

**CalDesal Executive Committee Meeting Notes**

**Monday, February 24, 2020**

**11:00 a.m-12:00 p.m.**

**Executive Committee Members present:**

Bob Shaver (Chair)

Warren Teitz (Treasurer)

Mark Donovan (Secretary)

Paul Shoenberger (alternate for Shawn Dewane)

Richard Svindland

Jeff Quimby

Gilad Cohen

**Executive Committee Members absent:**

Phil Rosentrater (Vice-Chair)

Jeremy Crutchfield (excused)

Phil Paule

Makrom Shantila

Harold Williams

**WHO IS NUMBER 13???**

**Guests:** Wendy Ridderbusch, Executive Director

Wendy Ridderbusch, ED gave the following report:

**Membership recapture, retention and recruitment efforts**

* Recaptured Poseidon and WRD for $10,000 total
* Reached out to GM Paul Sciutto at Monterey One Water but have not heard back. I intend to call him back and urge him to rejoin.
* Retained Jacobs through Ed Winkler in Sacramento.
* Recruitment attempt at bringing in Yorba Linda Water District failed. This is what they said in part, *“I don’t believe the Board’s decision is related to a lack of interest, but rather in focusing how they are going to make up the revenue shortage we are about to experience due to having to import water instead of using our groundwater because of PFAS. Keep working on us and when the timing is right, I believe it can happen.”*
* Gilad encouraged Maria Elena Rodriguez Hernandez with the engineering company Indar to join. She sent in a membership application and we sent her an annual dues bill.
* Approached Daniel Cozad from CV Salts and he agreed they would join at the associate level. We mailed him a thank you note and application. We have also just sent him an annual dues bill.
* Stacy Taylor with Mesa Water has been urging Eric Miller to join as an associate and he has indicated he will join in March. We have sent him an annual dues bill too.
* Reached out to Tim Hogan who has shared that he has not yet decided if he will join as an associate. He is being invited to one more Regulatory Committee meeting being held next week and if he does not join, he will be disinvited from that for next month and other member activities.
* Contacted Sivan Cohen from Noria Water, daughter of UCLA’s Yorum Cohen. She paid $750 to have a vendor table at conference but I am encouraging her to take next step to join as a member.
* Sent contact to Steve Ritchie at SFPUC but no response so far, will follow-up.
* Phil Rosentrater and I are going to visit IEUA in March to pitch them.

**CalDesal Membership Plan**

Wendy has been performing triage, trying to claw back members who have not paid and who do not plan on paying, having tough retention conversations with members, and setting up multiple recruitment meetings with potential members. Since we have cleaned up the membership and associate members list we now know exactly who is a member or associate of CalDesal.

If I was wildly successful, I could bring in a couple of new members each month. When you start doing the math it would take almost two years to bring the membership level back to where it was previously not counting the retention efforts underway. I am putting the finishing touches on a draft Membership Plan laying out a vision of where our organization could be in five years. It includes the creation of a Membership Committee who can assist in recruitment efforts so that we can increase our penetration into the market of potential members. I have started making contacts working from the list that we compiled based on your input of folks who should be members of CalDesal. You may remember I e-mailed that list out on the Friday of our conference. I would urge you to volunteer to take one name from that list and pursue them with a direct membership ask over the next month. That could expand our efforts to 14 people recruiting. Agency GMs are working on their budgets with staff and they will be locked in by late spring as the start of the new budget cycle begins on July 1. It was reported that company fiscal years generally begin January 1, but that recruitment efforts should continue irrespective of that since the member and associate dues are not steep. Both Carol Mahoney and Paul Shoenberger agreed to take a name from the list and make direct contact.

Wendy will give the Executive Committee a copy of the proposed Membership Plan before the monthly meeting in March so that the committee can have a fuller discussion on the points and so Wendy can make adjustments based on that input and then you in preparation for a vote at our meeting Wednesday, May 6th.

