

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES OF APRIL 9, 2025
1:30 PM

President McDonald called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 1:30 PM with participation in person, via teleconference, and through Teams. All those in attendance stood for the pledge of allegiance led by President McDonald.

ROLL CALL:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Melody McDonald, President
Robert Stewart, Vice President
John Longville, Director
Richard Corneille, Director
Mark Falcone, Director

STAFF PRESENT:

Betsy Miller, General Manager
David Cosgrove, General Counsel
Milan Mitrovich, Land Resources Manager
Angie Quiroga, Senior Administrative Analyst
Aaron Rueda, Administrative Analyst
Allison Zecher, Board Secretary
Anna Frey, Assistant Biologist
Aliza Olmos, Assistant Engineer
John Lambie, Consulting Chief Engineer and Geohydrologist

GUESTS PRESENT:

David Smith, East Valley Water District
Paul Kielhold, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District
Cindy Saks, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District
Michael Fam, San Bernardino County Flood Control District
Hans Tolksdor, Cal Poly Pomona
Joseph Cordillo, Cal Poly Pomona
Seema Shan-Fairbank, Cal Poly Pomona
Margo Hakim, Cal Poly Pomona
Safiya Hassan, Cal Poly Pomona
Lam Doan, Cal Poly Pomona
Carlos Bobadilla, Cal Poly Pomona
Joe Kebbar, Cal Poly Pomona
Shane Santos, Cal Poly Pomona
Adam Erickson, Cal Poly Pomona
Samantha Santoro Flores, Cal Poly Pomona
Kiara Cruz, Cal Poly Pomona
Matthew Romero, Cal Poly Pomona
Jacob Cataneda, Cal Poly Pomona

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public comments were made.

2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

No additions or deletions to the agenda were made.

3. INTRODUCTIONS AND GUEST RECOGNITION

The Board, staff, in-person, and Teams attendees introduced themselves.

4. PUBLIC MEETING RELATED TO ADOPTION OF THE GROUNDWATER CHARGE

President McDonald opened the public meeting related to the adoption of the District's Groundwater Charge. She began by referencing Article 1, Section 75560 of the California Water Code, which requires that any conservation district proposing to levy a groundwater charge must annually prepare an engineering investigation and report on groundwater conditions within the District.

Ms. Miller offered to present the 2025 Engineering Investigation Report for the Bunker Hill Basin, which had previously been reviewed and accepted by the Board of Directors on March 12, 2025; however, no requests were made for a second presentation of the 2025 Report. Ms. Miller reviewed the Groundwater Enterprise budget for Fiscal Year 2025–2026, including the recommended 5% increase to the groundwater charge. The proposed unitary groundwater charge is \$18.69 per acre-foot, applicable to all production categories, including municipal, non-municipal, and agricultural use. The charge would apply to groundwater production occurring between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

Mr. Cosgrove, District Counsel, provided an overview of the legal and procedural framework for the groundwater charge, noting that this meeting represents the first of two hearings required by statute. The final public hearing is scheduled for April 23, 2025, and all proceedings related to the charge must be completed by the end of April. He summarized key legal findings required under Proposition 26, including:

- The revenue generated by the charge must not exceed the cost of the services provided.
- There must be a reasonable relationship between the charges imposed and the benefits received by those who pay the charges.

He confirmed that:

- Notice of the proposed charge was mailed to all pumpers and published in a newspaper of general circulation.
- The Engineering Investigation Report and proposed budget have been posted, circulated, and made part of the administrative record.
- A draft resolution has been prepared detailing the findings and rationale that support the proposed charge. No action on the resolution is proposed during this meeting.

Ms. Betsy Miller presented further details of the proposed FY 2025–2026 groundwater charge, noting that staff and Board evaluated 0%, 3%, and 5% rate increases. The proposed 5% increase,

which is higher than the regional Consumer Price Index (CPI), is recommended to cover costs associated with the District's operation of the 20 new basins recently constructed through the Enhanced Recharge agreement.

It was confirmed that no written comments on the proposed groundwater charge had been received as of the meeting date, April 9, 2025. No comments were received following President McDonald's invitation for public comment. President McDonald closed the public meeting with no action taken. The matter will return to the Board for consideration and action at the April 23, 2025, public hearing.

5. AD HOC AUDIT FIRM SELECTION COMMITTEE

President McDonald introduced Item 5D regarding the formation of an Ad Hoc Audit Firm Selection Committee. She noted the importance of reviewing the selection process for the District's independent audit firm and acknowledged the District's practice of rotating audit firms to ensure independence.

