

## MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING – June 14, 2021

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by President Reinhart on June 14, 2021, via teleconference pursuant to the provisions of the Governor’s Executive Orders N-25-20 and N-29-20 due to COVID-19. Members of the public did not attend this meeting in person.

Directors Present: LaMar, McLaughlin, Withers, Swan, and Reinhart

Directors Absent: None.

Also Present: General Manager Cook, Executive Director of Water Policy Weghorst, Executive Director of Technical Services Burton, Executive Director of Operations Chambers, Executive Director of Finance and Administration Clary, Director of Water Quality and Regulatory Compliance Colston, Director of Recycling Operations Zepeda, Director of Information Services Malone, Director of Maintenance Mykitta, Director of Human Resources Mitcham, Director of Strategic Communications and Advocacy / Deputy General Counsel Compton, Secretary Bonkowski, General Counsel Collins, Special Legal Counsel Brown of Payne and Fears, staff, and public.

WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None.

ITEMS RECEIVED TOO LATE TO BE AGENDIZED: None.

### CONSENT CALENDAR

General Manager Cook said that prior to voting on the Consent Calendar, and specifically Item No. 6, he said that each June the Board typically is asked to consider changes to the salary schedule for District employees. Mr. Cook said that pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(c)(3), prior to taking final action on changes to salary schedules that include salary ranges for local agency executives, he would like to provide a summary of the recommended action. He said that Item No. 6 will revise the District’s salary grade schedules based on a Cost-of-Living adjustment of 3.6% for FY 2021-22 and adopt a resolution superseding Resolution No. 2020-22 and adopting a revised Schedule of Positions and Salary Rate ranges for Managers, Exempt Supervisors, Confidential and Exempt employees effective July 1, 2021. Mr. Cook further said that he would like to note that staff slightly modified the Salary Grade Schedule originally included as Exhibit “A” to this item on the agenda as the position of Environmental Compliance Analyst (grade U12E) was inadvertently left off, and the modified version includes this position. There being no further comments, on MOTION by Withers, seconded by McLaughlin and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (5-0) McLaughlin, Swan, Withers, LaMar and Reinhart voting aye, and 0 noes **ITEMS 3 THROUGH 8 WERE APPROVED AS FOLLOWS:**

#### 3. BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Recommendation: That the minutes of the May 24, 2021 Regular Board meeting be approved as presented.

CONSENT CALENDAR (CONTINUED)

4. RATIFY/APPROVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Recommendation: That the Board ratify/approve the meetings and events for Steven LaMar, Karen McLaughlin, Douglas Reinhart, Peer Swan, and John Withers, as described.

5. 2021 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATE

Recommendation: That the Board adopt a "support in concept" and "seek amendments" position on the Future Western Water Infrastructure and Drought Resiliency Act.

6. IRWD SALARY GRADE SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR MANAGERS, EXEMPT SUPERVISORS, CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYEES AND EXEMPT EMPLOYEES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-22

Recommendation: That the Board approve the revised salary grade schedules based on a Cost-of-Living Adjustment of 3.6% for FY 2021-22 and adopt the following resolution by title superseding Resolution No. 2020-22 and adopting a revised Schedule of Positions and Salary Rate Ranges for Managers, Exempt Supervisors, Confidential Employees and Exempt Employees.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021 -9

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT, SUPERSEDING  
RESOLUTION NO. 2020-22 AND ADOPTING A REVISED  
SCHEDULE OF POSITIONS AND SALARY RATE RANGES

7. CONSULTANT SELECTION FOR RECYCLED WATER USE SITE INSPECTION, TESTING AND TRAINING

Recommendation: That the Board authorize the General Manager to execute Professional Service Agreements with Real Water Consultants and West Yost Associates, each in an amount not to exceed \$365,000, to provide on-call recycled water use site visual inspections, cross-connection tests, and site supervisor training for a two-year period.

8. WATER EFFICIENCY TACTICAL INCENTIVE FUNDING AUTHORIZATION

Recommendation: That the Board authorize the General Manager to allocate \$230,000 in funding to the FY 2021-22 rebate programs administered through the Water Conservation Participation Agreement between Municipal Water District of Orange County and IRWD and execute addenda to the agreement as may be necessary to allocate funds to specific programs and modify device incentive levels based on customer participation rates and regional program funding levels.