**Annual Conference**

Final numbers:

* 110 attendees with **$21, 250.00** in registration fees.
* Sponsors came in at **$17,000.00** – which according to CAMS is the highest so far for a CalDesal Conference
* 3 Vendors at $750 for **$2,250.00**

A total of $40,500. The hotel bill was $22,000. So CalDesal made approximately **$18,500** profit, minus CAMS travel expenses. Wendy discussed the concept that we should optimize opportunities for revenue from our annual conference.

Wendy had a great conversation with Conference Planning Committee Chair Joe Monaco about retooling the committee moving forward this year. Working with the committee under his leadership they are going to perform some research, meet as a committee to discuss and brainstorm some new ideas, and bring some recommendations back to the Executive Committee regarding length of the conference, registration fee, sponsorship fee, etc. The goal is to add more value to our members and associates at conference.

For instance, keeping the projector running between panels during breaks to show associates’ companies with photos and contact info like an old slide projector. Mixing it up and adding talk show style panels between the traditional programs was another idea. All with an eye to increasing the conference profit in order to help diversify the association’s revenue. WateReuse California is making a healthy profit as are other organizations through their conferences. The Committee will investigate the profit margins of other folks who are doing it successfully and trying to emulate the positive pieces to put into place in our organization.

It is difficult to separate the membership value from the membership retention and recruitment. They are one and the same in many ways.

Wendy has asked CAMS to give us pricing on venues in Costa Mesa, Palm Springs, and Ontario for 2021 conference. Joe Monaco asked that we also obtain a quote for San Diego.

CAMS has shared that Santa Barbara would like to have us return in **2022** to the newly remodeled Marriott which is being rebranded as Mar Monte. The only difference would be a higher room rate. This year it was $199 per room within the hotel. Next time the room rate will move up to $259.00 for an increase of $60.00 per night. Natalie with CAMS has informed us that we need to strike while the iron is hot with the hotel. The Executive Committee expressed a desire to have the Conference Planning Committee make that decision on whether CalDesal should go back to Mar Monte in 2022.

**Policy Issues Update**

We attached our comment letter on the Governor’s Water Resilience Portfolio to the agenda. Nancy Vogel dropped us a quick note saying that she received it and she appreciated our group weighing in. Wendy will let the Executive Committee know when the final portfolio is released.

**Committee Activity**

We also attached a copy of the letter sent by the CA Coastal Commission regarding the HB project to the agenda e-mail. Charles Busslinger from Orange County wanted to make sure that our Executive Committee saw this response. He feels like they are really deviating from their own lane. Wendy indicated that she included this letter as an FYI. She did not see an upside for the association in weighing in against the California Coastal Commission. After some discussion about ways in which the association could weigh in, the group consensus was that the organization did not have the resources at the current point in time to participate in any comments. Wendy did let the Executive Committee know that Poseidon had responded to the CCC letter and that she would send a copy of that to the entire committee.

Wendy also shared that John Watts from Senator Feinsteins’ office is asking for a CalDesal support letter on their Senate Bill 1932, their Drought Resiliency and Water Supply Infrastructure Act that currently contains $80 million for desal. The Legislative Committee will take a position on the bill this week.

She reported that all the committees and the subcommittees are up and running and meeting monthly and beginning to accomplish some goals.

Wendy broached the issue of the idea thrown out at our February meeting about an Innovative Technology Committee being formed. She told the committee that she went back and consulted the organization’s Bylaws and they require an official vote in order to create a new committee. She asked for some discussion and then a motion and a vote. Discussion ensued and the committee asked that more detail including the purpose of the committee be circulated in order to vote on whether or not to form an Innovative Technology Committee. Wendy will receive this requested information from Mark Donovan and circulate it to the Executive Committee for a vote before the March meeting.

**Social Media**

We are working with CAMS to get our members only website section up and running and are about three weeks away from completion. This will be a tangible way to provide value to members.

