

SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MINUTES OF MARCH 12, 2025
1:30 PM

Vice President Stewart 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 Vice President Stewart.

ROLL CALL:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Melody McDonald, President, (joined via remote participation from 2:55 PM – 3:03 PM only)

STAFF PRESENT:

Betsy Miller, General Manager
David Cosgrove, General Counsel
Milan Mitrovich, Land Resources Manager
Allison Zecher, Board Secretary
Anna Frey, Assistant Biologist
Aliza Olmos, Assistant Engineer
Yesenia Yangin, Intern
Alan Salcedo, Intern
John Lambie, Consulting Chief Engineer and Geohydrologist

GUESTS PRESENT:

Jennifer Alford, CSUSB
David Smith, Board Member, East Valley Water District
Adekunle Ojo, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public comments were made.

2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

No additions or deletions to the agenda were made.

3. AD HOC COMMITTEE TO REVIEW FINANCIAL REPORTS FORMAT

[This item was moved on the agenda to just before Closed Session to allow time for President McDonald to join; however, she was unable to attend.]

Vice President Stewart noted the Board's interest in discussing modifications to the monthly financial report format and appointed Directors Falcone and Corneille to serve on the committee, which will review the current report format and provide recommendations, if needed, for review by the Board. The committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 1:30 PM.

4. INTRODUCTIONS AND GUEST RECOGNITION

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

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

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

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to approve the Consent Calendar: Item A, Board Minutes, February 12, 2025; and Item B: Expenditure Report, February 2025. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS

Committee Reports

Chair Longville requested Ms. Miller provide an update on the March 5 Outreach and Communications meeting. She stated that the Committee has reviewed the District's donation to CSU San Bernardino's Institute for Watershed Resiliency as well as the District's support for CalPoly Pomona's senior project review of the Plunge Creek PERC project, with discussion on supporting similar projects in the upcoming year. She also highlighted fiscal year 2026 planning with Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) for educational programs and discussed the District's involvement in STEM career fairs at Crafton Hills, the Waterwise Garden at the San Bernardino County Museum, and a request from the Highland Branch Library to collaborate on their small waterwise garden with IERCD. The committee reviewed Santa Ana Watershed displays, the website modernization status, and the District's outreach activities for 2024, as well as initial outreach planning for the coming year. Director Corneille proposed promoting the District's strategic plan through creation of a presentation for Directors to use when engaging with public agencies, emphasizing the need to publicize and implement the plan. Director Falcone stated that directors and staff should have the opportunity to beta test the new website before it goes live.

Vice President Stewart provided a verbal update on the Ad Hoc General Manager Performance Review meeting that took place on March 6. During the meeting, it was noted that Ms. Miller has served in the General Manager role since mid-2022, and the committee discussed the many accomplishments and ongoing efforts related to the strategic plan implementation. The committee's recommendations will be presented to the board as a specific item during the closed session of the April 9 meeting under personnel items.

Action Items

A. UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JANUARY 2025

Ms. Miller presented the unaudited financial report for February 2025, starting on page 31. Regarding revenue, she highlighted that the majority of the groundwater production payments for the July through December 2024 period had been received, with less than \$2,000 outstanding. Additionally, a significant payment of over \$200,000 was made from the Trust to the District following the completion of the Trust's FY24 audit. The Redlands Plaza Enterprise rose to \$80,000, while the Land Resources Enterprise was nearly balanced, showing a minor deficit of only \$922. Additionally, the general fund showed a slight decrease in net income of approximately \$30,000, though adjustments for overhead at year-end were anticipated. Regarding expenses, Ms. Miller noted that significant expenses had been incurred under GL7126 for the PERC projects' feasibility studies, demonstrating substantial progress on these projects.

Ms. Miller addressed questions raised by Director Falcone regarding discrepancies in the P&L report, particularly about shortfalls in mining income (GL4032) and miscellaneous other income (GL4040). The latter was explained as a pending grant reimbursement, expected by the end of the fiscal year, with discussions on possible changes as the District applies for more grants.

Director Falcone stated the importance of ensuring all public-facing materials, including financial reports, are thoroughly reviewed for accuracy and professionalism, reflecting the District's commitment to excellence. The discussion concluded with the recognition of ongoing efforts to assess monthly financial reporting, including the formation of an ad-hoc committee to review these items.

