

Regular Meeting
May 19, 2026
6:00 pm

Meiners Oaks Water District
202 W. El Roblar Drive
Ojai, CA 93023-2211

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The Board President, Mike Etchart, called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The meeting was also available via teleconference.

2. Roll Call

Present: Board President, Mike Etchart, Board Directors: James Kentosh, Christian Oakland, and Christine Cooper. Staff Present: General Manager, Justin Martinez, and Board Secretary, Summer Ward. Attorney Present: Stuart Nielson; and Jeanne Zolezzi (closed-session only).

Absent: Director, Joe Pangea.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Approval of the April 21, 2026, Regular Board Meeting minutes.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve the minutes from the April 21, 2026, meeting. Director Cooper seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Cooper

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent – Pangea

4. Public Comments

No Comments.

*****The Board went into closed session at 6:05 pm.*****

5. **Closed Session:** The Board of Directors held a closed session to discuss litigation, pursuant to the attorney/client privilege, as authorized by Government Code Sections §54957 & 54956.8, 54956.9, and 54957.

- CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL—EXISTING LITIGATION
(Paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Gov. Code § 54956.9)
Name of case: *Santa Barbara Channelkeeper v. State Water Resources Control Board, et al.*,
Los Angeles County Superior Court Case No. 19STCP01176

****The Board ended closed session at 6:30 pm.****

Attorney Nielson reported that the Board discussed pending litigation, and there are no actions to report.

6. **Financial Matters**

a) **Approval of Payroll and Payables from April 16, 2026, to May 15, 2026, in the amount of:**

Payables:	\$ 73,146.24
Payroll:	<u>\$ 51,149.11</u>
Total:	\$ 124,295.35

Director Cooper made the motion to approve the Payroll and Payables for April 16, 2026, to May 15, 2026. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Oakland
(4) Ayes – M/S/C
(1) Absent - Pangea

7. **Board Discussion/Actions**

a) **Approve Resolution 20260519-1: Request a Consolidated General Election.**

Ms. Ward introduced Resolution 20260519-1, requesting a consolidated general election. Ms. Ward explained that this is a standard resolution that the District approves each election cycle to include the MOWD Director seats in the Ventura County Election Division nomination and ballot process. Attorney Nielsen has reviewed and provided input on the resolution language.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve Resolution 20260519-1: Request a Consolidated General Election. Director Cooper seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Cooper

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Pangea

b) Approve Resolution 20260519-2: Conflict of Interest Code.

Ms. Ward introduced Resolution 20260519-2: Conflict of Interest Code. Ms. Ward explained that this, too, is a standard resolution that the Board reviews and approves at least once every election cycle and serves as the basis for the Form 700 submissions completed each year. Attorney Nielsen has reviewed and provided input on the resolution language.

Director Oakland made the motion to approve Resolution 20260519-2: Conflict of Interest Code. Director Kentosh seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Oakland/Kentosh

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent - Pangea

c) Authorize the GM and Board President to sign the Nigro & Nigro, PC FY25/26 Financial Audit Engagement Letter for the approved and budgeted expense of \$20,500.

Director Etchart introduced the letter of engagement provided by Nigro & Nigro, to perform the financial audit for FY25/26. Ms. Ward noted that this is a standard engagement letter and that it remains within the MOWD-budgeted audit expense of \$20,500.

Director Cooper made the motion to authorize the General Manager and Board President to sign the FY25/26 Financial Engagement Letter. Director Oakland seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Cooper/Oakland

(4) Ayes – M/S/C

(1) Absent – Pangea

- d) **Approve FY26/27 Cost of Living Adjustment of 3% for staff, effective 7/1/2026.** Director Etchart introduced a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment for staff, effective July 1, 2026, based on the Los Angeles-area CPI. He further noted that it is important for the District to support staff with these cost-of-living adjustments. Director Kentosh asked for clarification on why 3% was used instead of the full 3.7% in the CPI report. Mr. Martinez and Ms. Ward expressed that management is proposing a balance between a tight budget and addressing inflation for staff. Director Kentosh proposed that the Board consider capturing the 0.7% in a future fiscal year, should the budget allow.

