. He is happy that engineering is working with hydrology (David Gensler and Alicia Lopez) to get the projects done. They have active projects in every division, and everyone is coming together well as a team. He is planning to show the Board more of the spatial distribution in future reports.

Mr. Casuga wanted to especially give kudos to Alicia Lopez as she has been guiding the designs after her hearing what Mr. Casuga and Mr. Gensler would like to see.

Madam Chair Dunning asked if the crews were having an especially hard time because of the ground being so saturated. Jason Casuga responded that they were having no more trouble than usual.

**c. Resolution of the Board of Directors Authorizing Change in Signature Authority - David M. Ferguson, Secretary/Treasurer**

No discussion or questions were raised for this topic.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. SA-12-09-19-28 AUTHORIZING CHANGE IN SIGNATURE AUTHORITY.** Director Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

**d. Resolution of the Board of Directors Authorizing Transferring of the Land Sales Endowment Fund and the Water Bank Revenue Fund from Bank of America Accounts to State Treasury Accounts - David M. Fergeson, Secretary/Treasurer**

David Fergeson would like to move the land sales endowment fund and the water bank revenue fund from their existing Bank of America accounts to the MRGCD State Treasury accounts, so that they may earn much better interest rates (an increase of approximately 2% in earned interest). Discussion ensued regarding the history of the prior Resolutions.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. BA-12-09-19-79 AUTHORIZING TRANSFERRING OF THE LAND SALES ENDOWMENT FUND AND THE WATER BANK REVENUE FUND FROM BANK OF AMERICA ACCOUNTS TO STATE TREASURY ACCOUNTS.** Director Moore seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

**e. Review and Approval of the MRGCD 2020 Legislature Capital Outlay Request - Mike Hamman, CE/CEO**

Mike Hamman provided a handout in the Board packets detailing four items to include in the 2020 Capital Outlay Request:

1. Improvement of the Loretta Drive and Alameda Blvd (SR 528) intersection to improve public safety for access into the recreational parking area on MRGCD land at the boat ramp - Phase One Funding for Design and Construction \$300,000 and this will be coordinated with Bernalillo County's capital outlay requests.
2. Planning and Conceptual Design Funding Request to assist MRGCD, Bernalillo County, ABCWUA and the City of Albuquerque in the Site Development of the Atrisco Lateral Heading Area near the Rio Grande State Park Open Space at Central Avenue – Planning and Concept Development \$100,000 to be cost-shared by the local partners including a \$25,000 contribution from MRGCD and potentially Bernalillo County.
3. Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area Pedestrian Bridge across East Riverside Drain to Allow Access into the Rio Grande Bosque – Design and Construction \$225,000. MRGCD, through its On-call Engineer, BHI, prepared concept design and cost estimate.
4. Improvements to Socorro County Riverine Parks, Trails and Land Treatment to Help Protect Habitat and Communities from Wildland Fire Damage - \$30,000 to be cost-shared with MRGCD and City of Socorro.

After much discussion by the Directors and Yasmeen Najmi, it was decided to add a fifth Capital Outlay request for \$100,000 for District-wide, including all four counties and six pueblos, necessities of public safety concerns, including gates, signage, guard rails, etc.

Director Moore made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MRGCD 2020 LEGISLATURE CAPITAL OUTLAY REQUEST ADDING THE FIFTH ITEM FOR DISTRICT-WIDE ACCESS CONTROL, SIGNAGE,** Director Kelly seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

**f. Update on the Conservation Advisory Committee Activities and Program Overview and Outreach Document - Mike Hamman, CE/CEO, and Casey Ish, Water Resource Specialist**

Casey Ish introduced himself as the District's Water Resource Specialist, straight out of UNM Law School. He started out by detailing his background to the Board. He has started to take over operations of the Conservation Advisory Committee. Mr. Ish reported that the conservation program is aiming to increase the District's resilience to a highly variable water supply and to address new challenges faced by the District, our constituents, and our partners.