It was moved by Director Longville and seconded by Director Corneille to approve the Unaudited Financial Report for February 2025. The motion carried 3-1-1.

**President McDonald: Absent
Vice President Stewart: Yes
Director Corneille: Yes
Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: No**

B. INVESTIGATION LIST FOR GROUNDWATER ASSESSMENT NO. 63

Ms. Miller presented the status of Groundwater Assessment No. 63, noting that this item is typically brought before the Board twice a year, following each invoicing period for the previous six months of groundwater assessments. She highlighted that while the majority of funds have

been received, several entities listed on page 40 either have not responded, have not paid, or may require a field visit for further follow-up. Ms. Miller provided updates on entities that have paid since the publication of the report.

Ms. Miller noted that Board direction is requested given that the staff time required to follow up on these assessments might exceed the revenue that would be collected, and shared the Board's past concerns regarding the precedent that could be set if the District ceases to follow-up with those who do not pay.

Director Falcone discussed the fiscal impact of continuing to follow up, noting that the report indicated a cost of approximately \$500 in staff time to collect an outstanding balance of less than \$2,000. He further inquired about the status of late reports.

Ms. Miller confirmed the estimated costs for staff time and noted the District's late fee helps to recover the staff costs for follow-up.

The Board directed staff to continue contacting entities that have not reported their well usage to ensure that all parties are treated equitably in the assessment process.

It was moved by Director Falcone and seconded by Director Longville to direct staff to continue contacting entities on the investigation list for Groundwater Assessment No. 63. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

C. FINAL ENGINEERING INVESTIGATION REPORT FOR 2025

Ms. Miller presented the final 2025 Engineering Investigation Report and thanked Ms. Olmos for her exceptional work on the project. The final report included minor updates based on additional data from a city and updated precipitation data for San Bernardino County, but the overall numbers remained similar to those presented in the draft. She stated that a PowerPoint with updated information was available for presentation if desired by the Board. The recommendation was to receive and file the final report to serve as the basis for the groundwater charge for FY26. In response to a question from Director Corneille, Ms. Miller confirmed the quality assurance review process for the draft and final reports.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to receive and file the Final Engineering Investigation Report for 2025 as presented. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

Director Longville: Yes
Director Falcone: Yes

D. CONSULTANT AGREEMENT FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ENGINEERING SERVICES WITH DOPUDJA & WELLS CONSULTING, INC.

Ms. Miller presented the Consultant Agreement for Supplemental Engineering Services with Dopudja & Wells Consulting, Inc., explaining the role this agreement fulfills to support the District's engineering needs. She discussed the current small contract with this firm, and recommended entering into a larger contract to allow Tom Crowley, who has previously worked with the District as an engineer and assistant general manager, to assist various ongoing projects during the transition between the PERC feasibility studies and the hiring of a new senior engineer.

Director Corneille stated his support of this approach to assist with the District's engineering needs and discussed the terms of the contract, with a focus on the consultant's rate. Mr. Cosgrove provided details on the rate and discussed options to clarify the contract language.

Director Falcone requested clarification on a statement in the contract about consultant staffing and conflicts. Mr. Cosgrove confirmed that the contract specifies that Mr. Crowley would not be reassigned to other projects by Dopudja & Wells if they took on additional work.

It was moved by Director Falcone and seconded by Director Longville to approve the Consultant Services Agreement for Supplemental Consulting Engineering Services with Dopudja & Wells Consulting, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$80,000, and amend the approved FY25 budget to 1) decrease GL 6230, Salaries, by \$50,000 and 2) increase GL 5120, Professional Services, by \$50,000. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

E. CONTRACT AGREEMENT FOR COWBIRD CONTROL IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE UPPER SANTA ANA RIVER WASH HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN WITH THE SANTA ANA WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Dr. Mitrovich introduced the contract agreement for cowbird control in accordance with the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan, recommending approval for a service agreement with the Santa Ana Watershed Association (SAWA) for a not-to-exceed amount of \$35,000. This agreement would support protection of California gnatcatcher and other native bird species following high incidence of nest parasitism in 2024 at the Wash Plan Preserve and Mill Creek facilities.

This project includes several partnerships for funding and land access: One half of the contract cost is expected to be reimbursed by IERCD and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District,

and San Bernardino County Flood Control District has expressed willingness to allow access to their property.

