

San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency

DATE: March 16, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lance Eckhart, General Manager

BY: Maricela V. Cabral, Exec. Asst./Clerk of the Board

SUBJECT: **Adopt Ordinance No. 19 Establishing New Times For Board Meetings and Affirming the Location of Board Meetings, and Rescind Ordinance No. 18**

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and consider action to adopt Ordinance No. 19, establishing revised Board meeting times and affirming the location of Board meetings, and Rescind Ordinance No. 18, thereby amending the Board's regular meetings to the first and third Monday of each month at 1:30 p.m., or at 6:00 p.m. or leave as is.

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION

The Board discussed this item at the following Board of Directors meetings:

- October 6, 2025
- January 26, 2026
- February 2, 2026
- February 23, 2026

BACKGROUND

At the October 6, 2025, Board meeting, the Board requested that staff evaluate the effectiveness of evening Board meetings, specifically whether the evening meeting format achieved its intended purpose of increasing public attendance and community participation.

Since that time, staff has monitored and evaluated public attendance trends, in-person participation, and remote engagement for both daytime and evening meetings. The evaluation period included review of in-person attendance, public comment participation, and remote access usage through Zoom and telephone conferencing. At the January 26, 2026, Board meeting, the Board considered staff's recommendation but did not reach a consensus. At the February 2, 2026, Board meeting, the Board again did not reach a consensus. At the February 23, 2026, Board meeting, the item was pulled from the agenda due to the absence of a Director, consistent with the Board's previously stated preference to consider the matter with a full Board present.

The Agency continues to provide robust public access options, including live video and telephone participation via Zoom, ensuring that members of the public may attend and

participate in meetings without being physically present. These tools have significantly expanded accessibility beyond traditional in-person attendance.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

ACTION

1. Adopt either Draft Ordinance A or Draft Ordinance B as Ordinance No. 19, establishing new Board meeting times and affirming the Board meeting location
2. Rescind Ordinance No. 18

ATTACHMENTS

Director Board Action Item
Draft Ordinance A
Draft Ordinance B

Pass Agency meetings 3/26

From:

To:

Date: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 10:19 PM PDT

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and consider action to adopt an ordinance to return the Board's regular meetings to the first and third Monday of each month at 6pm with allowances for holidays. Additionally, special or emergency meetings to be held at 5pm or later whenever possible. Furthermore, rescind Ordinance No. 18.

BACKGROUND:

The **San Geronio Pass Water Agency (the Agency)** was voted into existence by the people of the **San Geronio Pass**. As a public agency established through the will of the electorate, the Agency carries a special responsibility to remain transparent and accessible to the residents and taxpayers it serves.

Public access to the decision-making process is a foundational principle of California law. The **California Brown Act** (Government Code §54950 et seq.) declares that *"the people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them."* It further states that the people insist on remaining informed so they may retain control over the instruments they have created. Because the Agency was created directly by the voters, honoring this principle is especially important.

The website of the **California Attorney General, Rob Bonta**, explains the core requirement of the Brown Act clearly, stating that **"all meetings of a legislative body shall be open and public, and all persons shall be permitted to attend the meeting."** This statement reflects the Legislature's intent that government decision-making occur in settings that allow the public to observe and participate in the process.

Meaningful public participation requires that meetings be scheduled at times when working residents can realistically attend. While the Brown Act does not mandate a specific meeting hour, it clearly establishes that **public agencies must conduct their business openly and in a manner that allows the public the opportunity to participate**. Meetings held during standard working hours can unintentionally limit attendance to retirees, government employees, or individuals with flexible schedules, thereby excluding a large portion of the community.

Holding regular board meetings at **6:00 p.m.** provides a practical and reasonable balance. Evening meetings allow residents who commute, work full-time jobs, or operate local businesses to attend after normal working hours. This promotes broader civic engagement, strengthens public trust, and ensures that the Agency hears from a wider cross-section of the community affected by its decisions.

The Agency secures water resources that are vital to the population within its boundaries. Decisions regarding water supply, infrastructure, and rates directly affect the daily lives of residents throughout the Pass. Because of this importance, it is essential that the public be given a fair and practical opportunity to observe and participate in Agency governance.

Scheduling meetings at **6:00 p.m.** reflects the spirit and intent of the Brown Act by encouraging transparency, accountability, and public participation. It acknowledges that the Agency ultimately exists to serve the people who created it and whose lives are affected by its policies.

For these reasons, holding meetings at **6:00 p.m.** is consistent with both the **democratic origins of the San Geronio Pass Water Agency** and the **public participation principles embodied in California's Brown Act.**

ANALYSIS:

Holding meetings of the **San Geronio Pass Water Agency (the Agency)** at **6:00 p.m.** creates benefits for the public and the Agency while causing injury to no one involved in the process.

The primary beneficiary of evening meetings is the public itself. When meetings are scheduled after the normal workday, **virtually all members of the public have the ability to attend**, including employed citizens who work both within the Pass communities and those who commute to jobs outside the area. Public agencies exist to serve their constituents, and scheduling meetings at a time when the greatest number of residents can attend strengthens transparency, public oversight, and civic participation.