Director Kentosh made the motion to approve the 3% Cost of Living Adjustment for staff, effective July 1, 2026. Director Cooper seconded the motion.

No Public Comment.

Kentosh/Cooper
(4) Ayes – M/S/C
(1) Absent - Pangea

8. **General Manager's Report**

Mr. Martinez reported that the Casitas Lake level is at 99.5% as of May 14, 2026. Wells 2, 4a & 7 are running. Site fencing at Well 4a has been reinstalled by staff, following the completion of the Well 4a Rehab Project. The annual Consumer Confidence Report is complete. Parties involved in the Riverview Trailhead culvert have been trying to coordinate a site meeting with the Ventura County representatives, but without success. Mr. Martinez has received three proposals for the culvert repair/replacement, ranging from \$16,000 to \$22,000. Mr. Martinez will work with Attorney Nielsen to reach an agreement among the parties on cost sharing. Mr. Martinez reported that progress is being made on the CalARP list of recommended improvements, including paint, labels, signage, personal wearable detection devices, and drafting additional plans and procedures. Staff is working on a process for customers to request a down-sized meter, which will include policy language and a request form to be approved by the Committee and Board. Director Cooper asked about the status of the grant application for purchasing meters. Ms. Ward noted that she has the application package and will submit it.

No Public Comment.

9. **Board Secretary's Report**

Ms. Ward provided a summary of administrative activities. Ms. Ward reported that the Prop 218 notices were mailed out to parcel owners and account holders on April 30, 2026. The Prop 218 Hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, at 6:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room at Meiners Oaks School. RDN consultants will be present to assist with the presentation and to help answer questions. The rate study report and notices were also translated into Spanish using Google Translate and made available on the District website and in hard copy at the office. Protest ballots are being collected at the office and are available for review. Ms. Ward stated that she and Mr. Martinez participated in the Ventura County Office of Emergency Services Hazard Mitigation Plan update meetings held on April 21 and 28. The 2026 Consumer Confidence Report, for 2025 data, is complete and will be published by May 29, 2026. A notice will be included in the monthly billing statements, the report will be available on the District website and in hard copy at the office; the report will be available on the District website and in hard copy at the office; and customers may also request that and customers may also request a paper copy be mailed to them directly. The SWRCB approved the MOWD electronic annual report (eAR) on May 14, 2026. Ms. Ward reviewed the Ventura County Elections Division timeline for candidate nomination paperwork (July 13 – August 7, 2026) and the instructions for scheduling a candidate filing appointment. A flyer notice has been posted on the District website and in the display case outside the office for anyone interested in running for a board position in the upcoming election. Ms. Ward reminded Directors that if they need assistance accessing training materials or county-required form submissions, such as the Form 700, they should contact her, and she will set them up on a computer at the office.

No Public Comment.

10. **Board Committee Reports**

- Executive & Personnel Committee: No report.
- UVRGA: Met; routine meeting.
- Budget/Rate Committee: Meeting scheduled for May 28th at 10:00 am.
- Emergency Management Committee: No Report.
- Allocations, New Meters & Expansion of Services Committee: No report.
- Grants: No report.
- Treatment Plant Design Ad Hoc Committee: No report.

11. **Old Business**

- State Water: No report.
- Matilija Dam Removal Update: No report.

12. **Director Announcements/Reports**

- Director Kentosh: No report.
- Director Oakland: No report.
- Director Pangea: Absent.
- Director Cooper: No report.
- Director Etchart: No report.

13. **Meeting Adjournment**

The next meeting and Prop 218 Public Hearing will be held on June 16, 2026, at 6:00 pm, Meiners Oaks School – Multipurpose Room. Since there was no further business to conduct, Board President Mike Etchart adjourned the meeting at 7:17 pm.

Board Secretary

Board President