

# **WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, March 4, 2024**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Kevin Bash at 12:30 p.m., in the Board Room at the County of Riverside Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, First Floor, Riverside, California, 92501.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

#### **Board of Directors/Alternates Present**

Kevin Jeffries  
Karen Spiegel  
Chuck Washington  
Colleen Wallace  
Julio Martinez  
Jeff Cervantez  
Mark Terry  
Tony Daddario  
Jocelyn Yow\*  
Carole Kendrick

Leslie Altamirano  
Natasha Johnson  
Lesa Sobek  
Ron Holliday  
Kevin Bash  
David Starr Rabb  
Patricia Lock Dawson  
Crystal Ruiz  
Zak Schwank  
Joseph Morabito

#### **Board of Directors Absent**

V. Manuel Perez  
Yxstian Gutierrez  
David Marquez

\*Arrived after the meeting was called to order.

### **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Spiegel.

At this time, Board Member Yow joined the meeting.

Chair Bash presented Past Chair Natasha Johnson with a gavel to commemorate her tenure as Chair from 2020-2023 on behalf of the entire RCA organization.

Chair Bash thanked and congratulated Past Chair Johnson for her service to RCA, which has been absolutely amazing.

### **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no requests to speak from the public.

**5. ADDITIONS / REVISIONS**

There were no additions or revisions to the agenda.

**6. CONSENT CALENDAR** - *All matters on the Consent Calendar will be approved in a single motion unless a Board Member(s) requests separate action on specific item(s).*

Chair Bash shared that one of the things that Past Chair Johnson started was making sure that all Board Members were very clear why certain items were always on the Consent Calendar. For example, the monthly agenda items include: MSHCP Fee Collection Report, JPR Status Report, Acquisition Status Report, Investment Report, and the State and Federal Legislative Update. These reports are for Board Members to have the information, and not necessarily something that needs to be discussed at each meeting. This is also a way for new Board Members to familiarize themselves with RCA. The quarterly agenda items are: Quarterly Financials, Consultant Reports, Single Signature Authority, and Public Engagement Metrics.

Anne Mayer, Executive Director, added that the reports give a glimpse of the daily activities of the RCA team. They include the financial status, fees that are being received, and highlights of projects that are coming in to RCA. If at any time a Board Member has questions about a particular report, they should not hesitate to reach out to staff.

**M/S/C (Lock Dawson/Wallace) to approve the following Consent Calendar items.**

**Board Member Sobek abstained on Agenda Item 6A.**

**6A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 8, 2024**

**6B. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FEE COLLECTION REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2023**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Fee Collection report for November 2023.

**6C. WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FEE COLLECTION REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Fee Collection report for December 2023.

**6D. JOINT PROJECT REVIEW STATUS REPORT**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Joint Project Review (JPR) monthly status report as of January 31, 2024.

**6E. ACQUISITIONS STATUS REPORT**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the acquisition status report as of December 31, 2023.

**6F. MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2023**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Monthly Investment Report for the month ended November 30, 2023.

**6G. MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Monthly Investment Report for the month ended December 31, 2023.

**6H. CONSULTANT REPORTS – FISCAL YEAR 2024 SECOND QUARTER**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the consultant reports for Fiscal Year 2024 Second Quarter.

**6I. QUARTERLY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT METRICS REPORT, OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file report summarizing the Quarterly Public Engagement Metrics.

**6J. SINGLE SIGNATURE AUTHORITY REPORT**

This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file the Single Signature Authority report for the second quarter ended December 31, 2023.

**6K. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

- 1) Receive and file the Quarterly Financial Statements for the six months ended December 31, 2023, and
- 2) Approve the Fiscal Year 2023/24 budget adjustment in Attachment 2.

**7. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Tyler Madary, Legislative Affairs Manager, provided an update on state and federal legislative actions. The state legislature reconvened in January, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 2-year legislative session. At the top of their list, is to negotiate a budget that address the multi-year shortfall by billions of dollars. While Governor Newsom proposed a \$291 billion budget, assuming a shortfall of \$38 billion, the legislative analyst office now estimates the shortfall closer to \$73 billion.

To balance the budget, the Governor proposed a series of spending cuts, recessions, and deferrals, as he did last year.

