

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 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  
Richard Corneille, Director

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

John Longville, 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

GUESTS PRESENT:

Cindy Saks, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District  
David Smith, East Valley Water District  
Jeff Mosher, Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority

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 HEARING RELATED TO ADOPTION OF THE GROUNDWATER CHARGE

President McDonald introduced the item and reviewed statutory requirements under California Water Code Section 75560, which require an annual engineering investigation before levying a

groundwater charge. Ms. Miller noted that staff were available to present the Engineering Investigation Report (EI Report) and Groundwater Replenishment Program budget, which were presented at previous Board meetings, upon request.

Staff recommend a 5% increase to the groundwater charge for FY 2025-2026, setting the proposed rate at \$18.69 per acre-foot for all groundwater production from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

President McDonald opened the public hearing and invited comments. Hearing none, Mr. Cosgrove confirmed all required procedures and notices were completed and summarized Proposition 26 compliance. He explained that the proposed charge meets both legal criteria: (1) revenue does not exceed service costs, and (2) a fair relationship exists between the charge and the benefits received. The estimated revenue of \$1,568,203 is less than projected expenditures, and the groundwater pumping charge structure ensures benefit based on extraction. It was confirmed no written comments were received during the notice period.

Director Dave Smith of East Valley Water District provided public comment in support of the proposed groundwater charge and commending the District's groundwater recharge work and stewardship of the Bunker Hill Basin.

President McDonald asked about development of a District reserve to purchase surplus water for recharge when available. Mr. Cosgrove stated that staff would develop options for Board review for the FY27 budget, noting the importance of input from rate-payers including local water retailers.

**It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to approve Resolution No. 632 as presented. The motion carried 3-0-2, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative. Director Longville and Director Falcone were absent from the vote.**

**President McDonald: Yes  
Vice President Stewart: Yes  
Director Corneille: Yes  
Director Longville: Absent  
Director Falcone: Absent**

## **5. CONSENT CALENDAR**

The Board considered approval of the April 9, 2025, meeting minutes with a motion by Director Corneille to approve the consent calendar which was seconded by Vice President Stewart.

**It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to approve the Consent Calendar with corrections to dates on page 26: Board Minutes, April 9, 2025. The motion carried 3-0-2, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative. Director Longville and Director Falcone were absent from the vote.**

**President McDonald: Yes**

**Vice President Stewart: Yes**  
**Director Corneille: Yes**  
**Director Longville: Absent**  
**Director Falcone: Absent**

## 6. COMMITTEE REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

### Committee Reports

Acting Chair Director Corneille provided a verbal update on the Ad Hoc Audit Firm Selection Committee meeting held on April 15. The committee reviewed four proposals and, following discussion, recommended Eadie & Payne LLP for audit services based on qualifications, staffing rotation, and overall cost.

Vice President Stewart provided a verbal update on the April 16 meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee. The committee reviewed budget projections, highlighting the challenges of forecasting mining revenue and interest income, and recommended clarification on which budget line includes grant income. The committee also discussed scenarios that would necessitate mid-year budget adjustments and discussed revisions to the monthly financial reporting format as discussed by the Ad Hoc Financial Report Review Committee. Staff coverage and strategic staffing decisions were also reviewed.

### Action Items

#### A. AUDIT FIRM SELECTION FOR FISCAL YEARS 2025-2028

Ms. Miller presented the Ad Hoc Audit Firm Selection Committee recommendation to approve Eadie and Payne LLP as the District's audit firm for fiscal years 2025 through 2028, based on the firm's qualifications and performance. Director Corneille made a motion to approve the selection, which was seconded by Vice President Stewart. The Board expressed appreciation to staff and the Ad Hoc Audit Firm Selection Committee for their thorough evaluation and analysis.

**It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to approve Eadie Payne LLP to perform the District's FY25 audit and authorize the General Manager to 1) enter into an Audit Engagement Letters to provide these services, as approved by District Counsel, and 2) up to three subsequent Audit Engagement Letters through audit year FY28 based on performance. The motion carried 3-0-2. Director Longville and Director Falcone were absent from the vote.**

**President McDonald: Yes**  
**Vice President Stewart: Yes**  
**Director Corneille: Yes**  
**Director Longville: Absent**  
**Director Falcone: Absent**

## B. CONTRACT SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH NAKAE & ASSOCIATES FOR CACTUS SALVAGE & RELOCATION SERVICES

Dr. Mitrovich presented a proposed contract services agreement with Nakae & Associates to salvage and relocate several hundred to potentially several thousand cactus clumps, including prickly pear and Opuntia species, on a site that is planned for development. Dr. Mitrovich explained the value of the proposed effort, including its role in supporting Wash Plan covered species such as the cactus wren, contributing to fire-resistant habitat structure under the BLM fuels management grant, and addressing off-site mitigation obligations related to past trespass violations. The project aligns with the District's environmental objectives and is being funded through previously allocated mitigation funds.

