

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

ENGINEERING, OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

July 8, 2024

Chair Erdman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Directors Alvarez, Bryant, Camacho (entered after roll call), Dennstedt, Erdman, Faessel, Lefevre, McMillan, Miller (entered after roll call), Morris, Petersen, and Seckel.

Members absent: Directors Fong-Sakai and Smith.

Other Board members present: Chair Ortega, Directors Armstrong, Gray (teleconference location posted), Kurtz, Lewitt, and Sutley.

Committee staff present: Hattar, Chapman, Chaudhuri, Eckstrom, Martinez, and Parsons.

1. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION

None

Director Camacho entered the meeting.

Student Interns were introduced by Ms. Hattar, Mr. Chaudhuri, and Mr. Eckstrom.

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS – ACTION

2. CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS ACTION

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Engineering, Operations, and Technology Committee for June 10, 2024.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS – ACTION

- 7-1** Subject: Award a \$2,197,460 contract to J.F. Shea Construction Inc. for the replacement of a section of steel pipe on the Rialto Pipeline and rehabilitation of Service Connection CB-11; and authorize an increase of \$150,000 to an existing agreement with Brown and Caldwell for a new not-to-exceed amount of \$395,000 to provide technical support during construction; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Presented by: No presentation requested

Motion: Award a \$2,197,460 contract to J.F. Shea Construction Inc. for replacement of steel pipe on the Rialto Pipeline and rehabilitation of Service Connection CB-11.
b. Authorize an increase of \$150,000 to an existing agreement with Brown and Caldwell for a new not-to-exceed amount of \$395,000 to provide construction support services.

7-2 Subject: Authorize an agreement with Arcadis, U.S. Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$1.525 million for Data Management and Data Analytics Consulting & Implementation Services to implement Phase 1 of the Data Analytics project; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Presented by: No presentation requested

Motion: Authorize an agreement with Arcadis, U.S. Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$1.525 million for Data Management and Data Analytics Consulting & Implementation Services to implement Phase 1 of the Data Analytics project.

Director Morris made a motion, seconded by Director Dennstedt, to approve the consent calendar consisting of items 2A, 7-1, and 7-2.

The vote was:

Ayes: Directors Alvarez, Bryant, Camacho, Dennstedt, Erdman, Faessel, Lefevre, McMillan, Morris, Petersen, and Seckel.
Noes: None
Abstentions: None.
Absent: Directors Fong-Sakai, Miller, and Smith

The motion for Items 2A, 7-1, and 7-3 passed by a vote of 11 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstention, and 3 absent.

No Directors provided comments or asked questions.

**** END OF CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS ****

Director Miller entered the meeting

4. OTHER BOARD ITEMS – ACTION

8-1 Subject: Authorize a \$600,000 increase to an existing agreement with J.F. Shea Construction Inc. for a new not to exceed amount of \$10.4 million to purchase long-lead equipment for the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project; the General Manager has determined the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA (This action is part of a series of projects that are being undertaken to improve the supply reliability for State Water Project dependent areas)

Presented by: Jeannie Chu, Engineer, Engineering Services Group

Motion: Authorize a \$600,000 increase to an existing design-build services agreement with J.F. Shea Construction Inc. for a new not-to-exceed amount of \$10.4 million to purchase long-lead equipment for the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions.

1. Miller
2. Alvarez
3. Bryant

Staff responded to Directors' questions and comments.

Director Faessel made a motion, seconded by Director Morris, to approve option #1 for action item 8-1.

The vote was:

Ayes: Directors Alvarez, Bryant, Camacho, Dennstedt, Erdman, Faessel, Lefevre, McMillan, Miller, Morris, Petersen, and Seckel.
Noes: None.
Abstentions: None.
Absent: Directors Fong-Sakai, and Smith.

The motion for Item 8-1 passed by a vote of 12 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstention, and 2 absent

5. BOARD INFORMATION ITEMS

9-2 Subject: Informational update to provide the final report from the community planner on the District Housing & Property Improvements Program at the Desert Facilities. Staff will review the report recommendations in detail and return to the Board at a later date with final staff recommendations and next steps.

