

BIG BEAR AREA REGIONAL WASTEWATER AGENCY

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency was called to order by Chair Miller at 5:00 p.m. on March 27, 2024 at 121 Palomino Drive, Big Bear City, California.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Miller, Chair
Rick Herrick, Vice-Chair
John Russo, Director
Kendi Segovia, Director
Larry Walsh, Director

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

David Lawrence, General Manager
Christine Bennett, Finance Manager
Bridgette Burton, Administrative Services Manager/Board Secretary
Sonja Kawa, Human Resources Coordinator/Accounting Technician

OTHERS

Glenn Jacklin, General Manager, Big Bear City Community Services District
Brittany Lamson, Interim General Manager, Big Bear Municipal Water District
Reggie Lamson, General Manager, City of Big Bear Lake, Department of Water and Power

Members of the public who signed in included:

Jan Bacon, Big Bear City
Linda Bettys, Big Bear City
Cynthia Ann Booth, Big Bear City
Roger Boring, Big Bear City, Big Bear Lake
Ellen Clarke, Sugarloaf
Joyce Crist, Big Bear City, Big Bear Lake
Patrice Duncan, Sugarloaf
Steve Foulkes, Big Bear Lake
Daniel Gulbranson, Big Bear Lake
Joseph Kelly
Bobbi Martinez, Big Bear City
Bynette Mote, Big Bear Lake
Greg Mote, Big Bear Lake
Sierra Orr, Big Bear City

Bob and Jo Rowe, Big Bear City
Andrew S., Sugarloaf
Matt Scriven, Big Bear Lake
Bonnie Shaffer, Big Bear City
Sandy Steers, Fawnskin
Margaret Tiefenthaler, Big Bear City
Theodore Trentman, Big Bear City
Gina Weiss, Big Bear City
Bob and Sandy Ybarra, Sugarloaf

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Director Walsh

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Director Walsh and carried, the Governing Board approved the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

4. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Joseph Kelly commented that there was a Brown Act violation at the Big Bear City Community Services District meeting, Director Herrick has a conflict of interest, and stated Supervisor Dawn Rowe has maintained that the people should get to vote if this project should move forward or not.

5. **PRESENTATION AND INTRODUCTION**

None

6. **INFORMATION/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

6.A. General Manager's Report

The General Manager highlighted the Replenish Big Bear revenue and expenditures table.

7. **CONSENT CALENDAR APPROVED ITEMS**

7.A. Meeting Minutes from the February 28, 2024 Special Meeting Budget Workshop

7.B. Monthly Disbursements Report for February

7.C. Investment Report Identifying Agency Investments and Reporting Interest Income for February

Upon motion by Director Walsh seconded by Vice-Chair Herrick and carried, the Governing Board approved the Consent Calendar as presented.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

8. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

None

9. OLD BUSINESS

9.A. Replenish Big Bear Options

The General Manager provided an update to the agreement with Big Bear Municipal Water District, agreement with Big Bear Mountain Resorts, advisory election limitations, WIFIA loan and grant deadlines, Program Water equity, and equivalent dwelling unit calculation methods for Member Agencies.

The Governing Board inquired how the Big Bear Fire Authority put Measure I on the ballot, how changing the Program Water equity would work, locations of east valley recharge areas, and expressed concern over the process, scope of work, and additional cost for groundwater recharge. The Big Bear Municipal Water District confirmed they want the excess Program Water that will not be used for groundwater recharge and in-kind services will include monitoring, testing, and an offset program. The Governing Board directed staff to investigate additional equivalent dwelling unit calculation methods and bring the information back to the Governing Board for consideration.

Theodore Trentman spoke about the importance of water in the Big Bear Valley and stated there is a responsibility to keep the project going.

Charlie Brewster commented the project will only provide 4.4" with 48" of evaporation each year and the cost of the project is not worth it.

Joseph Kelly commented that the first hour of the last presentation was a waste of time, each time a grant is awarded the cost goes up, and the Lake does not recharge the aquifer to any significant level.

Tom Sitton stated he believes there are more people who do not want the project and to let the taxpayers say they want the project or not on the ballot.

Tim Wolcott advised the Governing Board that the project is not needed, is concerned with microplastics and forever chemicals, and stated the government created the HAARP system that can make storms wherever they want.

Sierra Orr commented that she knows people whose wells have run dry and acknowledged that we have enough water to support the current population now, but a comprehensive water supply availability study has not been conducted in 20 years.

Daniel Gulbranson commented that the project will be priceless because the actual cost and timeline is unknown and compared the project to the Castle Rock Trailhead.

Randall Putz stated that it makes sense to keep our water in our Valley and continuing to export our limited water is environmentally, regulatorily, and economically unsustainable.

Matt Scriven supports the project and stated the people who benefit the most should be footing the bill and would hate to see retired and low income people paying for this.

Gina Weiss stated she thought the toilet to tap project was distasteful and said she is hearing confusing information about recharging the aquifer.

Joyce Crist commented that she is trying to get more involved in the project, does not think we all should be paying these exorbitant fees, and suggested installing large septic tanks with leach lines instead so it goes back into the aquifer.

Steve Foulkes stated that the project should be thought of in cumulative terms not annual terms and the analysis done by the water district in 1977, and updated since then, will keep the lake 4' higher when it is at its low point.

John Jackson stated that agencies will not spend money on a complicated legal agreement for a project that does not exist yet and at some point a new treatment plant will need to be built and water quality standards will continue to go up.

The Governing Board further discussed project concerns.

