

MINUTES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WITH COMMUNICATIONS AND LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE
ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
February 6, 2025 12:00 p.m.

Director Tran called the Communications and Legislative Liaison Committee meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. in the District Conference Room C-2. Public access was also provided via Zoom webinar. The Secretary called the roll and reported a quorum as follows:

Committee Members

Van Tran
Roger Yoh (arrived 12:37 pm)
Steve Sheldon (arrived 12:15 pm)
Valerie Amezcua
Erik Wegand

OCWD Staff

John Kennedy – General Manager
Chris Olsen – Executive Director
Gina Ayala – Director of Public Affairs
Alicia Harasty – Legislative Affairs Liaison
Dani Berch – Communications Specialist
Lisa Haney – Executive Director
Mehul Patel – Executive Director
Stephanie Dosier – Director of Human Resources
Paula Bouyounes - Risk and Safety Manager
Janice Kovacevic – Executive Assistant/Secretary

Alternates

Cathy Green
Fred Jung
Dina Nguyen (arrived 12:05 pm)
Natalie Meeks (absent)
Denis Bilodeau (arrived 12:07 pm)

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar was approved upon motion by Director Green, seconded by Director Tran and carried [4-0] as follows:

Ayes – Tran, Amezcua, Weigand, Green

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the November 7, 2024 Communications/Legislative Liaison Committee meetings are approved as presented.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

2. State Legislative Update

The State consultant provided an update on legislation AB 259 Blanca Rubio (D-West Covina).

Upon motion by Director Green, seconded by Director Jung and carried [5-0], the Committee recommended that the Board at its February 19 Board meeting: approve the following position:

Bill Number/Author	Short Title	Recommendation
AB 259 Blanca Rubio (D-West Covina)	Open meetings: local agencies: teleconferences	Support

Ayes – Tran, Amezcua, Weigand, Green, Jung

3. Federal Legislative Update

Federal Consultants provided an update on the federal funding freeze and other items of interest to the District.

4. Orange County Water District State and Federal Legislative Goals & Strategy/Legislation Platform

Legislative Affairs Liaison Alicia Harasty provided an overview of a draft of OCWD's 2025 State and Federal Legislative Goals and Strategy, as well as a draft of OCWD 2025-26 Legislative Platform. She advised that an updated version incorporating the committee's comments will be presented to the committee next month.

5. Water Bottle Filling Station Program

Director of Public Affairs Gina Ayala provided an overview of a sponsorship request from the Heritage Museum of Orange County for a water bottle filling station on their grounds. She noted that the museum currently has two monitoring wells on-site, along with educational signage about the groundwater basin. The Board discussed taking future requests on a case by case basis.

Upon motion by Director Amezcua, seconded by Director Green and carried [5-0], the Committee recommended that the Board at its February 19 Board meeting: approve sponsoring a water bottle filling station at Heritage Museum of Orange County for an amount not to exceed \$6,000.

Ayes – Tran, Sheldon, Amezcua, Weigand, Green

6. First Responder Appreciation Luncheon

Ms. Ayala reported that staff was asked to research a First Responder Appreciation Luncheon. She stated that staff consulted with the Risk & Safety and Human Resources Departments to develop a potential invitee list. She noted that staff attended a similar event at Moulton Niguel Water District, which has hosted this type of event for many years. She recommended the luncheon be scheduled between July and December, possibly in October for National First Responders Day.

Upon motion by Director Green, seconded by Director Tran and carried [4-1], the Committee recommended that the Board at its February 19 Board meeting: Approve hosting a First Responder Appreciation Luncheon for fiscal year 2025-26, with a budget not to exceed \$10,000.

Ayes – Tran, Amezcua, Weigand, Green

Noes – Sheldon

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

7. GWRS Tour Program Update

Ms. Ayala said that the GWRS Tour Program is in need of enhancements and additional facilities. Senior Communications Specialist Kira Erquiaga presented a few examples, including the addition of the Laboratory Conference Room (L-1) as a dedicated space, which would need to be enhanced with audio visual and educational displays to incorporate more interactive displays along the tour route. She advised that staff will send out RFP's and present their findings to the Committee.

8. Children's Water Education Festival Update

Communications Specialist Dani Berch reported that the Festival is in its 28th year and will be hosted at Oak Canyon Park on April 23 and April 24, 2025. She shared that there are nearly 6,500 students registered, 54 presenters, and 44 volunteers. She noted there are 15 sponsors confirmed with \$37,500 raised to help offset costs.

9. Public Affairs Outreach Report (January 2025)

Ms. Ayala provided an overview of outreach activities for January 2025.

January Highlights:

- Fourteen tours were conducted, with a total of 327 guests, along with 6 speaker engagements.
- Chief Hydrogeologist Roy Herndon and Principal Hydrogeologist Bill Leever provided a South Basin briefing to staff from OC Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento's office.
- Executive Director of Planning and Natural Resources Lisa Haney provided a presentation on "Stormwater Capture: Managing Salinity and Optimizing Recharge and Water Supply in the Groundwater Basin" during ACWA's groundwater quality subcommittee.
- Principal Communications Specialist Crystal Nettles participated on a virtual panel hosted by UCI's career center focused on student internships.
- Principal Hydrogeologist Bill Leever and Principal Planner Shawn Nevill presented about the South Basin Groundwater Protection Project's proposed remedial action plan and program environmental impact report at consecutive public meetings held at the Delhi Community Center in the city of Santa Ana.
- Director of Public Affairs Gina Ayala and Communications Specialist Dani Berch presented "AI in Communications-How Public Affairs Uses AI" at the California Association of Sanitation Agencies conference.
- Executive Director of Operations Mehul Patel presented on how OCWD manages electricity costs and demands for the GWRS at a NAWI/UCI conference focused on exploring the technical challenges and opportunities of flexible desalination and water reuse facility operation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

Van Tran

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Van Tran, Chair