President McDonald appointed Directors Corneille and Falcone to the Ad Hoc Audit Firm Selection Committee to review qualifications, evaluate proposals, and provide a recommendation to the full Board regarding the selection of an independent audit firm.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

The Board considered approval of the March 12, 2025, meeting minutes and the March 2025 expenditure reports, with a motion by Director Corneille to approve the consent calendar which was seconded by Director Longville.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to approve the Consent Calendar: Item A, Board Minutes, March 12, 2025; and Item B: Expenditure Report, March 2025. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Board members voting in the affirmative.

President McDonald: Yes

President McDonald: Yes

Director Corneille: Yes

Director Longville: Yes

Director Falcone: Yes

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

Committee Reports

Chair Falcone provided a verbal update on the Ad Hoc Financial Reports Review Committee meeting held on April 2, 2025. The committee was tasked with reviewing the District's monthly financial reporting format and providing recommendations to optimize clarity and transparency, if needed. Following review and discussion, the committee recommends a revised Profit & Loss (P&L) report that includes a full balance sheet produced quarterly as well as a standalone Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) report. These changes aim to enhance the usefulness and accessibility of financial information for both the Board and the public. Chair Falcone noted that

the committee's recommendations will be discussed by the Finance & Administration Committee at its meeting on April 16. He thanked Ms. Miller, Ms. Quiroga, and the District's financial consultant for their work developing alternative formats for discussion by the committee. Chair Falcone also thanked Director Corneille for his participation. President McDonald expressed appreciation for the committee's work and their recommendations in support of an improved format.

Action Items

A. UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT FOR MARCH 2025

Ms. Quiroga presented the unaudited financial reports for the month of March 2025. She reported an increase in overall interest income by approximately \$309,000 due to market value adjustments, including a large payment of \$138,115.95 from UBS. A revenue increase of \$71,016.73 under GL 4030 – Mining Revenue was noted following reconciliation of payments from Cemex, including credits related to expenses under the High Groundwater Agreement. She reviewed enterprise-level performance: the Groundwater Enterprise saw a net revenue increase of \$42,423, and Redlands Plaza increased \$7,954.

Ms. Quiroga noted that total expenses rose by \$338,086, largely due to increases in professional services and salaries. In GL 7126 – PERC Engineering/Professional Services, expenses included payments to E-PUR LLC, CASC Engineering, Q3 Consulting, and Tetra Tech. The Land Enterprise showed a net loss of \$173,125, due to sediment transport and groundwater modeling costs, and the General Fund decreased by \$2,858.

Ms. Quiroga also reviewed notable variances across several GL accounts, including GL 6001 General Administration-Other for ergonomic assessments and GL 6091 Public Notices for groundwater rate notices. She responded to a question from Director Falcone regarding a \$221,406 reimbursement from the Conservation Trust, which offset prior-year implementation costs and was applied to reduce the trust's liability to the District.

It was moved by Director Falcone and seconded by Director Longville to approve the unaudited financial reports for March 2025 as presented, noting the Net Ordinary Income shown on the P&L on package page 51 reflects the District's annual budget, while the Net Income shown at the bottom of the page includes our CapEx/CIP expenses which are funded through reserves that are not shown on the P&L. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Board members voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

B. BIG BEAR WATER MASTER – APPOINTMENT OF MR. THOMAS CROWLEY

Mr. Cosgrove presented a recommendation to appoint Mr. Thomas Crowley as the District's representative to the Big Bear Watermaster, noting that the District sought support from a consultant due to the currently vacant Senior Engineer role. Mr. Crowley brings extensive experience and familiarity with the role, the responsibilities involved, and the parties represented from previous service on the Big Bear Watermaster during his tenure with the District.

Mr. Cosgrove noted that this appointment is needed in order to file the necessary nomination with the Court for Mr. Crowley to be officially designated as the District's Watermaster representative. He clarified that the appointment could be reconsidered in the future if the District brings a new senior engineer on board and deems it appropriate to make a change. Director Corneille discussed the anticipated time commitment, with staff noting attendance at quarterly meeting and annual report preparation in addition to calculations completed by the District's Assistant Engineer.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to appoint Mr. Thomas Crowley P.E., Senior Consulting Engineer with Dopudja & Wells Consulting, to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of its current Watermaster Representative, as the District's representative on the Big Bear Watermaster. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Board members voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

C. ACWA 2026-2027 PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, AND REGION BOARD MEMBER ELECTION VOTING DELEGATE

Ms. Miller presented the item regarding the designation of a District voting delegate for the upcoming Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) 2026–2027 elections for President, Vice President, and Region Board Members. Director Corneille moved that President McDonald be designated as the District's authorized voting delegate. Vice President Stewart seconded the motion, and there was no further discussion.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to appoint President McDonald as the voting delegate with no alternate for the ACWA 2026-2027 President, Vice President, and region board member election. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Board members voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

D. ACWA JPIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONCURRING NOMINATION

President McDonald introduced the item regarding a concurring nomination for a candidate to the ACWA JPIA Executive Committee. She noted the District's approach to supported qualified candidates and spoke favorably of Director Harrison's efforts to enroll SBVMWD in ACWA JPIA.