A primary goal of the program is to advance efficient water delivery and use, less extending the dependability of water supply for sustainable agriculture, as well as bosque and riverine habitat for species conservation. The guiding principle of the program is that sustaining healthy agriculture in the middle valley is crucial to maintain a healthy Rio Grande ecosystem, and he think that's a principle that we're going to be pushing really hard in our outreach campaign. The program is still in early stages of development. A copy of the outreach and overview document was distributed in the Board packets.

Mr. Ish believes the committee is very diverse and is exciting to work with. At the next meeting, scheduled for December 19<sup>th</sup>, the committee will work on putting together an outreach schedule to educate the public. Yasmeen Najmi added that the committee will be working on pilot programs in the near future also.

Director Kelly questions a payment made to Agua Caliente LLC. Mr. Ish did not have the information in front of him, but he will send the information about the expenditure to Board members via email. Mr. Hamman added he believes it is Suzanne Smith, a committee volunteer.

**g. Report on 2019 MRG-CAP Symposium, November 14, 2019 - Yasmeen Najmi, Planner**

In 2014 or 2015, an agreement was passed to enter into a conservation action planning process, which is the nature conservancy process. With some funding, we hired the Colorado and New Mexico Natural Heritage Programs to produce this plan. The reason behind it was to look at our properties, particularly the Bosque and the river, and what are the really key very vital resources there that are in need of conservation, specifically riparian and wetland resources and major wildlife community (birds and fish). We also looked at wildlife corridors and also ditch and drain habitats.

Since the plan was made, the District has been thinking about how to move it along. We wanted to bring people back to look at the plan and the targets contained therein. We have a number of conservation targets. We identified threats to those resources and then assigned them ratings (poor, fair, good, very good).

We had a workshop on November 15<sup>th</sup> and had presentations from people who are experts in the field. This was to update people on the current status of the plan and make recommendations for how we might want to change some of these targets or adjust them. The workshop was well attended. We had a panel of Land Managers that was centered on implementation, talking about this plan and how do we take it forward.

The plan going forward is to have more discussion of strategies and goals with the City of Albuquerque, Department of Game and Fish, folks from Socorro, and the Pueblos. Discussion

ensued with more details on the presentations that were given at the workshop, as well as opinions regarding maintenance of ditches and drains throughout the entire District.

Director Baca asked if there is an implementation mechanism to educate people about the maintenance and conservation efforts. Ms. Najmi responded that there are goals in the Conservation Action Plan and that part of the follow up includes education and outreach, which was also discussed during the workshop. Ms. Najmi agrees about the importance of socializing these topics more with the public.

Mike Hamman recognized Joan Hashimoto, Chair of the Corrales Bosque Commission (in the audience) as the District is working with her on a similar process at the Harvey Jones Channel outfall in conjunction with other work along the riverside drain (aka the clear ditch) to manage vegetation, to prevent wildfires and enhance habitat goals.

**Since the meeting has gone until 6:00 o'clock, and since there are a couple more items left on the agenda, Director Kelly made the MOTION TO CONTINUE THE MEETING THROUGH COMPLETION OF THE AGENDA. Director Baca seconded the motion. The MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

**It should also be noted that Director Moore had to leave the meeting at this time.**

**h. Report on the Forage Growers Workshop, December 3, 2019 - Mike Hamman, CE/CEO, and Director Russo Baca**

Mike Hamman provided the agenda for the workshop that was held on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. He gave a presentation during the workshop, and Director Russo Baca attended. This is the third year that Mr. Hamman has given a State of MRGCD presentation to the group. This group is primarily made up of Valencia County farmers; however, people from other counties also attended. The workshop is intended to focus on becoming better forage growers.

After the workshop, Newt McCarty, member of our Conservation Advisory group, discussed with Mr. Hamman and Director Russo Baca that he would like to create different agricultural opportunities beyond forage growing so that folks can have a little higher income. Casey Ish has taken the lead in putting together an MRGCD workshop to get people acquainted and start discussion on this possible endeavor.

Director Russo Baca added that she has been working with Newt McCarty on this idea for about six years. Ironically, she had a potential irrigator meet with her the next day regarding the same issue. She is happy that Mr. Ish is taking the lead on the getting the workshop organized.

**i. Report on the MRGESA Collaborative Program Science Symposium, December 3-4, 2019 - David Gensler, Water Operations Manager, and Yasmeen Najmi, Planning Specialist**

David Gensler reported that several members of the District attended the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Collaborative Program Science Symposium. He gave some background from the first meeting, where they mostly discussed fish biology, which he believes laid the groundwork for the 2016 Biological Opinion. He reported that this meeting was very different in that it was not focused on fish biology, but more on the river, river processes and various habitat issues (including nutrient resources for critters, water chemistry, and development of habitat needs). Mr. Gensler thought it was going in a nice direction.

Yasmeen Najmi added that while the first day was focused around hydrology and geomorphology, the second day was focused on bird species (the Flycatcher and the Yellow Billed Cuckoo). There are efforts to pull together information in a geodatabase, which Ms. Najmi thinks is a great idea. There were also presentations on the salt cedar beetle, which does not seem to be doing lots of damage, but now there are two beetle species that may be hybridizing in the Bosque Del Apache. She felt the presentations were very interesting and this is time well spent since there's limited time for MRGCD staff to do the reading of reports to catch up on science and research.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 11 – REPORT(S) FROM THE MRGCD ATTORNEY(S) - Chief Water Counsel and/or General Counsel**

**a. Update on the Blue Buffalo/City of Santa Fe Water Rights Transfer Protest - Dr. Charles DuMars, Chief Water Counsel**

Dr. DuMars handed out a letter to the Board that was drafted by himself and Mike Hamman. Since the MRGCD has vacated or set aside the pre-hearing conference on the merits, Dr. DuMars and Mr. Hamman decided to try an approach of changing the tone of the negotiation. In the letter, they are trying to show that there are true concerns for both parties and show that it behooves both sides to try to come to resolution, instead of going to trial.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 12 – REPORT(S) FROM THE MRGCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**a. Report on Finance Committee Meeting, November 18, 2019 - Directors Kelly, Moore, and Baca**

This report was given during Item 4. The Finance Committee met with David Fergeson to discuss the first quarter financials. The Committee recommends the report's approval by the Board.

Director Moore made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORT ON THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING, NOVEMBER 18, 2019**. Director Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously**.

**b. Report on Conservation Advisory Meeting, November 21, 2019 - Director Moore**

Director Moore reported that the Upton Center is adding two grad students to their staff to work on helping farmers sell locally and also to work on the Middle Rio Grande Conservation Plan, developing strategies for conservation in the Rio Chama project.

Director Moore made a recommendation to Casey Ish and Adrian (Oglesby) that they might check out funding with the Department of Ag with the Farm Bill because there might be some money there that would help to fund some of the things we want to look into.

They would like to put together a presentation of some kind that shows what the river will look like long term (in 50 years).

They also discussed outreach to community, i.e., chile farm tours, acequia tours, walking tours, pueblo tours as they are the oldest farming community in New Mexico (possibly the country), and possibly next year working with the Festival of the Cranes and tours of farms on the Bosque Del Apache.

Director Moore added that she believes the committee is good mix of eclectic and diverse committee members that will bring different viewpoints to the table.

Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO APPROVE THE REPORT ON THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY MEETING, NOVEMBER 21, 2019.** Director Russo Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

With no further comments, questions or concerns, Director Kelly made the **MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.** Director Baca seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Approved to be the correct Minutes of the Board of Directors of December 9, 2019.

**ATTESTED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike A. Hamman, CE/CEO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Dunning, Madam Chair  
MRGCD Board of Directors