

**SAN GORGONIO PASS WATER AGENCY**  
1210 Beaumont Avenue, Beaumont, California 92223

**Official Minutes**  
**Board of Directors Regular Meeting**  
**July 21, 2025**

THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON,  
WITH PUBLIC AVAILABILITY PROVIDED VIA ZOOM.

**1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, and Invocation**

The San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency Board of Directors meeting was called to order by President Valdivia at 6:00 p.m., Monday, July 21, 2025, at the office of the Agency. Director Wargo gave the invocation and President Valdivia led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Roll Call**

President Valdivia requested a roll call.

**Board Present:** Mickey Valdivia, President  
Robert Ybarra, Treasurer  
Kevin Walton, Secretary  
Blair M Ball, Director  
Sarah Wargo, Director  
Larry Smith, Director

**Board Absent:** Chander Letulle, Vice-President

**Staff Present:** Lance Eckhart, General Manager  
Thomas Todd, Jr., Chief Financial Officer  
Maricela Cabral, Exec. Asst. /Clerk of the Board  
Emmett Campbell, Sr. Water Resources Planner  
Matt Howard, Operations Manager

**Consultant Present:** Holland Stewart, Legal Counsel

A quorum was present.

**3. Adoption and Adjustment of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as published.

**4. Public Comment**

No public comment received.

**5. Consent Calendar**

- A. Approve Minutes of the July 7, 2025, Regular Meeting of the San Geronio Pass Water Agency Board of Directors

On a motion by Treasurer Ybarra, seconded by Secretary Walton, the board approved the Consent Calendar as presented.

Approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Smith, Walton, Wargo, Ybarra, Ball, Valdivia

Noes: None

Absent: Letulle

**Motion passed 6-0.**

## 6. Reports

### A. General Manager's Report

General Manager, Lance Eckhart reported on the following:

1. Santa Ana Watershed Cloud Seeding Pilot Program was officially concluded by SAWPA due to lack of definitive results linking seeding to increased precipitation.
2. Local news story (KESQ) aired highlighting the Agency's heli-hydrant initiative. Director Smith represented the Agency during the broadcast, receiving positive regional coverage for the fire-fighting infrastructure.

### B. Legal Counsel's Report

Counsel Stewart had no report.

## 7. Informational Presentations and Updates:

### A. Water Conditions Report

Operations Manager, Matt Howard reviewed current water conditions, reporting year-to-date precipitation in the Northern Sierra is 105% of average, with over 10,100 acre-feet delivered under a 50% State Water Project allocation. Citrus Reservoir operations are limited due to maintenance, and recharge capacity is temporarily reduced.

Mr. Howard also addressed the failure of rhomboid bird deterrents at Citrus Reservoir, which caused pump blockages. All rhomboids are being removed and discarded, with long-term mitigation solutions under review. Mr. Howard emphasized the need for infrastructure like Sites Reservoir and Delta Conveyance to reduce water lost to the ocean during peak flows.

### B. USGS Monitoring Well Drilling Update

Operations Manager, Matt Howard provided an update on the Agency's partnership with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to install four groundwater monitoring wells within the San Geronio Pass Subbasin. The project is fully grant-funded through the Department of Water Resources (DWR), with a total award exceeding \$2 million under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation Program.

Mr. Howard reported that wells P1 and P4 have been completed. P4, located on City of Banning property, was successfully drilled in early July, with two

nested casings installed to a depth of 500 feet. Transducers will be placed in the wells to collect continuous water level data. The City of Banning was publicly thanked for its cooperation in providing access and allowing for on-site disposal of drilling fluids resulting in significant cost savings. Well P3 is scheduled to begin drilling on August 4, and staff is coordinating the final site selection for P2. Once P3 is underway, the Agency plans to invite the Board and GSA representatives to observe field operations. The data collected from all four wells will enhance groundwater model calibration and support long-term basin management and SGMA compliance.

**8. New Business – Discussion and Possible Action:**

**A. Approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) and Authorize the General Manager to Contract with the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District for Professional Services for FY 2025-26 through FY 2027-28**

General Manager Eckhart presented a proposed MOU for a three-year agreement (FY 2025-28) with two optional one year extensions, with annual payments of \$65,000, \$68,250 and \$71,662, respectively. Director Wargo, Conservation & Education Committee Chair and Treasurer Ybarra expressed strong support for IERCD's educational and outreach efforts.

On a motion by Director Wargo, seconded by Treasurer Ybarra, the board approved the Memorandum of Understanding with Inland Empire Resource Conservation District and authorized the General Manager to Contract with the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District for Professional Services for FY2025-26 through FY2027-28, with two optional one year extensions.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Smith, Walton, Wargo, Ybarra, Ball, Valdivia

Noes: None

Absent: Letulle

**Motion passed 6-0.**

**B. Consideration and Approval of Funding Agreement with Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for Heli-Hydrant Wildfire Suppression System – Project No. 5-0-10027**

Prior to discussion of the item, President Valdivia and Director Smith announced their recusals due to a potential conflict of interest. President Valdivia passed the gavel to Treasurer Ybarra, and both he and Director Smith exited the room.