Director Stewart discussed the number of traps needed for the program, considering increasing the number beyond the proposed four traps. Dr. Mitrovich discussed the process followed to select the proposed number of traps based on input from SAWA, and emphasized that the program will be monitored and adjusted as necessary. The final report will summarize the data collected and be used to plan work for the following year.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to approve the Contract Services Agreement for Professional Services for Cowbird Control with the Santa Ana Watershed Association in an amount not to exceed \$35,000. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

F. GENERAL MANAGER TRAINING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

Ms. Miller presented the request for Board approval to attend a professional development training in fiscal year 2025 as provided in her employment contract. She provided details on the proposed course, "Communication to Drive Results," offered by Speakeasy, Inc. Ms. Miller presented a conservative estimate of \$8,850 for the cost of the training, which includes hotel, airfare, and transportation.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to approve General Manager registration fees and travel costs up to \$8,850 to attend SpeakEasy Inc.'s Communication to Drive Results per Section 12, Professional Development, of the Agreement for Employment of General Manager. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

G. ACWA JPIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONCURRING NOMINATION RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Miller presented the concurring nomination resolutions for the ACWA JPIA Executive Committee, noting that the Board previously authorized nomination for President McDonald. The Executive Committee will be seated at the meeting prior to the upcoming ACWA conference in May.

This year, concurring nomination requests have been received from Brent Hastie, Reclamation District 487, Yuba County; Chris Kapheim, Kings River Conservation District; Randall Reed, Cucamonga Valley Water District; and Scott Quady, Calleguas Municipal Water District. These nominations were included in the packet for the Board's review and consideration.

Director Falcone inquired if Directors has previously worked with the nominees; certain Directors noted their experience working with Randall Reed. Staff stated that President McDonald had expressed her approval for the nominations during development of the Board meeting agenda.

It was moved by Director Corneille and seconded by Director Longville to approve Resolution No. 628 supporting Brent Hastey for ACWA Executive Committee, Resolution No. 629 supporting Chris H. Kapheim for ACWA Executive Committee, Resolution No. 630 supporting Randall Reed for ACWA Executive Committee, and Resolution No. 631 supporting Scott H. Quady for ACWA Executive Committee. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

Dr. Mitrovich reported that slender-horned spineflower have sprouted at both out-planting trial sites and reference sites. Hundreds of individuals have been recorded, and efforts are ongoing to convene a spine-flower working group in accordance with the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan.

He shared that a grant proposal was submitted by the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) under the Federal Endangered Species Act Traditional Section 6 Grant program. The proposal seeks funding for range-wide SBKR surveys, with a request of over \$300,000 for a two-year implementation period. If awarded, the funding would support consultants to address critical gaps in regional monitoring efforts.

Following the significant atmospheric river event on February 13, District staff conducted mapping to assess expanded wetted areas within the Plunge Creek Conservation Project. Preliminary results indicate notable improvements in habitat conditions. Additionally, students CSU San Bernardino participated in a field experience to observe alluvial fan development and depositional processes, enhancing their understanding of real-world restoration projects.

ENGINEERING UPDATE

Mr. Lambie provided an engineering update highlighting significant progress on the PERC projects. The PERC feasibility study report is in draft. Tetra Tech has submitted deliverables for the Waterman Percolation Basin, Twin Creek, and Lynnwood projects, including a groundwater modeling report, for District review. Plunge Creek and Oak Creek are progressing well, with Oak Creek focused on ensuring a design that allows for access to nearby pipelines. Hydraulic modeling preliminary cost estimates, and grading are complete for Mill Creek.

Mr. Lambie presented an animation of recharge under different scenarios at the Waterman spreading grounds.

UPDATE FROM CSUSB INSTITUTE FOR WATERSHED RESILIENCY

Dr. Alford provided an overview of the Institute for Watershed Resiliency at CSU San Bernardino. She discussed the focus of the Institute, which was reimagined two years ago, on workforce development and student engagement through community partnerships in water resource management and environmental studies.

Dr. Alford highlighted three key program areas: the Watershed Resiliency Fellowship Program, which provides students with field experience, professional certifications, and skills to help them pursue careers in water resource management; the Field-Based Learning Outreach and Workforce Scholarship (FLOWS) program, which brings together students from multiple CSU campuses to participate in service learning and fieldwork with local agencies; and the integration of technology into student learning, including the use of drones and geospatial data apps to enhance field research and community engagement. She also described the Institute's partnerships with local agencies to create collaborative learning environments for students. Dr. Alford also emphasized the importance of alumni engagement, noting that former students are contributing to curriculum development, internships, and grant collaborations, ensuring the program remains relevant and impactful for future generations.