Agency staff are not harmed by evening meetings. Staff members can be made whole through the use of **personal time off or flexible scheduling**, and they are compensated appropriately for the work they perform. This ensures that staff responsibilities are fulfilled while maintaining fairness in compensation and scheduling.

In many cases, **Agency directors themselves have been financially injured by meetings held in the middle of the workday.** Because serving as a director is **not a full-time position**, many directors maintain outside employment. Daytime meetings often require directors to leave their place of employment, resulting in lost income or disruption to their professional responsibilities. Holding meetings at **6:00 p.m.** allows directors to complete their regular workday and then fully focus on conducting the people's business without the distraction of unfinished work obligations.

Evening meetings also reflect the standard practice followed by most public agencies throughout California. **Virtually all city councils, school boards, water districts, and recreation and park districts conduct their meetings in the evening** specifically so the public can attend. These agencies recognize that meaningful public participation requires scheduling meetings outside of typical working hours.

By contrast, holding meetings in the middle of the day limits participation and does not demonstrate leadership in promoting public access. As a public agency entrusted with important decisions affecting water resources and the community, the Agency should set an example by ensuring that its meetings are held at times that maximize public involvement.

For these reasons, scheduling Agency meetings at **6:00 p.m.** benefits the public, protects directors from unnecessary financial harm, accommodates staff appropriately, and aligns the Agency with the widely accepted practices of other local public bodies that prioritize public access and participation.

ACTION:

See Recommendation above

**SAN GORGONIO PASS WATER AGENCY
ORDINANCE A**

**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING NEW TIMES FOR
BOARD MEETINGS AND AFFIRMING THE LOCATION
OF BOARD MEETINGS**

WHEREAS, the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency (“Agency”) is a State Water Project Contractor and wholesale water agency organized and operating under the Chapter 101 of the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency Law set forth in the Water Code Appendix (“Law”). Section 11 of the Law provides that the Board of Directors shall provide for the time and place of holding its meetings and the manner in which its special meetings may be called; and

WHEREAS, the Board has adopted a number of ordinances and resolutions over the years designating changes in the date, time, and place of Board meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to change the times for Board meetings as set forth below and to affirm the place of Board meetings. The Board desires to take this action in order to have, in one ordinance, all of the information as to the time, place, and dates of regular meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board has the authority under the Law, and pursuant to the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code §§ 54950 *et seq.*), to change the date, time, and/or place of Board meetings for a particular meeting or on a more permanent basis so long as certain procedures are followed.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SAN GORGONIO PASS WATER AGENCY AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1 Incorporation Of Recitals All of the foregoing Recitals are true and correct and the Board so finds and determines. The Recitals set forth above are incorporated herein and made an operative part of this Ordinance.

Section 2 Place Of Board Meetings Board Meetings shall be held at the Agency offices located at 1210 Beaumont Avenue, Beaumont, CA 92223.

Section 3 Regular Board Meetings Regular meetings of the Board shall convene on the following dates and times, with allowances for holidays:

The first Monday of each month at 1:30 PM; and
The third Monday of each month at 1:30 PM.

Section 4 Ordinance To Be Controlling All ordinances, resolutions, or other Board actions, or parts thereof, that are inconsistent with any provision of this Ordinance are hereby superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

Section 5 New Schedule Commences As Of April 1, 2026 The President of the Board of Directors shall sign this Ordinance and the Secretary of the Board of Directors shall attest thereto, and this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon adoption. The new

dates and times of Board meetings, as set forth herein, shall go into effect as of April 1, 2026 and shall apply to the applicable meetings scheduled after April 1, 2026.

Section 6 Severability If any section, subsection, clause or phrase in this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid, the validity of the remainder of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby. The Board hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase thereof, irrespective of the fact that one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases or the application thereof be held invalid.

ADOPTED this 16th day of March 2026, by the Board of Directors of the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency.

SAN GORGONIO PASS WATER AGENCY

Robert Ybarra
President of the Board of Directors

ATTEST:

Sarah Wargo
Secretary of the Board of Directors

**SAN GORGONIO PASS WATER AGENCY
ORDINANCE B**

**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING NEW TIMES FOR
BOARD MEETINGS AND AFFIRMING THE LOCATION
OF BOARD MEETINGS**

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Section 3 Regular Board Meetings Regular meetings of the Board shall convene on the following dates and times, with allowances for holidays:

The first Monday of each month at 6:00 PM; and
The third Monday of each month at 6:00 PM.

Section 4 Special and Emergency Board Meetings Special and emergency meetings of the Board shall convene at the following time:

5:00 PM, or later, whenever possible.

Section 5 Ordinance To Be Controlling All ordinances, resolutions, or other Board actions, or parts thereof, that are inconsistent with any provision of this Ordinance are hereby superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

Section 6 New Schedule Commences As Of April 1, 2026 The President of the Board of Directors shall sign this Ordinance and the Secretary of the Board of Directors shall attest thereto, and this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect immediately upon adoption. The new dates and times of Board meetings, as set forth herein, shall go into effect as of April 1, 2026 and shall apply to the applicable meetings scheduled after April 1, 2026.

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President of the Board of Directors

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Secretary of the Board of Directors