Another item that we discussed in Santa Barbara was the idea of “passing the hat” voluntarily with members and associates who would like to contribute in order to fund a communications media effort focused externally with messaging on larger issues important to our members and assisting with the viability of their projects, and producing professional membership recruitment material. We envision the Outreach Communications Committee working more internally and the communications consultant working externally but the efforts would obviously be compatible.

Discussion occurred regarding the “pass the hat” strategy so we can move forward to hire a firm to help us. Wendy talked about working with Southwest Strategies as they helped craft our op-ed on Carlsbad working with San Diego County Water Authority and Poseidon. Wendy would like to ask the Chair of the Outreach Communications Committee Stacy Taylor to get a scope of work request prepared for to them to give us some quotes for this work as a package. Wendy pledged to keep the Executive Committee fully informed as the effort moves forward. VOTE???

Finally, our volunteer committees can help us obtain some key pieces without paying a consultant. For example, the Social Media Subcommittee worked with one of their own vendors to produce a “video banner” that creates movement and interest for our Facebook page. Take a look at it if you haven’t yet.

**Policy Committee Activity Highlights**

**Social Media**

* Members’ Only website pursuit update – CAMS is pursuing the coding to create the “members’ only” portion of the CalDesal website in order to create more of the value proposition for current members as well as recruitment for potential members. More sensitive information for members only will reside there such as Executive and policy committee notes, membership lists, etc.

**ED Activity**

Invitations and Requests:

Association of California Cities Orange County – ED appeared in their magazine with photo and bio. Pitching membership at a follow-up meeting to members of this organization, again as a result of an invitation-only opportunity courtesy of Stacy Taylor Policy Committee Activity

* California Coastal Commission (CCC) Letter regarding Huntington Beach project
* Senator Feinstein’s S1932, the Drought Resiliency and Water Supply Infrastructure Act request
* State Legislative, Regulatory, Annual Conference, and Outreach Communications Committees
* Potential Innovative Technology Committee Status – some interest was expressed but need an official vote

Social Media

* Members’ Only website pursuit update
* “Pass the Hat” for voluntary contribution to professional communications contract – need an official vote
* FB Video Banner

ED Activity

Invitations and Requests:

* Cal Matters Op-Ed reposted and reprinted – Director Nancy Vogel comment
* Association of California Cities – Orange County (ACCOC) membership presentation on March 2, 2020
* MWD Chairwoman and West Basin MWD Director Gloria Gray CalDesal request

Next Executive Committee Meeting: **Monday, March 16, 2020 from 11:00-noon**

**Adjourn**

* at Mesa Water District.

\*\*\* It’s amazing the reach that the CalMatters op-ed had. In addition to being reprinted and reposted in places like the Visalia Times, and the Desert Sun, Nancy Vogel told me at our conference that she read and liked it! CalMatters even ran an op-ed to the op-ed by the environmentalists so we know it peaked their interest.

I am appearing at the ACCOC meeting to pitch membership next week and continuing to pursue other opportunities to get in front of folks to preach CalDesal. I have also been invited to attend the Water Agencies of Orange County (WACO) to talk about CalDesal and our important issues.

Finally, I received a phone call from MWD Chairwoman and President of West Basin Gloria Gray regarding her new “Women in Desal” concept idea. She is requesting that CalDeal staff the administrative and organizational piece of this new group which would consist of four meetings a year every quarter with apps from 5:30-7:00 p.m. with a woman speaker who works in and around desal. I told her I would need to talk with the Executive Committee about it to get approval before I could commit. I also underscored our inability to fund it but would be happy to work with any funders on the organizational side. She shared with me that some other companies like Dudek and Poseidon would pay for the food and any expenses if CalDesal could e-mail the invites and help arrange the locations like at Met headquarters.

I know this is the third request to vote on this, but I would appreciate it if I could get a sense of whether or not you’d like me to move ahead with this. It seems like a great way to affiliate our brand with Gloria Gray/MWD with this specific activity. May I get a motion and a second?

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**Chair Bob Shaver adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.**