As a reminder, last year's budget included cuts to the Governor's one-time multi-year investments in the 2021 Climate Resilience Package, which included programs that RCA competes for. Cuts included a \$6 million reduction in Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) land acquisition and a \$35 million cut to a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) program. This year, the Governor has proposed a \$15.7 million cut to a WCB program that funds land acquisition in support of habitat conservation. While these funds were allocated in last year's budget, the Governor has proposed a recession of those funds.

RCA's state legislative priority this year will be to advocate against any proposed cuts to funding programs that RCA competes for, as well as to engage in legislative discussion centered around the proposed Climate and Natural Resources Bond Measure that could be placed on the ballot in November. RCA will advocate for maximizing funding included for WCB, as well as a carve out within that funding for NCCP land acquisition for plans like the MSHCP.

RCA staff together with the California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition (CHCPC), will travel to Sacramento on March 11<sup>th</sup> to meet with members of the Legislature and Governor's Administration to advocate against cuts and in support of the proposed Climate and Natural Resources Bond Measure. This trip will follow work that has been done over the past few months with RCA staff meeting with area legislators and their staff, including Senator Kelly Seyarto, the offices of Assemblymembers Bill Essayli, Corey Jackson, Eduardo Garcia, Greg Wallis, Keith Sanchez, Sabrina Cervantes, as well as Senators Richard Roth and Steve Padilla. These meetings offer the opportunity to remind elected officials of the MSHCP's value for Western Riverside County particularly balancing growth with protecting the region's natural landscapes and habitat.

On the federal side, staff will continue to monitor the ongoing FY 2024 Appropriations negotiations. Congress just passed another round of Continuing Resolutions (CR) through March 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> as an aim for a final spending deal. Staff will continue to coordinate with the National Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Coalition for efforts to increase HCP land acquisition funding for Section 6.

Board Member Spiegel wanted clarification on what the deficit was. Tyler Madary stated that the Governor's budget proposal predicted the deficit at \$38 billion, but the legislative analyst offices estimate the deficit to be \$73 billion.

**This item is for the Board of Directors to receive and file an update on state and federal legislative affairs.**

**8. RATIFICATION OF CHAIR’S APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Chair Bash appointed Board Member Ruiz and Board Member Washington to the Executive Committee.

**M/S/C (Yow/Morabito) to ratify the appointments to the Executive Committee.**

**9. BOARD OF DIRECTORS / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Anne Mayer, Executive Director, shared that last week was an exciting one for RCA, in that we closed escrow on the B Canyon acquisition. It adds almost 700 acres adjacent to the 91 in the canyon, connecting the Cleveland National Forest with the Chino Hills State Park. This has been prime land for decades that the RCA has wanted to have in conservation, and it is an important linkage for the mountain lion and other species. The acquisition was funded with RCA funds as well as Wildlife Conservation Board 30x30 funds.

Board Member Sobek met with the Natural Education Foundation of the Santa Rosa Plateau, who currently have some exciting programs happening with their Junior Ranger Program. They asked if it would be possible to come make a presentation before the RCA Board.

Board Member Johnson shared that in the City of Lake Elsinore preparations are underway for the upcoming flowers. Last year, RCA acquired the property by Walker Canyon, which was the public access for the trailhead in Lake Elsinore, making planning a little easier. There are not poppies yet, but there will be. The size of the bloom is dependent on the weather, temperature, sunshine, and whether there is continued rain or not. The stance of the city will be the same as last year, which is no access for the public.

**10. CLOSED SESSION**

At this time, Steve DeBaun, legal counsel, announced the Board will be going in to Closed Session to discuss the property items on the agenda.

**10A. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS**

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8

Agency Negotiator: Executive Director or Designee

Item	Property Description	Property Owner	Buyer(s)
1	571-060-022	Andy and Nora Bazar	RCA
2	429-040-018	SSR Investment Co., Limited Partnership, a California Limited Partnership	RCA
3	371-100-006	Roger T. Darby	RCA
4	371-050-004 & 371-050-005	Ratan L. Tiwari and Nirmla D. Tiwari, Sreenivasa R. Nakka and Hemalatha Nakka, Anil V. Shah, & Preeti A. Shah	RCA

5	465-020-031 & 465-030-020	Silo Hills Development Corporation, an Illinois Corporation	RCA
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**10B. REPORT OUT FROM CLOSED SESSION**

There were no announcements from Closed Session.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for consideration by the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Board of Directors, Chair Bash adjourned the meeting at 1:17 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled to be held on **Monday, April 1, 2024.**

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Mobley  
Administrative Services Director/  
Clerk of the Board