It was moved by Vice President Stewart and seconded by Director Longville to approve Resolution No. 633 supporting T. Milford Harrison for ACWA JPIA Executive Committee. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Board members voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

E. GOVERNING BODY RESOLUTION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 STATE & LOCAL CYBERSECURITY GRANT PROGRAM FOR LOCAL & TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Ms. Miller presented the Governing Body Resolution for Fiscal Year 2026 related to participation in the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program. She explained that the granting agency requested approval of the resolution in order to proceed with grant award, noting the benefits of work planned to be completed with the grant funds.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Falcone to approve Resolution No. 634 authorizing Betsy Miller as the Authorized Agent for the Fiscal Year 2024 State & Local Cybersecurity Grant Program for Local & Tribal Governments. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Board members voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

Dr. Mitrovich provided the Board with an update on current environmental fieldwork and species monitoring, focusing primarily on the San Bernardino Kangaroo Rat (SBKR). He reported that District staff have completed approximately 30% of the 141 habitat surveys to be completed this spring at the Santa Ana River Wash and Mill Creek facilities, and discussed the survey and trapping methodologies in response to Director Corneille's question about reliably detecting nocturnal species. The survey data will be used to identify population trends and survival rates as well as understand the effects of management actions.

Dr. Mitrovich also highlighted the District's leadership in expanding the San Bernardino kangaroo rat survey protocol across the species range in support of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

goals. On March 25, 2025, the District hosted a training for 30 individuals from 12 different agencies, including representatives from USGS and USFWS, who will engage in a collaborative effort to implement a consistent, science-based approach to habitat monitoring and species recovery.

The Board thanked Dr. Mitrovich and his team for their continued dedication and outstanding work in advancing environmental stewardship and interagency collaboration.

ENGINEERING UPDATE

Ms. Miller shared an update on the Mentone Shop construction, noting that a notice to proceed was issued on March 19.

Mr. Lambie provided an update on PERC activities through March 31, 2025. He reported that technical studies and modeling are largely complete, including groundwater modeling, and discussed interagency coordination. The results of these technical studies are being used to estimate costs, recharge yields, and construction timeframes.

Director Falcone asked if the final feasibility study report will be completed prior to May 15. Ms. Miller stated that she is working closely with Mr. Lambie to ensure deliverables are provided according to Board expectations.

CAL POLY POMONA SENIOR ENGINEERING PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

The Board welcomed the Cal Poly Pomona senior engineering team and expressed appreciation for their work and presentation. District staff introduced Dr. Fairbank, who acknowledged project support provided by the District, San Bernardino County Flood Control, and other technical partners who assisted with the project. The student team presented their capstone project focused on increasing groundwater recharge through development of the Plunge Creek PERC alternative.

The project involved multiple technical components including environmental review, spatial data collection, geotechnical and hydrologic studies, and hydraulic design. The environmental team addressed potential benefits of the proposed project including improved infiltration, reduced runoff, and enhanced water quality. The geospatial team conducted data collection using traditional survey methods and drone photography, producing detailed topographic maps and digital models of the project site and spillway. The hydrology team estimated storm flows and modeled stormwater capture using industry software and historic data. The geotechnical team performed soil testing both in the field and laboratory, concluding that infiltration was feasible at the site, with results similar to nearby Oak Creek. The hydraulic team designed a diversion structure using inflatable pneumatic gates and box culverts, with a forebay for energy dissipation and sediment collection to protect downstream infiltration basins. Two infiltration basins were proposed in parallel to allow operational flexibility and continuous function during maintenance. Additionally, a plunge pool was designed to reduce velocity and erosion at the existing spillway outlet. The team announced they are finalizing cost estimates for construction and maintenance, which will be completed prior to their final symposium on April 25, 2025.

The Board expressed their appreciation and enthusiasm for the team's thorough and professional presentation. Director Corneille commended the proposed infrastructure development and discussed the impacts of recent watershed fires and the importance of considering post-fire sediment in design. He also inquired about the consideration of atmospheric river events and changing hydrologic patterns, which the students noted as important factors for future design

work. Directors thanked the team once again for their work and meaningful contribution to the District's mission of sustainable water management.

The Board was formally invited to the Cal Poly Pomona Senior Project Symposium on Friday, April 25, 2025, at 9:30 AM.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT AND MONTHLY RECHARGE REPORT

Ms. Miller began by sharing recent team training and employee appreciation events for District staff. She then reported that water recharge activity remained strong through March 2025, with over 29,000 acre-feet recharged in this water year to date, and noted that the District is approximately 8,000 acre-feet away from 1.5 million acre-feet of recharge since 1912.

