PROVOST&PRITCHARD
CONSULTING GROUP

ADMINISTRATOR FOR SOUTH KERN & OLD RIVER MUTUAL WATER COMPANIES
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING SUMMARY
MAY 8, 2024 AT 6:00 PM

The meeting was held at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at Douglas J Miller Elementary School. Due to no attendees at the meeting, Hamish Kellam with Provost & Pritchard (P&P) presented the meeting via Teams. The meeting was recorded and uploaded to admin.provostandpritchard.com/south-kern-old-river for South Kern and Old River Mutual Water Companies (MWCs) customers to view.

Hamish Kellam introduced Provost & Pritchard and outlined the Administrator team's responsibilities. Hamish also explained the roles of P&P's subconsultants within the Administrator Program and clarified the distinctions between P&P's role and those of the consultants.

Hamish provided an overview of the Administrator Program, highlighting its functions, the reasoning for South Kern and Old River MWCs getting assigned an Administrator, and the Program's goals. Additionally, he outlined the Post Administrator Plan, which will provide a path forward for the South Kern and Old River MWCs water systems and the end goal of consolidation with the City of Bakersfield.

An update on the work completed was provided. Hamish reviewed the initial assessment of both water systems, which was completed and submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in January 2023. The assessment included a review of the water system infrastructure, water quality, operations and maintenance, managerial structure and practices, and financial status. This assessment was conducted to give P&P an idea of the challenges they will be addressing in the future.

Hamish explained that the Community Accountability and Engagement Plan (CAEP) is underway, with the draft submitted to the SWRCB on April 25, 2024. The CAEP will be finalized by May 15 and will be uploaded to the dedicated webpage at admin.provostandpritchard.com/south-kern-old-river. Hamish highlighted the importance of filling out community surveys for public engagement. These surveys will inform P&P on the best form of communication for customers of the South Kern and Old River MWCs. Hamish also updated customers on other ongoing Administrator Plans, including the Emergency Response Plan, Governance Plan, and Financial Management Plan.

Updates regarding the South Kern and Old River MWCs water systems' performance were also provided. McMor Water Services will continue to be the Certified Operator for both water systems. Water sampling is continuing on schedule for Old River MWC and has been restarted for South Kern MWC. While both water systems are returning to compliance with monitoring, water samples indicate contaminants remain above the maximum levels allowed by the SWRCB. Hamish explained that these results are available online at the SWRCB website: https://sdwis.waterboards.ca.gov/PDWW/. P&P is prioritizing system deficiencies and implementing a maintenance program.

Hamish provided an overview of the Emergency Response Plans, stating that the Plans for both water systems are underway and will be uploaded to the South Kern and Old River MWC webpage once approved. He also gave an update on the status of water for the systems, informing customers that their water is placed on a "Do Not Drink" order from the Division of Drinking Water due to contaminant levels. In case of an emergency, customers should contact Golden State Water Company at 800-999-0403 or customerservice@gswater.com.

An update on billing and water rates was provided. Customer accounts have been established with Golden State Water Company for billing and customer services. These accounts were established in February 2024 for Old River MWC and in April 2024 for South Kern MWC. Bills will be proceeding with a flat rate of $50 per month. Hamish explained that the funds from billing will be used to provide operation and maintenance to the water systems and will not go toward P&P. P&P will be conducting a rate study to assess the true cost of water system operations and the future rate with the City of Bakersfield. Further updates on the rate study will be communicated to customers at community meetings.

Hamish communicated that a snapshot of the South Kern and Old River MWC water systems' financial health will be provided at future community meetings. P&P recently set up individual bank accounts for South Kern and Old River to process payments and grant funding.

Major projects and plans underway include technical assistance for long-term consolidation with the City of Bakersfield. P&P is working with Sacramento State University – Office of Water Projects for long-term consolidation assistance and UC Davis Aoki Water Justice Clinic for legal assistance for consolidation. Other work underway includes routine maintenance and upgrades to the water system through operations and maintenance funding.

P&P provided an overview of community engagement and future community meetings. Customers were encouraged to attend future community meetings, fill out the community surveys, sign up to receive email updates, and visit the P&P Administrator Program website to stay informed.

Because there were no attendees present, a public comment period was not held. Instead, Hamish encouraged customers to call the P&P office to submit public comments or fill out the form online. An email and phone number for continued public comment was provided: 559-449-2700 and southkernoldriver@ppeng.com.