General Manager Eckhart presented the funding agreement with Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District to support the installation of a seventh Heli-Hydrant in the Banning Heights area, with \$300,000 in pass-through funds from the County.

On a motion by Secretary Walton, seconded by Director Wargo, the board approved the Funding Agreement with Riverside County Flood Control and

Approved by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Walton, Wargo, Ybarra, Ball

Noes: None

Absent: Letulle

**Motion passed 4-0.**

Following the conclusion of the item, President Valdivia and Director Smith reentered the room and resumed participation in the meeting.

**C. Increase Medical Reimbursement Maximum Amount for Board Members**

General Manager Eckhart introduced the item by providing historical context on the medical reimbursement policy for Board members, currently set at \$2,000 annually. Staff noted that inflation over two decades has significantly eroded the value of the benefit. Several financial models were presented, illustrating inflation-adjusted equivalents ranging from \$3,600 to \$6,600 annually, depending on whether consumer inflation, medical inflation, or CalPERS premium changes were applied. The proposal recommended increasing the reimbursement cap to \$5,000 per year, with an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to preserve its intended value over time.

Director Ball, Chair of the Handbook Committee, acknowledged the work of the committee and staff, but voiced principled opposition to the proposed increase. He expressed concern about ethics, emphasizing the importance of public trust, transparency, and fiscal responsibility with a suggestion that the benefit be eliminated altogether.

The Board discussed and acknowledged Ball's concerns but supported the increase, noting it helps offset the personal cost of public service and allows broader participation, especially for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. President Valdivia emphasized the recommendation was the product of extensive committee deliberation and reflected a compromise, avoiding full medical benefits while modernizing the existing policy.

On a motion by Secretary Walton, seconded by Treasurer Ybarra, the board approved increasing the medical reimbursement benefit from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per year for board directors including an annual cost-of-living escalator.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Smith, Walton, Wargo, Ybarra, Valdivia

Noes: Ball

Absent: Letulle

**Motion passed 5-1.**

**D. Approve Increase in Medical Reimbursement Maximum Amount for Staff Consistent with Amount Approved for Board Members**

General Manager Eckhart introduced the item proposing aligning the medical reimbursement benefit for SGPWA employees with the new board approved amount of \$5,000 per year, including an annual cost-of-living escalator.

On a motion by Secretary Walton, seconded by Treasurer Ybarra, the board approved aligning the medical reimbursement benefit for SGPWA employees with the new board approved amount of \$5,000 per year, including an annual cost-of-living escalator.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Smith, Walton, Wargo, Ybarra, Valdivia

Noes: Ball

Absent: Letulle

**Motion passed 5-1.**

## 9. Reports - Directors and Committee Report

The following meetings were reported on:

- July 1, 2025, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District Board Meeting (Wargo)
- July 9, 2025, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District Board Meeting (Wargo, Ball)
- July 14, 2025, Banning Heights Mutual Water District Board Meeting (Wargo)
- July 15, 2025, Cabazon Water District Board Meeting (Wargo)
- July 15, 2025, Beaumont City Council Meeting (Valdivia)
- July 16, 2025, High Valleys Water District Board Meeting (Wargo)
- July 17, 2025, Boys and Girls Club of the San Gorgonio Pass Art Show (Wargo)

Secretary Walton reported that a dust issue at the Cabazon heli-hydrant sites was resolved through coordination with Cal Fire, the contractor, and local partners. A solution was reached, and future projects will include dust control measures.

Director Wargo announced the Boys & Girls Club of the San Gorgonio Pass will be hosting a Horses & Hattitudes event on July 25, 2025.

Director Ball reported Art Vela is the new Interim City Manager for the City of Banning.

Director Smith and Treasurer Ybarra had no report.

President Valdivia commented on the Beaumont City Council Meeting and requested a follow-up on the status of the recycled water partnership with the City.

Given the floor by President Valdivia, Dan Jaggars, General Manager of Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District invited the Board to attend the July 24, 2025, BCVWD Engineering Workshop where the topic of discussion will be status of water reuse plans and recycled water partnership with the City of Beaumont.

**10. Board Requests for Future Agendas**

No topics were discussed.

**11. Closed Session Agenda**

- A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO LITIGATION  
Gov. Code § 54956.9(d)(2)  
Potential Case: (1)

**12. Reconvene**

- A. Report out of Closed Session

President Valdivia reconvened the meeting back into Open session. Counsel Stewart announced there was no reportable action on item 12.A.

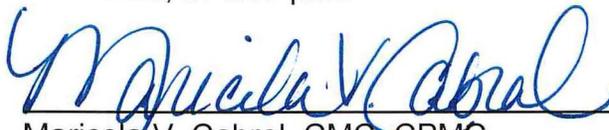
**13. Announcements**

President Valdivia reviewed the following announcements:

- A. Finance & Budget Committee Meeting, July 24, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.  
B. Regular Board Meeting, August 4, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. at 6:00 p.m.  
C. Southern California Water Conference, August 8, 2025 at 7:00 a.m.  
D. Water Conservation & Education Committee Meeting, August 12, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

**14. Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, President Valdivia adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, August 4, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.



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Maricela V. Cabral, CMC, GPMC  
Deputy Secretary of the Board