The contract is structured as a time-and-materials agreement with a not-to-exceed amount of \$77,500. Based on cost estimates, this will cover approximately ten days of field activity, during which 150 to 200 cactus clumps may be salvaged per day. Section 2.1 of the agreement establishes the financial cap, and Section 1.2 clarifies that no work will proceed without explicit direction from the District.

Director Corneille and Vice President Stewart discussed potential salvage locations, cost considerations, and the possibility of additional restoration sites beyond the planned relocation area. The Board discussed the need to carefully track work completed under the time-and-materials contracts, particularly on mobilization days. Staff confirmed that insurance and liability requirements were adequately addressed under the District's standard contract provisions.

**It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to approve Contract Services Agreement with Nakae & Associates for implementation of Cactus Salvage and Relocation into the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan Preserve in an amount not to exceed \$77,500. The motion carried 3-0-2, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative. Director Longville and Director Falcone were absent from the vote.**

**President McDonald: Yes  
Vice President Stewart: Yes  
Director Corneille: Yes  
Director Longville: Absent  
Director Falcone: Absent**

## 7. INFORMATION ITEMS

### JEFF MOSHER, CLOUD SEEDING UPDATES SAWPA – SANTA ANA WATERSHED PROJECT AUTHORITY

Mr. Jeff Mosher of SAWPA provided the Board with an update on the Santa Ana River Watershed Cloud Seeding Pilot Program. He began by expressing appreciation for the opportunity to present and thanked staff for coordinating the visit.

Mr. Mosher provided a brief overview of SAWPA's mission, structure, and key projects. The presentation then focused on SAWPA's regional cloud seeding pilot project, intended to test the

ability to increase local water supply by augmenting snowpack in strategic mountain areas. The project uses ground-based silver iodide generators to stimulate precipitation during storm events. Cloud seeding does not create storms but enhances natural precipitation by introducing additional ice nuclei into the atmosphere.

The project is funded 50% through a Proposition 1 grant, with the remainder provided by SAWPA member agencies and participating regional partners. SAWPA coordinated closely with local flood control agencies and implemented strict suspension criteria to prevent any possible contribution to flooding, including pausing seeding during severe storms and in areas with recent wildfire burn scars. Due to concerns over post-fire flooding, no cloud seeding occurred during the current season.

Operationally, the program ran from November 2023 through April 2024. A total of 12 storms were seeded out of 20, depending on storm characteristics and meteorologist's assessment. Mr. Mosher described the program's independent validation component, conducted by the Desert Research Institute (DRI). DRI uses a target/control methodology, comparing historical snow gauge data from seeded and unseeded areas to determine the increase in precipitation attributable to seeding. Preliminary results from the San Bernardino Mountains (Northeast Target Area) showed encouraging results, with a 10–15% increase in precipitation. One additional target area showed similar modest increases, while two areas did not exhibit measurable improvement.

Based on the results from Year One, SAWPA estimates approximately 20,000 acre-feet of additional snow water across the watershed, at an estimated cost of \$50–100 per acre-foot—an amount Mr. Mosher described as cost-effective when compared to other water supply options.

The Board thanked Mr. Mosher for his informative presentation and ongoing collaboration.

## FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND STAFF TASKS

### 8. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The upcoming meetings were reviewed.

### 9. CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Miller stated that staff wished to discuss the items listed under Closed Session with the Board at 2:42 p.m.

**It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to adjourn to Closed Session. The motion carried 3-0-2, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative. Director Longville and Director Falcone were absent from the vote.**

**President McDonald: Yes  
Vice President Stewart: Yes  
Director Corneille: Yes  
Director Longville: Absent  
Director Falcone: Absent**

At 3:06 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.

**10. ADJOURN MEETING**

**It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Vice President Stewart to adjourn. The motion carried 3-0-2, with all Directors present voting in the affirmative. Director Longville and Director Falcone were absent from the vote.**

**President McDonald: Yes  
Vice President Stewart: Yes  
Director Corneille: Yes  
Director Longville: Absent  
Director Falcone: Absent**

At 3:08 p.m. the meeting adjourned to the Board meeting scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on May 21, 2025, in-person, teleconference, and Teams meeting.



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Betsy Miller  
General Manager