

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
EL TORO WATER DISTRICT
March 27, 2025

President Gaskins called the meeting of the Board of Directors of the EL TORO WATER DISTRICT to order at 7:30 a.m.

Vice President Freshley led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Committee Members MARK MONIN, MIKE GASKINS, KAY HAVENS, KATHRYN FRESHLEY, and WYATT McCLEAN participated.

Also present were DENNIS P. CAFFERTY, General Manager, GILBERT J. GRANITO, General Counsel, VISHAV SHARMA, CFO, HANNAH FORD, Director of Engineering, SCOTT HOPKINS, Operations Superintendent, VICKI TANIOUS, Senior Accountant (Zoom), SHERRI SEITZ, Public Affairs Manager (7:43 a.m.), VU CHU, Water Use Efficiency Analyst, RORY HARNISCH, Senior Engineer, VICKI OSBORN, WEROC, GABBY LANDEROS, WEROC (7:46 a.m.), JANINE SCHUNK, WEROC (7:46 a.m.), and MARISOL MELENDEZ, Recording Secretary.

Determination of a Quorum

Five Board members were present for the meeting, therefore a quorum was determined.

Oral Communications/Public Comments

There were no comments.

Items Received Too Late to be Agendized

President Gaskins asked if there were any items received too late to be agendized. Mr. Cafferty replied no.

Presentation of Awards, Recognitions, Certifications and Introductions

Mr. Cafferty recognized and congratulated Rory Harnisch, Engineering Department Senior Engineer for 5 years of service with the District.

Mr. Harnisch left the meeting at approximately 7:40 a.m.

Consent Calendar

President Gaskins asked for a Motion.

Motion: Director Monin made a Motion, seconded by Director Havens to approve the Consent Calendar.

Roll Call Vote:

Director McClean	aye
Director Havens	aye
Director Monin	aye
Vice President Freshley	aye
President Gaskins	aye

Directors Reports for Meetings Attended

Director Havens stated that she attended the MWDOC P&O meeting, the MWDOC Met Directors Workshop, the Board Budget Committee #1 and #2, the South OC Watershed Management Area Executive Committee, the WACO Meeting, the Laguna Woods Village Landscape Gate 14 meeting, the ACWA Spring Quarterly Policy Committee meetings, the MWDOC Board meeting, the Engineering and Finance meeting, and today's Board meeting.

Vice President Freshley stated that she attended both ETWD's regular Board meetings, the SOCAG meeting, the SOCWA Board meeting, the SOCWA Finance Committee meeting, the RRC meeting, the WACO meeting, the Laguna Woods City Council meeting, the OCWA luncheon, the MWDOC P&O meeting, the MWDOC/MET Directors Workshop meeting, the LAFCO meeting, the LAFCO Southern Region meeting, the Agenda Review meeting, the MET Policy Forum, and the ACWA Policy Committee meetings.

Director McClean stated that he attended the MWDOC P&O meeting, the ISDOC meeting, the SOCWA meeting, the SOCEC Meet the Mayor meeting, the MWDOC Admin/Finance meeting, the OCWA meeting, the MET Water Policy Forum, the Engineering and Finance meeting, the regular Board meeting.

Director Monin stated that he attended the District's Board meeting, the Engineering and Finance meeting, the MWDOC P&O meeting, the ISDOC Executive Committee meeting, the MWDOC Met Directors Workshop, the WACO meeting, the MWDOC Policy Forum, the MWDOC A&F meeting, the MWDOC Board meeting, the MWDOC Executive Committee meeting, will be attending OCCOG today, the South OC Watershed Management Area Executive Committee.

President Gaskins stated that he attended the MWDOC meetings, the two Board Budget Committee meetings, the President/VP/GM meeting, the Agenda Review meeting, the MWDOC Familiarization Tour, the MWDOC Policy Forum, the SOCAG meeting, ETWD's Engineering and Finance meeting, today's Board meeting, the RRC meeting, and the SOCWA Board meeting.

General Manager Action Items

Strategic Plan

Mr. Cafferty informed the Board that staff reached out to Means Consulting for strategic planning services, and a proposal within the General Managers authority has been submitted. Mr. Cafferty would like the Board to have an opportunity to provide input on the selection. The proposed process is similar to the one used five years ago. The proposal includes one on one meetings with each Board member and discussions with staff to gather comprehensive information. A meeting with the Board will be held to present the plan based on the feedback and direction provided.