Director Corneille asked for clarification on the current focus of the Institute and its relation to its former focus on maintaining water archives. Dr. Alford explained that the archives that were previously maintained by the Institute have been moved to the university library's special collections section for optimal care and accessibility.

Alford concluded by thanking the SBVWCD for its support and invited the Board to tour the new classroom and lab facilities at Lake Gregory Community Center in the coming months to witness firsthand the hands-on learning experiences being provided.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT AND MONTHLY RECHARGE REPORT

Ms. Miller provided an update on the District's activities in February, including completion of the 2025 Engineering Investigation and critical tasks for the PERC feasibility studies. Recruitment efforts were a major focus, with interviews for the Senior Engineer and Administrative Analyst roles taking place between February 18th and 26th. Work on the draft FY26 budget is also underway. The District has selected a new auditing firm for presentation to the Board in April in accordance with the Board's policy to select a new auditor every three years. The contractor for the Mentone shop has submitted bonds and a detailed schedule, which is currently under review. Federal grants that had been paused were recently restored.

Ms. Miller thanked Ms. Frey for the completion and on-time submittal of the 2024 annual report for maintenance activities to CDFW, and shared a significant update on the land exchange process with the Bureau of Land Management. She provided an update on educational initiatives in February 2025.

Ms. Miller attended a leadership conference focused on water sector best practices, as well as a conference in Washington D.C. to learn more about federal lobbying. While in Washington, D.C., she reconnected with World Bank staff working on water and agriculture to discuss best practices in groundwater stewardship. She noted that several staff and Directors participated in a celebration for the successful completion of Enhanced Recharge Phase 1B, and praised the project's timely, under-budget completion and the respectful treatment of the District's property by San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District contractors.

Director Corneille expressed appreciation for the recognition given to the District during the Enhanced Recharge Phase 1B celebration. He emphasized the new basins are on District property with the District staff responsible for operating and maintaining the basins and channels.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND STAFF TASKS

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

Director Falcone attended the following meetings:

- East Valley Water District Regular Board Meeting - February 12
- SBVMWD Regular Board Meeting - February 18
- Association of San Bernardino County Special Districts Dinner - February 24
- Highland Chamber Luncheon - February 25
- SBV Conservation Trust Financial Workshop - February 26
- Highland Chamber Installation Dinner - February 27
- SBVMWD Regular Board Meeting - March 4
- Redlands City Council Meeting - March 4
- SBVWCD Outreach and Communication Meeting - March 5
- SBVMWD Policy and Administration Workshop - March 6
- SBVMWD Resources and Engineering Workshop - March 11
- Highland City Council Meeting - March 11

Director Longville attended the following meetings:

- SBVWCD Board Meeting - February 12
- SBVMWD Board Meeting - February 18
- SBV Conservation Trust Financial Workshop - February 26
- SBVMWD Regular Board Meeting - March 4
- SBVWCD Outreach and Communications Committee - March 5
- SBVMWD Resources and Engineering Meeting - March 11

Director Corneille attended the following meetings:

- Enhanced Recharge Dedication - February 20
- SBV Conservation Trust Financial Workshop - February 26
- SBVWCD Ad Hoc for General Manager Evaluation - March 6

- Redlands Chamber Rise and Shine - March 7

Vice President Stewart attended the following meetings:

- SBV Conservation Trust Financial Workshop - February 26
- Loma Linda Chamber of Commerce - March 5
- Bear Valley Extension Pipeline Meeting - March 5
- SBVWCD Outreach and Communications Committee - March 5
- SBVWCD Ad Hoc for General Manager Evaluation - March 6

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 3:45 p.m.

It was moved by Director Falcone and seconded by Director Longville to adjourn to Closed Session. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Board members present voting in the affirmative.

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

At 4:21 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 Longville and seconded by Director Falcone to adjourn. The motion carried 4-0-1, with all Directors present voting in the affirmative.

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

At 4:22 p.m. the meeting adjourned to the Board meeting scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on March 12, 2025, in-person, teleconference, and Zoom meeting.



Betsy Miller
General Manager