

**WATER RESOURCES & CONSERVATION
COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES
Wednesday, May 24, 2023
4:15 p.m.**

ATTENDANCE

Directors: Judy Huang (Chair), John Weed

Staff: Ed Stevenson, Thomas Niesar, Stephanie Nevins, Gisselle Delgadillo, Megan Maurino

Public: Phi Chanda

This meeting was conducted in person at the District's Headquarters and virtually by Zoom Webinar and Teleconference, and members of the public were invited to participate. Materials presented to the Committee were posted in advance of the meeting at www.acwd.org and copies of materials as presented are attached to these minutes.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Lawn Be Gone Rebate Program Proposed Term Update: Megan Maurino, Water Use Efficiency Specialist, described an update to the maximum rebate terms for the Lawn Be Gone Rebate Program (LBG Program), also known as the Turf Removal Rebate Program. The LBG Program provides a rebate of \$2 per square foot of lawn removed and converted to water-efficient landscape. Single-family residential accounts are eligible for up to a maximum of \$3,000 and Commercial, Industrial, Institutional (CII), Multifamily, and Homeowner Association, the District's large landscape customers, are eligible for up to a maximum of \$20,000. The maximum rebate of \$20,000 for large landscape customers means that customers with multiple sites may only benefit from this rebate program at one of their sites. Many large landscape customers have multiple sites, so limiting the maximum rebate on a per customer basis may act as a barrier for maximizing turf removal in the service area.

Staff proposes to apply the \$20,000 maximum rebate for CII, Multi-Family, and Homeowner Association on a per-site basis, rather than per customer. Currently the District has an active customer proposing a project to remove approximately 202,500 square feet of turf across 8 sites throughout the service area. If the term is on a per-site basis, the District would provide a rebate for an estimated \$131,100 for 65,600 sq. ft. of turf removed. An additional ~137,000 sq. ft. of turf will be removed as part of these projects. The cost per acre foot (AF) for this project is \$625/AF. Turf removal is one of the most impactful ways to achieve long term water savings and assist the District in addressing future climate change scenarios, drought preparedness, upcoming water conservation regulations, and meeting District Strategic Plan Goal 2.1 – Maintain and Enhance Sustainability and Reliability of Local and Regional Water Supplies. Staff answered questions related to artificial turf, conversion of dead grass, and landscape zoning policies from Directors. This item will come to the June Board Meeting for consideration. Staff responded to questions from the Committee.

2. Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency Water Use Efficiency Program Participation Agreements: Gisselle Delgadillo, Water Use Efficiency Specialist, presented an update on District participation in the FY 2023/24 Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) programs. The District routinely participates in a few select water use efficiency

programs administered by BAWSCA under annually-renewed, program-specific participation agreements. In doing so, the District leverages BAWSCA staff resources and benefits from economy of scale pricing, helping to achieve its cost-effective efficiency goals. In FY 2023/24, BAWSCA is offering 15 water use efficiency programs. Staff has reviewed all of BAWSCA's programs and recommends continued participation in the following programs:

- a. Rain Barrel Rebate Program – All customers can receive \$50 per rain barrel for up to two rain barrels.
- b. Lawn Be Gone Rebate Program – All customers can receive a \$2 per square foot rebate for the removal of turf and installation of water-efficient landscaping.
- c. Regional Smart Controller Program – Residential customers can receive an instant incentive of \$75 when purchasing a Rachio Inc. controller.
- d. Large Landscape Program – Landscape water audits and online water use budget tool for large landscape customers with dedicated landscape meters through Waterfluence.
- e. Irrigation Hardware Rebate Program – Customers can receive a rebate of up to \$5 for high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles, up to \$10 for spray bodies with pressure regulation, and up to \$30 for large rotors.
- f. Water Loss Management Program – District will receive support and validation of the annual Water Loss Audit through E Source, BAWSCA's subcontractor.

The District's participation allows regional consistency of programs and enhances local partnerships. Funds for all programs are proposed for inclusion in the FY 2023/24 budget as presented at the May 16, 2023, Board Workshop. A majority of the funds are allocated to direct rebates to customers. Participation in these programs is part of the recommended strategy in the Water Efficiency Master Plan (WEMP). All rebates and incentives for these measures are adopted in the District's Rate and Fee Schedule. Continuation in these programs will help meet the District's Strategic Plan Goal 2.1 – Maintain and Enhance Sustainability and Reliability of Local and Regional Water Supplies. Staff answered questions related to the breakdown of the budget for the BAWSCA programs from Directors. Staff will be asking the Board to authorize the General Manager to enter into participation agreements with BAWSCA at the June Board Meeting. Staff responded to questions from the Committee.

3. Update on Consultant Selection for Development of an ACWD Water Resources Master Plan: Thomas Niesar, Water Supply & Planning Manager, informed the committee that staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in February of 2023 for interested firms to submit proposals for consulting services to develop a Water Resources Master Plan (Plan) and that three proposals were received. An interdepartmental team evaluated the proposals based upon established criteria contained in the RFP, including methodology and approach to scope of services, qualifications and experience of company, response to supplemental questions, and cost. Based on the initial evaluation, all three firms were invited to an interview with the technical evaluation team and the General Manager. Upon a comprehensive evaluation of proposals and interviews, Woodard & Curran was the highest-ranked firm and was determined to have the qualifications, experience, and proposed methodology and approach that best met the District's needs. Accordingly, it is staff's intention to recommend the Board authorize the General Manager to execute a professional services agreement with Woodard & Curran at the regular June Board meeting. There were no questions from Board members or the public on this item.

4. Public Comments: There were no additional public comments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Topics discussed by the Committee were informational only, and no recommendations are being made.