## ACTION CALENDAR

### WATERSMART SOFTWARE VARIANCE NO. 2

Water Efficiency Specialist Baquerizo reported that the WaterSmart Program was first implemented as a pilot program in 2012 with 1,000 IRWD customers and based on the amount of water savings and positive customer responses, the program was expanded in FY 2013-14 into a full-scale program that targeted over-allocation, single-family customers. Mr. Baquerizo said that the following year the program was expanded to include commercial, industrial and institutional (CII) customers. He said that after a competitive process in 2016, IRWD entered into an agreement with WaterSmart to continue implementation of the program for three additional years. In December 2019, Variance No. 1 to the agreement extended the program through FY 2020-21 and provided for the integration of WaterSmart with IRWD's new bill payment processing system (Paymentus). The integration of Paymentus with the WaterSmart Customer portal provides improved customer access to IRWD payment options.

Mr. Baquerizo said that Variance No. 2, in the amount of \$188,100, would extend the WaterSmart Program for one additional year. The variance cost reflects an increase in number of District customer accounts, increased postage rates since 2016, support for the Paymentus integration and up to three custom reports. Staff negotiated the costs associated with Variance No. 2 and finds the variance to be fair and reasonable for the required tasks. He said that in 2022, staff will issue a new request for proposal (RFP) to invite other companies to provide proposals to provide this service for the next five-year period.

Director LaMar said that this item was reviewed by the Water Resources Policy and Communications Committee on June 3, 2021 and noted that this program is being paid by over allocation funds. Director Withers asked staff to consider developing metrics to measure success of the program.

On MOTION by LaMar, seconded by McLaughlin and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (5-0) McLaughlin, Swan, Withers, LaMar and Reinhart voting aye, and 0 noes, THE BOARD AUTHORIZED THE GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE VARIANCE NO. 2 TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH WATERSMART SOFTWARE, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$188,100.

### 2021-2022 WATER USE EFFICIENCY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Manager of Public Affairs Fabris reported that in July 2020, staff implemented a new suite of creative and targeted outreach initiatives, known as the 2020 Water Use Efficiency Outreach Campaign. Mr. Fabris said that the campaign supported programs to help customers save water outdoors, where IRWD sees the greatest potential for additional efficiency and that the Board approved hiring Suple Advertising & Design to implement the campaign, which occurred over the last five months of 2020 and in early 2021. Mr. Fabris then provided a summary of the 2020 Water Use Efficiency Outreach Campaign.

The 2020 outreach campaign focused on: 1) Promoting turf removal and weather-based irrigation controller incentives through a monthly email campaign; 2) Raising awareness of, and increasing interest in, RightScaping by refreshing the [RightScape.com](http://RightScape.com) landing page, highlighting the beauty of water-efficient plants in IRWD-owned media and through a paid social media campaign featuring humorous "Dino" videos that highlighted the difficulties of maintaining a traditional

lawn; 3) Increasing attendance at virtual garden workshops through a paid social media and email campaign featuring beautiful garden images; and 4) Refreshing WaterStar Business Outreach Program materials and webpages. Mr. Fabris reviewed the 2020 Campaign Results noting that the 2020 RightScape social media campaign reached 83% of residential customers and drove a 380% increase (18,521 versus 3,855) in year-over-year traffic to [RightScape.com](https://www.rightscape.com). The campaign's strategy of positioning RightScaping as a way of bringing beauty and individuality to customers' outdoor spaces helped capture the attention and imagination of IRWD customers. Analytics show that customers driven from the campaign to [RightScape.com](https://www.rightscape.com) were most interested in content that provided inspiration and helpful planning tools. Almost 85% of users clicked on either "Before and After Turf Gallery" or "Design Resources."

Mr. Fabris said that IRWD's gardening workshops quickly converted to online virtual events due to COVID-19. Presenting the workshops online increased the potential audience, and marketing drove up the number of participants versus prior years when workshops were conducted in person. The workshop marketing campaign drove 749 total registrations across the three promoted workshops, a year-over-year increase of 499%. Total registrations rose 220% from September to November as the campaign was implemented.

Mr. Fabris summarized the proposed 2021-2022 Water Use Efficiency Outreach Campaign noting that interest in home gardening remains high, after a year in which customers spent more time at home due to social distancing. He said that the new outreach campaign will craft engaging messaging and visuals to highlight the beauty of water-efficient landscaping and to build desire and need for a RightScaped yard. The campaign will continue to drive attendance at IRWD water-efficient-gardening workshops as well as improve workshop content to extend service life and make it more engaging on digital platforms. He said that [RightScape.com](https://www.rightscape.com) will be redesigned with new tools to make it easier for customers to follow through with rebates and turf replacement once they are inspired to make the change. He said that the elements of 2021-2022 Outreach Campaign include: 1) Redesign [RightScape.com](https://www.rightscape.com) to optimize it for mobile and tablet devices, where 55% of users experience it, and equip the site with innovative tools to make landscape transformation easier for customers; 2) design a creative and highly visual outreach campaign to promote turf replacement and RightScaping; 3) re-imagine gardening workshops and transform three of them from one-time presentations into visual, engaging, and always-accessible digital content built around a unifying brand; 4) promote gardening workshops to increase attendance and draw customers who have not previously participated; and 5) target single-family homeowners with an email campaign to increase redemption rates of smart irrigation controller rebates and installations.

