

Yuba Water Agency June 16, 2020

By Joshua Dowell

The Yuba Water Agency held its bi-weekly board of directors meeting via Zoom teleconference on June 16th, 2020 at 9:00am. Board Chairman **Randy Fletcher** called the meeting to order around 9:05 AM and led attendees in a flag salute. Standard board procedures followed, approval of the minutes and a session of public comment.

The first half of the board's agenda were consent items ranging from a \$5,000 grant to the District 10 Wild Duck Egg Salvage Program to a \$650,000 grant to Reclamation District 784 to cover the costs associated with planning, design, and construction of the Unit 38 Levee Mile 4.66 - Storm Drain Pipe Replacement Project. Also, the board granted Yuba County \$50,000 dollars to implement a water conservation program in county facilities. The board consented to grant the monies requested and moved forward to discussion items.



Starting this meeting off with a bang, everyone's favorite discussion, recommending the annual budget for approval. Like I have said in the past writing about the numbers is a pain, but the biggest takeaway from the discussion is that the agency has a good financial position moving forward and will be able to ensure that its customers will be taken care of. The budget included a host of new positions and adjusted salary schedules that are publicly available on the Yuba Water Agency website, it also included a 3 percent annual increase for all non-union employees. My hat is off to the agency staff that has developed and performed the due diligence in to bring the budget to fruition.

Next was consideration of the reserves policy, which is revisited every two years. In its current format the reserves policy is approved by the **Association of California Water Agencies** and every interested government party. In the revised policy, operating reserves (which are one year of operating expenses) is just over the thirty-six million dollar mark. The number is high to some but necessary in the event of a critical failure of infrastructure. Levee bonds are going to be a payment that agency will be making until the year 2038 as it currently stands, rounding out the safety net setup by Yuba Water staff for about fifty-three million dollars. The revised reserve policy was passed unanimously with the stipulation that its status is reported to the board on a monthly basis.

One of the final items on the agenda was an approval of an allocation for an additional project management position that was immediately passed with a unanimous vote of the board. As well as an update from the Ellis Lake Advisory Ad Hoc Committee on current project status. The project was started in August 2019 and has had several sessions since the committee's formation. The committee is already seeing improvements in motion, with a grant of \$40,000 to the **City of Marysville** to restore a fountain for improved aeration.

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Josh Dowell brings a combined background of ag technology, water policy and grower focused service.

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YUBA WATER AGENCY 1220 F Street, Marysville, CA 95901 www.yubawater.org 530/741-5000 DWR SGMA # 5-021.60 Yuba Water Agency GSA

Board – Randy Fletcher Chairman, Brent Hastey Vice-Chairman, Gary Bradford, Mike Leahy, Doug Lofton, Charlie Mathews & Andy Vasquez

Staff – Willie Whittlesey GM, Alex Boesch PIO, Marcel Bos Maintenance Manager, Justin Hoffman Principal Engineer, Scott Matyac Water Resource Manager & Maury Miller Operations Manager.

YWA is a stand-alone public agency governed by a board of 7 elected officials to serve the people of Yuba County. Established by a special act of the California State Legislature in 1959, the agency's primary missions are flood risk reduction, water supply, fish habitat protection and enhancement, hydroelectric generation, and recreation Yuba Water Agency owns and operates facilities with a capacity of storing 170,000 acre-feet of dedicated flood storage in the rainy season, more than 966,000 acre-feet of water the rest of the year, and generating enough hydropower to supply more than 300,000 homes. Each year, Yuba Water Agency supplies approximately 260,000 acre-feet of water to eight irrigation districts that convey that water to 60,000 acres of productive farmland. - From the YWA website.