

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

Official Minutes
Board of Directors Regular Meeting
January 26, 2026

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

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

The San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency Board of Directors meeting was called to order by President Robert Ybarra at 6:00 p.m., Monday, January 26, 2026, at the office of the Agency. Vice President Smith provided the invocation and Secretary Wargo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

President Ybarra requested a roll call.

Board Present:

Robert Ybarra, President
Larry Smith, Vice-President
James Tickemyer, Treasurer
Sarah Wargo, Secretary
Blair M Ball, Director
Mickey Valdivia, Director – arrived at 6:08 p.m.

Absent:

Chander Letulle, Director

Staff Present:

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

Consultant Present:

Jeff Ferre, Legal Counsel

A quorum was present.

3. Adoption and Adjustment of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as published.

4. Public Comment

No public comment was received.

5. Consent Calendar

- A. Approve Minutes of the January 5, 2026, Regular Meeting of the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency Board of Directors

On a motion by Vice President Smith, seconded by Treasurer Tickemyer, the board approved the Consent Calendar as presented.

Approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Wargo, Smith, Tickemyer, Ball, Ybarra

Noes: None

Absent: Valdivia, Letulle

Motion passed 5-0.

6. Reports

A. General Manager's Report

General Manager, Lance Eckhart reported on the following:

1. City Creek update
2. Administrative and Operational updates
3. Board photoshoot is scheduled for February 2, 2026
4. New Chief Financial Officer scheduled to begin on February 23, 2026

B. Legal Counsel's Report

Counsel Ferre provided updates on the Sites Reservoir Project and Delta Conveyance Project financing, reporting that the Bureau of Reclamation/Department of the Interior approved a Record of Decision under NEPA, allowing federal participation in the Sites Project and potential funding of up to 25 percent of project costs. He further explained that a court validation action related to Delta Conveyance bond financing resulted in a Court of Appeal ruling that the Water Code section relied upon was insufficient authority for issuing bonds for a new project unit, and that DWR has since filed a second validation action under alternative Water Code provisions, with additional challenges anticipated.

7. Informational Presentations and Updates:

A. Water Conditions Report

Operations Manager, Matt Howard presented the January water conditions report, noting total 2025 supplies and deliveries were approximately 19,500 acre-feet, with minimal carryover remaining and reduced spill risk at San Luis Reservoir. He reported that December storms significantly increased Lake Oroville storage to approximately 81 percent of capacity, while San Luis Reservoir was at approximately 77 percent, though near-term forecasts show limited precipitation and below-average snowpack for this time of year. Mr. Howard stated DWR announced an initial 10 percent Table A allocation on December 1, 2025, which remained unchanged, and that allocations typically increase as hydrologic conditions improve. He reported the Agency has begun 2026 recharge operations, with strong January deliveries underway, and that the customary January maintenance shutdown was deferred to preserve flexibility for potential Article 21 water opportunities.

B. State Water Project Overview

Director of Water Resources, Emmett Campbell provided an overview of the State Water Project, explaining that it conveys imported water from Northern California to Southern California and can deliver more than four million acre-feet annually under certain conditions, serving over 25 million Californians. He described the

water's path from Lake Oroville through the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta into the California Aqueduct, with operational storage at San Luis Reservoir. Mr. Campbell highlighted the system's major pumping facilities, including the Edmonston and Pearblossom Pumping Plants, which lift water over the Tehachapi Mountains and into Silverwood Lake before delivery through the East Branch Extension. He noted that imported water travels more than 500 miles before reaching the Agency's end-of-line service area.

C. County Line Road Construction Update

Director of Water Resources, Emmett Campbell provided an update on the County Line Road Recharge Basin and Turnout Project, noting the Agency is advancing basin construction and pipeline improvements while San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District continues work on the turnout component. He reported that pipeline installation along Fourth Street and the jack-and-bore crossing were completed, inspection and preparation are underway to rehabilitate an existing South Mesa pipeline for raw water use, and basin excavation has begun. He also noted that required utility coordination and archaeological, paleontological, and tribal monitoring remain ongoing.

8. New Business – Discussion and Possible Action:

A. Adopt an Amendment to the SGPWA Organizational Chart Adding a Water System Operator I/II Position and Authorize the General Manager to Proceed with Recruitment and Hiring

General Manager Eckhart introduced the item, noting the Board previously considered the position but did not obtain the four affirmative votes required by the Agency Act when only four Directors were present. He stated the item was included in the adopted budget and returned for consideration with a full Board present.

Operations Manager Howard presented the staff report recommending creation of a Water Systems Operator I/II position to support expanding operational responsibilities, including new conveyance and recharge infrastructure (including the County Line Road pipeline), wells, heli-hydrant facilities, and ongoing monitoring of recharge ponds and pump stations.