Director Havens commented on the excellent work Means Consulting provided during the previous strategic planning process.

President Gaskins asked for a Motion.

Motion: Director Havens made a Motion, seconded by Director Monin to authorize the District's General Manager to enter into a consulting contract with Means Consulting in the amount of \$35,904 for consulting services associated with the development of an updated ETWD Strategic Plan.

Roll Call Vote:

Director McClean	aye
Director Havens	aye
Director Monin	aye
Vice President Freshley	aye
President Gaskins	aye

California Special District's Association (CSDA) Board of Directors, Southern Network – Southern Network – Seat B Election

Mr. Cafferty stated that this item allows the Board to nominate a candidate for CSDA's Seat B election for the 2026-2028 term. No action is required if there are no nominations.

There was no interest from the Board regarding CSDA's Seat B election, and no action was taken.

AB 259 (Rubio) – Open Meetings: Local Agencies: Teleconferences AB

Mr. Cafferty noted that there are several legislative items on today's agenda. As previously discussed during the adoption of the advocacy policy, staff will present updates to the Board when the timing is appropriate. Staff has already responded to two of today's legislative items due to timing constraints, but the remaining action items are being presented for Board discussion. President Gaskins expressed confidence in management staff to take action if necessary, although he would prefer to review the legislative items first, if possible.

Ms. Seitz reported that AB 259 seeks to eliminate the sunset provision on AB 2449 which introduced flexibility in Brown Act meeting procedures, allowing Board members to participate remotely under just cause or emergency circumstances. This action item would adopt a formal support position on AB 259 authorizing staff to work with CSDA to submit position letters supporting the bill on behalf of ETWD.

President Gaskins asked for a Motion.

Motion: Director Havens made a Motion, seconded by Director Monin to adopt a support position on AB 259 (Rubio) – Open Meetings: Local Agencies: Teleconferences, the sunset elimination for modified Brown Act meeting procedures and authorize staff to authorize CSDA to submit position letters supporting the bill on behalf of ETWD.

Roll Call Vote:

Director McClean	aye
Director Havens	aye
Director Monin	aye
Vice President Freshley	aye
President Gaskins	aye

SB 350 (Durazo) – Water Rate Assistance Program

Ms. Seitz stated that SB 350 proposes the LIRA program, which provides financial aid for low income residents. While ACWA supports the concept of the LIRA program, there are significant concerns with the bill as currently written. ACWA has sent a letter outlining the necessary amendments and is requesting that agencies adopt an “oppose unless amended” position on the bill.

President Gaskins asked for a Motion.

Motion: Director Havens made a Motion, seconded by Director Monin to adopt an oppose unless amended position on SB 350 (Durazo) – Water Rate Assistance Program and authorize staff to sign onto ACWA’s future coalition letters regarding the bill.

Roll Call Vote:

Director McClean	aye
Director Havens	aye
Director Monin	aye
Vice President Freshley	aye
President Gaskins	aye

SB 454 (McNerney) – State Water Resources Control Board: PFAS Mitigation Program

Ms. Seitz stated that this bill proposes the creation of a statewide PFAS Mitigation Fund to assist local water and wastewater agencies in addressing contamination from PFAS. Mr. Cafferty added that PFAS has not significantly impacted the District due to the lack of groundwater access. However, he noted that the future of PFAS will directly impact the District as wastewater is increasingly viewed as a concern.

President Gaskins asked for a Motion.

Motion: Director Monin made a Motion, seconded by Vice President Freshley to adopt a support position on SB 454 (McNerney) – State Water Resources Control Board: PFAS Mitigation Program and authorize staff to sign onto ACWA's coalition letter supporting the bill.

Roll Call Vote:

Director McClean	aye
Director Havens	aye
Director Monin	aye
Vice President Freshley	aye
President Gaskins	aye

General Manager Information Items

SB 496 (Hurtado) – Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation: Appeals Advisory Committee:

Exemptions

Ms. Seitz stated that this item was time sensitive, and to meet the deadline, staff has submitted an automatic form authorizing a CSDA position letter supporting the bill on behalf of the District. She explained that SB 496 aims to provide relief for local agencies struggling to comply with the CARB ACF/ZEV mandates.