Mr. Fabris said that on March 10, 2021, staff issued a request for proposal to four public outreach consulting firms: 1) Fiona Hutton & Associates, 2) Gigasavvy, 3) Idea Hall, and 4) Sukle Advertising and Design, offering them the opportunity to work with staff to develop and implement a 2021-2022 Water Use Efficiency Outreach Campaign for IRWD. He said that Fiona Hutton & Associates declined to participate. He said that Gigasavvy, Idea Hall and Sukle submitted proposals, and that staff recommends that Sukle be selected to implement the proposed 2021-2022 campaign. Since 2016, IRWD has retained Sukle for water efficiency outreach through a series of Professional Service Agreements. Public Affairs and Water Efficiency Department staff have been highly satisfied with the firm's work. Key strengths of Sukle's 2021-2022 proposal include: 1) an inspiring approach and method for taking IRWD's water efficiency outreach to the next level, particularly by re-imagining water efficiency workshops as multi-media experiences provided to tens of thousands of targeted customers, and a vision to redesign [RightScape.com](https://www.rightscape.com) into an engaging hub that will help customers transform their yards;

2) an outstanding principal and technical leads, with a five-year record of delivering top-quality work to IRWD; 3) deep knowledge of IRWD issues, values, and customer relationships, with a clear understanding of IRWD's objectives; 4) extensive relevant experience in water-efficiency outreach for IRWD and other water-industry clients; and 5) a detailed proposal that was highly responsive to the RFP that included the lowest average hourly fee of any of the applicants.

Director LaMar reported that this item was reviewed by the Water Resources Policy and Communications Committee on June 3, 2021. Following a discussion on with the Board and staff regarding developing meaningful measurements, and a potential for less residential gardening due to the changed conditions with the opening up of businesses, on MOTION by LaMar, seconded by McLaughlin and unanimously carried by a roll call vote (5-0) McLaughlin, Swan, Withers, LaMar and Reinhart voting aye, and 0 noes, THE BOARD AUTHORIZED THE GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH SUKLE ADVERTISING & DESIGN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,384,000 FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF IRWD'S 2021-2022 WATER EFFICIENCY OUTREACH CAMPAIGN.

### GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

General Manager Cook reported that there are no new COVID-19 cases among employees. Mr. Cook said that there is currently a lot of confusion from an employer's standpoint regarding masking as the June 3<sup>rd</sup> OSHA requirements adopted were rescinded, and on June 17<sup>th</sup> they will meet again to determine requirements. He also said that shortly thereafter, the Governor may do an Executive Order implementing the OSHA requirements immediately.

### COMMUNITY UPDATE

Consultant Bruce Newell said that he has been in contact with District staff relative to a main line shutdown on July 1 in Silverado Canyon for four hours to make repairs. He further said that fire season officially begins today, and that a community meeting is scheduled in late July when he will invite IRWD staff to participate.

### DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

Director LaMar reported said that he was unable to attend the CORO event and the WACO meeting. He said that he attended an ACWA Water Quality meeting, a South County Agency meeting, and several ACWA meetings.

Director McLaughlin reported that she attended a WaterReuse meeting and a WACO meeting.

Director Swan reported on his attendance at a Southern California Dialogue meeting, a MWDOC Board meeting and Committee meeting, a Newport Chamber of Commerce meeting, a WACO meeting, an OCBC Infrastructure meeting, and a UCI Economic Forecast Event.

Director Withers reported that he attended his regular meetings along with daily OCSD meetings. He suggested that a congratulatory letter be sent to MWD's new General Manager.

Director Reinhart reported that he is attending OCWD meetings, a WACO meeting, a SOCWA meeting, and a South County Agencies meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

Legal Counsel Collins said that the following Closes Session would be held this evening:

CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS – Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6.

*Agency Designated Representatives:* Paul Cook, General Manager, and Tiffany Mitcham, Director of Human Resources

*Employee Groups:* International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (AFL-CIO) Local #47 for the General Unit and the Non-Exempt Supervisor Unit

OPEN SESSION

At 7:30 p.m. the meeting was reconvened with Directors Swan, LaMar, Withers, McLaughlin, and Reinhart present. Legal Counsel Collins said that there was no action to report.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Reinhart adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED and SIGNED this 28th day of June 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Claire Hervey Collins, General Counsel  
Hanson Bridgett LLP