Ms. Miller shared updates on recent recruitment efforts, with continued focus on the vacant Senior Engineer role. Board members and staff discussed strategies to reach high-quality candidates who will fit the District's culture.

She noted that proposals have been received and reviewed for a firm to complete the FY25 audit, which will also be reviewed by the Ad Hoc Audit Firm Selection Committee.

2025 BOARD PRIORITIES PROGRESS REPORT: Q1

Ms. Miller directed the Board to the 2025 Board Priorities Progress Report – Quarter 1 included on package page 78 for a review of progress to date.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND STAFF TASKS

Director Corneille highlighted the upcoming *Day of Climate Action* on April 26, 2025, noting that the District is a sponsor along with several local agencies. Activities will include community service projects, a celebration at Smiley Park, and a Repair Café at the A.K. Smiley Public Library. He also noted the District's sponsorship of a wildfire resilience lecture cosponsored by San Bernardino County Museum. Director Corneille noted that projects sponsored by other entities that take place on District property should obtain access authorization.

MONTHLY BOARD MEMBER MEETING REPORTS, AND/OR BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Director Falcone attended the following meetings:

- SBVWCD Board Meeting - March 12
- EVWD Regular Board Meeting - March 12
- Association of San Bernardino County Special Districts Dinner – March 17
- Chino Basin Water Conservation District Tour – March 18
- Redlands City Council Meeting - March 18
- SBVWCD Facilities Tour – March 25
- Highland Chamber Luncheon – March 25
- SBVMWD Regular Board Meeting - April 1
- Ad Hoc Financial Reports Review – April 2
- Groundwater Watersheds and Groundwater Sustainability Plans Workshop – April 3
- SBVMWD Policy and Administration Workshop - April 3
- BTAC Committee Meeting – April 7

- SBVMWD Resources and Engineering Workshop - April 8
- Highland City Council Meeting - April 8

Director Longville attended the following meetings:

- SBVWCD Board Meeting - March 12
- SBVMWD Board Meeting - March 18
- 2025 ACWA Legislative Symposium - March 26
- SBVMWD Regular Board Meeting - April 1
- SBVWCD Outreach and Communications Committee - March 5
- SBVMWD Resources and Engineering Meeting - April 8

Director Corneille attended the following meetings:

- SBVWCD Board Meeting - March 12
- Redlands City Council Meeting – April 1
- Ad Hoc Financial Reports Review – April 2
- Redlands Chamber Rise and Shine - April 7

Vice President Stewart attended the following meetings:

- SBVWCD Board Meeting - March 12
- Association of San Bernardino County Special Districts Dinner – March 17
- Big Bear Watermaster Meeting – March 18
- SBVWCD Facilities Tour – March 25
- Loma Linda Chamber of Commerce Meeting – April 2
- SBVMWD Policy and Administration Workshop – April 3
- BTAC Committee Meeting – April 7

President McDonald attended the following meetings:

- Association of San Bernardino County Special Districts Board Meeting – February 17
- SBVMWD Board Meeting – February 18
- Enhanced Recharge Ribbon Cutting – February 20
- Association of San Bernardino County Special Districts Dinner – February 24
- Highland Chamber Luncheon – February 25
- Signed checks at SBVWCD – February 26
- Highland Chamber Installation Dinner – February 27
- SBVMWD Board Meeting – March 4
- Three Valleys Municipal Water District Board Meeting – March 5
- SBVMWD Policy and Administration Workshop – March 6
- ACWA State Legislative Committee – March 7
- Association of San Bernardino County Special Districts Board Meeting - March 10
- Yorba Linda Water District Board Meeting – March 11
- Association of San Bernardino County Special Districts Dinner – March 17
- Special ACWA Special State Legislative Committee – March 17
- Highland Chamber Luncheon – March 25
- ACWA State Legislative Committee – March 27
- SBVMWD Board Meeting – April 1
- SBVMWD Policy and Administration Workshop - April 3
- BTAC Committee Meeting – April 7
- SBVMWD Resources and Engineering Workshop - April 8

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The upcoming meetings were reviewed.

10. CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Miller stated that staff wished to discuss the items listed under Closed Session with the Board at 3:45 p.m.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to adjourn to Closed Session. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Board members voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

At 4:09 p.m., the meeting was reconvened to an open session. Under Government Code Section 54957.1, there was no other reportable action during Closed Session.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to reconvene to open session. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Directors voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

11. ADJOURN MEETING

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to adjourn. The motion carried 5-0-0, with all Directors voting in the affirmative.

**President McDonald: Yes
President McDonald: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes**

At 4:10 p.m. the meeting adjourned to the Board meeting scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on April 23, 2025, in-person, teleconference, and Teams meeting.



Betsy Miller
General Manager