AB 514 (Petrie- Norris) – Emergency Water Supplies

Mr. Cafferty stated that AB 514 is a continuation of SB 1218, which the District supported last year. AB 514 enacts a policy in the Water Code that encourages and incentivizes the development of emergency water supplies. While the bill does not mandate the development of these supplies, it acknowledges their critical importance during water emergencies.

General Manager's Monthly Report

Mr. Cafferty stated that the City of Laguna Woods is interested in building storage facilities and has inquired with the District about the possibility of arranging space at the WRP. Staff is exploring potential opportunities for this arrangement that would not negatively impact the District, while benefiting the City and providing revenue for the District through a lease agreement. Mr. Cafferty added that more information will be presented at the April Board meeting for a conceptual approval.

Mr. Cafferty reported that recent legislation requires that any rate increase objections must be raised during the rate setting process. Staff is working on an ordinance to implement this requirement. If no objections are raised during the rate setting process, the ordinance will protect the District by allowing a formal response to any objections raised. Mr. Cafferty added that staff has consulted with Legal Counsel, and the plan is to hold a Special Board meeting for the Public Hearing in early June, with the deadline for objections set at the end of the Public Hearing. This timeline will allow staff to evaluate any objections and if necessary, bring them to the June Board meeting.

Mr. Cafferty inquired with the Board for their availability to schedule the Public Hearing on June 16, 2025. Director Havens emphasized that the Board has previously made efforts to adjust the Public Hearing times in order to provide flexibility for District customers.

Vice President Freshley mentioned the Cal Fire Map, noting that a portion of Laguna Woods, R-4 and R-3 fall within an at-risk fire zone. Mr. Cafferty stated that staff is assessing the data and will provide additional information as the topic evolves.

Legislative Reports

There were no comments.

Public Education and Outreach Report

Ms. Seitz provided updates on the District's public education and outreach efforts, including the District's newsletter, improvement project notices, and upcoming events.

Water Use Efficiency Report

Mr. Chu reported that demand continued to trend upwards in February, with total usage increasing by 26% compared to the same month last year. He also stated that usage was higher across all customer classes.

SOCWA Reports

Vice President Freshley stated that the Board approved the recommended changes to the Engineering and Executive Committee bylaws.

Mr. Cafferty added that the discussion at the Finance Committee meeting was focused on the budget. SOCWA is undergoing a significant period of transition, including budgeting without the Regional Treatment Plant, staffing changes, and outsourcing certain duties.

SOCWMA

Director Havens provided updates on the presentations covering the H2OC Rainsmart Rebates Pilot Program, the Basin Study, the future of IRWM, and cost share budgeting.

MWDOC

There were no comments.

LAFCO

Vice President Freshley stated the commission held a public meeting to present the MSR which was accepted and filed by the commission.

ISDOC

Director Monin stated the membership dues were discussed.

WACO

Director Monin stated that CSDA and ACWA provided updates.

COMMITTEE AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Dates to Remember for February/March

There were no comments.

Director Monin left the meeting at approximately 8:47 a.m.

WEROC Mobile EOC Van Presentation

Ms. Seitz introduced Janine Schunk, WEROC Coordinator, Gabby Landeros, WEROC Specialist, and Vicki Osborn, WEROC Director of Emergency Management, who gave a demonstration and tour of the WEROC Mobile EOC Van.

Ms. Landeros explained the features of the WEROC Mobile EOC Van and the value it provides during emergency incident responses.

At approximately 8:55 a.m. to 9:16 a.m., the Board and staff toured the WEROC Mobile EOC van, which was temporarily parked on District property.

Comments Regarding Non-Agenda Items

There were no comments.

Attorney Report

Mr. Granito reported that there is no need for a Closed Session today.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



MARISOL MELENDEZ
Recording Secretary

APPROVED:



MIKE GASKINS, President of
the El Toro Water District and the
Board of Directors thereof



DENNIS P. CAFFERTY, Secretary
of the El Toro Water District and
the Board of Directors thereof