Presented by: None, Board information item only.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions

1. Dennstedt
2. Miller

Staff responded to the Directors' questions and comments.

6. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- a. Subject: Value Engineering Program Update
- Presented by: Tao Peng, Team Manager, Technical Control Team, Engineering Services Group

Ms. Peng reported on Metropolitan’s Value Engineering program objectives; the program implementation process including value engineering, constructability reviews, and lessons learned; and program results.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions

1. Lefevre
2. Miller

Staff responded to the Directors’ questions and comments

- b. Subject: Metropolitan Headquarters Program Update
- Presented by: Jeany Wong, Sr Engineer, Engineering Services Group

Ms. Wong reported on the following:

- Overview of completed projects: seismic upgrades, physical security improvements, fire sprinkler replacement, courtyard improvements
- Fire alarm & smoke control system upgrades are complete pending Fire Department testing
- Future board actions are planned for HVAC & chiller plant upgrades, building automation system upgrades, lighting/control system upgrades, and zero emission vehicle infrastructure

No Directors provided comments or asked questions

- c. Subject: Artificial Intelligence Introduction
- Presented by: Jonathan Houck, Information Technology Architect, Information Technology Group

Mr. Houck reported on the following:

- Generative AI is inspired by the Neural network model inspired by the structure of animal brains, with “deep” layers of artificial neurons
- These layers are trained with data sets and reinforcement learning
- ChatGPT and large language models have limitations integrating with IT systems without fine-tuning
- Training is language-based, and it can “hallucinate” or generate incorrect results
- Metropolitan’s Gen AI guidelines were published in March 2024

- Microsoft Office Co-pilot testing and deployment will commence once prerequisites are in place

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions

1. Faessel
2. Lefevre
3. Miller
4. Sutley
5. Dennstedt
6. Ortega
7. Erdman

Staff responded to the Directors' questions and comments

- d. Subject: Ensuring Compliance with Water Quality Regulations
Presented by: Paul Rochelle, Section Manager, Treatment and Water Quality Group

Mr. Rochelle reported on the following:

- History of federal and state drinking water regulations and how Metropolitan has adapted over time
- Metropolitan staff efforts to ensure 100 percent compliance with drinking water regulations, including monitoring plans, sample collection, laboratory analysis, quality assurance, and regulatory reporting
- New and emerging water quality challenges from changing environmental and regulatory landscapes, and actions Metropolitan is taking to ensure continued compliance with drinking water regulations

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions

1. Seckel
2. Ortega
3. Kurtz

Staff responded to the Directors' questions and comments

7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- a. Subject: Engineering Services, Information Technology, and Water System Operations Activities
Presented by: Mai Hattar, Interim Chief Engineer & Shane Chapman, Assistant General Manager

Ms. Hattar and Mr. Chapman reported on the following:

- Metropolitan and LACSD had a panel for the Pure Water Southern California program at the AWWA annual conference

- Outreach conducted in the City of Monterey Park for the Garvey Reservoir Rehabilitation Project
- Diemer, Jensen, and Skinner plants were awarded 25-yr Directors Awards, and Metropolitan's distribution system was awarded a 10-yr Directors Award, from the Partnership for Safe Water Program at the AWWA annual conference
- 2024 Annual Drinking Water Quality report published, which also commemorates the 50-year history of Metropolitan's Water Quality Section.
- Safety and security awareness events held in June at several facilities, in recognition of National Safety Month
- Staff's quick and successful response to a Weymouth plant domestic water line failure, which had resulted in flooding of a basement that impacted electrical equipment with a temporary loss of site communications

No Directors provided comments or asked questions.

8. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

- a. Report from Subcommittee on Subcommittee on Pure Water Southern California and Regional Conveyance

Director Camacho provided the report.

- b. Discuss and provide direction to Subcommittee on Pure Water Southern California and Regional Conveyance

The following Director's provided comments or asked questions

1. Dennstedt
2. Erdman

Staff responded to Director's comments.

9. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

NONE

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Director Erdman requested a more detailed look at how Metropolitan presently analyzes and evaluates risks.

Director Dennstedt requested a presentation on water supply projects or storage options other than Pure Water that staff has considered.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on August 19, 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Dennis Erdman
Chair