On a motion by Vice President Smith, seconded by Director Valdivia, the board approved and adopted an Amendment to the SGPWA Organizational Chart adding a Water System Operator I/II position and authorized the General Manager to proceed with recruitment and hiring.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

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

Noes: None

Absent: Letulle

Motion passed 6-0.

B. Review and Approve Board Committee Assignments for Calendar Year 2026

The Board reviewed the proposed committee assignments for calendar year 2026 and discussed minor revisions to support scheduling efficiency and balanced participation. Discussion included adjusting a “3-by-2-by-2” committee to two primary members with an alternate to avoid unintended quorum concerns in meetings with partner agencies, and ensuring alternates are identified for committees where feasible.

On a motion by Treasurer Tickemyer, seconded by Vice President Smith, the board approved the Board Committee Assignments for Calendar Year 2026.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

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

Noes: None

Absent: Letulle

Motion passed 6-0.

9. Ordinance for Adoption

A. Adopt Proposed Ordinance No. 19, Establishing Revised Board Meeting Times and Affirming the Location of Board Meetings

General Manager Eckhart introduced Ordinance No. 19 as a Board-directed item to consider returning to two daytime meetings at 1:30 p.m. and rescinding the prior ordinance that established an alternating evening meeting schedule. The Board discussed maintaining evening board meetings versus returning to consistent daytime meetings. Several Directors indicated the decision should ideally include Director Letulle, given the significance of changing meeting times by ordinance.

President Ybarra opened the floor for public comment. Yucaipa Valley Water District Board member Joyce McIntyre, commented via Zoom in support of returning to daytime meetings, stating daytime meetings are easier to attend and aligning with schedules of regional agencies and water-related meetings.

1st motion

A motion was made by Vice President Smith, seconded by President Ybarra to adopt Ordinance No. 19 as presented.

Substitute motion

A substitute motion was made by Treasurer Tickemyer, seconded by Director Ball to table the item to the next regular meeting to allow full Board participation.

The Board voted to approve the substitute motion and continue the ordinance to the next regular meeting.

Approved by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Valdivia, Wargo, Tickemyer, Ball, Ybarra

Noes: Smith

Absent: Letulle

Motion passed 5-1.

10. Reports - Directors and Committee Report

The following meetings were reported on:

- January 7, 2026, Beaumont Chamber of Commerce Breakfast (Wargo)

- January 8, 2026, Richard Royce Town Hall Meeting (Wargo)
- January 12, 2026, Banning Heights Mutual Water Company Board Meeting (Wargo)
- January 13, 2026, Banning City Council Meeting (Wargo, Valdivia)
- January 14, 2026, Banning Chamber of Commerce Sunrise Breakfast (Ball, Wargo, Ybarra)
- January 14, 2026, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District Board Meeting (Ball)
- January 16, 2026, Sites Reservoir Committee Meeting (Smith)
- January 20, 2026, Cabazon Water District Board Meeting (Wargo)
- January 20, 2026, City of Beaumont Board Meeting (Valdivia)
- January 21, 2026, High Valleys Water District Board Meeting (Wargo)

Director Tickemyer had no report.

Director Valdivia congratulated the Agency on the CFO recruitment. He noted the City of Banning has an interim City Manager and encouraged outreach. Director Valdivia also suggested exploring sponsorship of a partner agency representative for a future ACWA conference as a professional development opportunity.

President Ybarra reported visiting a newly installed heli-hydrant site in High Valleys. He also referenced attendance at utility-related meetings and discussions regarding upcoming well project coordination.

11. Board Requests for Future Agenda Items

Director Ball requested a brief Brown Act refresher presentation to support ongoing compliance training for both new and existing members.

Director Ball also requested an update on the LAFCO nomination and election timeline, including participating agencies and voting procedures. Staff indicated information would be provided as received from LAFCO staff.

12. Closed Session Agenda

- A. CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS
(Gov. Code § 54956.8)
Property: 304-602-3022
Agency negotiator: Lance Eckhart, General Manager
Negotiating parties: AVEK, Pass Agency, and Property Owner
Under negotiation: Price and Terms of Payment

13. Reconvene

- A. Report out of Closed Session Action

President Ybarra reconvened the meeting into open session. Counsel Ferre reported the Board met in closed session on the noticed item and there was no reportable action.

14. Announcements

President Ybarra reviewed the following announcements:

- A. Regular Board Meeting, February 2, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.
- B. Water Conservation & Education Committee Meeting, February 10, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.
- C. Office closed February 16, 2026, in observance of President's Day
- D. Master Gardener Workshop, February 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., Noble Creek Community Center

15. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, President Ybarra adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, February 2, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

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