BOARD OF BEAR VALLEY BASIN
GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY (BVBGSA)
MEETING MINUTES
June 17, 2025

OPEN SESSION

A meeting of the Bear Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency Board of Directors was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on June 17, 2025, by Chair Miller at 41972 Garstin Drive, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jim Miller, Chair
Steve Ludecke, Vice-Chair
John Russo, Secretary
Craig Hjorth, Treasurer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chair Ludecke led the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Daniel Gulbransen spoke about legal disputes and litigation within the government. He also expressed concern about public attitudes towards law enforcement and fire officials.

1. PUBLIC HEARING

1.1 Resolution No. 2025-01 Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

DWP General Manager Reggie Lamson explained that the Bear Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (BVBGSA) was formed in 2017 as a requirement of the Sustainability Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The GSA consists of four member agencies, MWD, CSD, BBARWA, and DWP.

DWP CFO Nathan Statham gave an overview of the BVBGSA Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. He explained that the budget has remained mostly unchanged from last year and that revenues are projected to cover costs. He explained that the main expense is Hydrology services which covers the preparation of the Annual Report required by the Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

Vice-Chair Ludecke asked if the GSA is still Prioritized as low. Reggie clarified that the BVBGSA is Prioritized as very low, having improved from medium status, largely due to maintaining demand at about two-thirds of the existing perennial yield.

Vice-Chair Ludecke expressed frustration over high bank fees and discussed the possibility of switching to a different bank. Nathan explained that we can switch to a different bank, but it must be a bank that handles government accounts. He also noted that lower balances contribute to higher fees, but he will investigate options to find a more cost-effective account while maintaining the necessary government classification.

Vice-Chair Ludecke also expressed concern over the ACWA membership, inquiring about why the BVBGSA must be a member. Reggie and BBARWA General Manager David Lawrence explained that their agencies are not members of ACWA and that the GSA needs to be a member of ACWA in order to access ACWA's low-cost insurance programs.

Motion made by Vice-Chair Ludecke, seconded by Treasurer Hjorth, and carried 4-0 to adopt Resolution No. 2025-01 approving the Budget for Fiscal Year 2026.
AYES: Hjorth, Ludecke, Miller, Russo
NOES: -
ABSTAIN: -

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

2.1 Approve Minutes of Board Meeting Dated June 27, 2024

Motion made by Vice-Chair Ludecke, seconded by Chair Miller, and carried 4-0 to approve the Consent Calendar.
AYES: Hjorth, Ludecke, Miller, Russo
NOES: -
ABSTAIN: -

3. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

4. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

4.1 Approval of Claims Payments

Motion made by Vice-Cahir Ludecke, seconded by Chair Miller, and carried 4-0 to authenticate the claims payment register.
AYES: Hjorth, Ludecke, Miller, Russo
NOES: -
ABSTAIN: -

4.2 Replenish Big Bear Presentation

David provided an overview of the Replenish Big Bear Project's progress, noting that the CEQA document was certified in February 2025 and additional biological work is ongoing. The NEPA document was approved by the EPA to facilitate grants and the WIFIA loan. The project is awaiting design completion, expected by late 2026, and a preliminary design report will be presented to the board in August. He also discussed new brine minimization technology that could significantly reduce the size of evaporation ponds.

David explained that financial advisors are working on securing a loan, which is necessary for bidding the project but doesn't require immediate disbursement. The project cost remains at 86.7 million dollars, not including getting water up to Sand Canyon for recharge. David mentioned that they have collected about 27 million dollars in grants and submitted applications for additional funding. The team has also received a reimbursement from a state grant, after a delay due to a submission issue.

David discussed the 5-year sewer fee schedule approved by the board in March 2025, including projected collections for 2026-2030. He also talked about moving forward the WIFIA loan, which will likely be presented to the board in August. Board members and staff discussed the possibility of splitting off certain portions of the project to comply with the BABA requirement, if a waiver is not granted.

David discussed the adjustment of rate schedules for the project, noting that they can be modified in the last two years to align with actual bids received, operational costs, and debt service.

David discussed community outreach efforts, including school functions and booth events, as well as website updates and a quarterly newsletter.

4.3 Management and Board Members Discussion

Reggie gave an overview of the June 12, 2025 Technical Review Team (TRT) Committee Meeting. Vice-Chair Ludecke requested copies of the Hydrographs from the TRT meeting.

Chair Miller announced that he will not be returning to the BVBGSA Board next year.

ADJOURN

No additional business came before the Board. At 9:42 a.m., Chair Miller adjourned the meeting.

Craig Hjorth, Treasurer to the Board