Upon motion by Director Segovia, seconded by Vice-Chair Herrick and carried, the Governing Board decided to schedule a Replenish Big Bear study session between the Governing Board, Member Agencies, Program Partners, and stakeholders to be led by the City of Big Bear Lake.

Ayes: Herrick, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: Russo
Absent: None
Abstain: None

The Governing Board adjourned at 7:11 p.m. and readjoined at 7:21 p.m.

10. NEW BUSINESS – DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Chair Miller, the Governing Board moved item 10E. before Item 10.A.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

10.E. Resolution No. R. 06-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Expressing Appreciation to Bynette Mote for Dedicated Service as a Member of Said Governing Board

The Chair read the Resolution.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Chair Miller and carried, the Governing Board approved Resolution No. R. 06-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Expressing Appreciation to Bynette Mote for Dedicated Service as a Member of Said Governing Board.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

10.A. Resolution No. R. 02-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Clarifying the Fiscal Year 2025 Sewer Standby or Immediate Availability Charges

The Finance Manager presented the resolution to confirm the sewer standby fees for fiscal year 2025 and stated the fees have not changed from the prior year.

The Governing Board confirmed there are still parcels not connected to a sewer system and each undeveloped parcel with a separate parcel is charged the standby fee.

Joseph Kelly questioned how the standby fees work when parcels are combined for tax purposes only.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Director Walsh and carried, the Governing Board adopted Resolution No. R. 02-2024 A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Clarifying the Fiscal Year 2025 Sewer Standby or Immediate Availability Charges.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

10.B. Public Hearing: Resolution No. R. 03-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Amending the Sewer User Charge Subject to Annual Review and Taking Certain Other Actions Related Thereto

The Finance Manager explained the resolution and the base rate has not changed from the previous year's adopted rate schedule.

The Governing Board asked if approving this resolution would inadvertently approve the Replenish Big Bear Project, and if the project doesn't continue, the Agency would not have to continue with the adopted rate schedule. The Governing Board confirmed if the project doesn't continue and there was a surplus, rates would decrease. It is not clear at this moment if the grants would need to be paid back.

The public hearing opened at 7:35 p.m.

Joseph Kelly confirmed that approving this resolution does not move the Replenish Big Bear Project forward and stated that it is a rate increase that would pay for Replenish Big Bear.

The public hearing closed at 7:40 p.m.

Upon motion by Director Walsh, seconded by Vice-Chair Herrick and carried, the Governing Board adopted Resolution No. R. 03-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Amending the Sewer User Charge Subject to Annual Review and Taking Certain Other Actions Related Thereto.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

10.C. Public Hearing: Resolution No. R. 04-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency to Increase the Fee Schedule for the Disposal of Waste Delivered to the Regional Treatment Plant Subject to Annual Review

The Finance Manager described the resolution and explained the fees remain unchanged from what was presented a year ago.

The public hearing opened at 7:44 p.m.

Joseph Kelly stated that these are more increases to pay for the Replenish Big Bear Project that doesn't produce drinking water or recharge water, and there is no service being provided to charge the fee.

The public hearing closed at 7:49 p.m.

The Governing Board confirmed that waste disposal fees do not pay for the Replenish Big Bear Project, this waste being delivered to the plant is highly concentrated and not like normal sewage and is more expensive to treat.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Director Walsh and carried, the Governing Board adopted Resolution No. R. 04-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency to Increase the Fee Schedule for the Disposal of Waste Delivered to the Regional Treatment Plant Subject to Annual Review.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

10.D. Public Hearing: Resolution No. R. 05-2024, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Adopting the Operating and Capital Budget of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency for Fiscal Year 2025, Approving Budgeted Projects and Finding Approval of the Budget and Budgeted Projects Exempt from Review Under the California Environmental Quality Act

The Finance Manager explained the draft fiscal year budget was presented to the Governing Board at the February Budget Workshop. After the draft budget was presented, insurance costs increased more than the forecast, and the budget was updated.

The public hearing opened at 7:53 p.m.

Joseph Kelly stated that he did not understand the budget and felt the pie chart he referenced lacked information. He further stated the budget would be paid by the people.

The public hearing closed at 7:57 p.m.

The Governing Board clarified which roof was included in the capital projects.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Director Segovia and carried, the Governing Board adopted Resolution No. R. 05-2024, A Resolution of the

Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Adopting the Operating and Capital Budget of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency for Fiscal Year 2025, Approving Budgeted Projects and Finding Approval of the Budget and Budgeted Projects Exempt from Review Under the California Environmental Quality Act, adopted the budget and approved the seven proposed activities, directed staff to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption, as set forth in Resolution No. R. 05-2024, and in the event that the Replenish Big Bear Project is cancelled, directed staff to bring a budget amendment to the Governing Board once final costs have been determined.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

10.F. Governing Board Committee Appointments

The Governing Board and staff discussed the responsibilities of the three committees.

Upon motion by Chair Miller, seconded by Vice-Chair Herrick and carried, the Governing Board appointed Director Segovia and Director Walsh to the Administrative Committee.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Upon motion by Chair Miller, seconded by Director Segovia and carried, the Governing Board appointed Chair Miller and Vice-Chair Herrick to the Finance Committee.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Upon motion by Director Chair Miller, seconded by Vice-Chair Herrick and carried, the Governing Board appointed Director Russo and Chair Miller to the Operations Committee.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

k10.G. Replenish Big Bear Advisory Committee Appointment

Chair Miller appointed Director Segovia and Director Walsh to the Replenish Big Bear Committee.

11. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

11.A. General Manager Comments

None

11.B. Governing Board Member Comments

None

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Governing Board, Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

ATTEST: Bridgette Burton
Bridgette Burton, Secretary to the Governing Board
Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency