

**VENTURA RIVER WATER DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 22, 2026**

1) **CALL TO ORDER** – Director Kuebler called the meeting to order at 2:02 P.M. at the District office at 409 Old Baldwin Road, Ojai, California 93023.

2) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3) **ROLL CALL**

Present: Directors Bruce Kuebler, Ed Lee, Laurel Lary, Peggy Wiles, and Craig Zwirn

Staff present: Alma Quezada; General Manager  
Mark Albertsen; Field Supervisor  
Glecina Reyes; Office Manager/Accountant  
Stuart Nielson, Legal Counsel

Public Present: Candance Delbo, Tom Pipkin, and Suzanne Baker

Zoom Present: Anthony Elowsky of Robert D. Niehaus, Inc (RDN)

4) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Director Wiles made a motion to approve the agenda and to move Item 13 to be heard as the first action item, seconded by Director Lee, the motion carried unanimously.

5) **PUBLIC COMMENT – FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:**

Candance Delbo and Suzanne Baker, both residents of Sumac Street, requested a status update regarding the results of the surveyor's work related to the Parker facility, and expressed frustration in the length of time the work has taken.

6) **CONSENT ITEMS:**

**A. MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 17, 2025**

**B. PAYMENTS & CHECKS FOR DECEMBER**

**C. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR DECEMBER**

**D. FYE 2026 – Q3 INVESTMENT REPORT**

**Action:** Director Lary motioned to remove item 6A from the consent agenda and approve consent agenda items 6B, 6C and 6D, seconded by Director Wiles, the motion carried unanimously. Item 6A was discussed and Director Wiles moved to approve Consent Item A, incorporating the requested change to the minutes. Director Lee seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**Item 13 was presented as the first action item.**

7) **RESOLUTION 2026-01: ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED RATE ADJUSTMENTS, FEES AND CHARGES TO THE DISTRICT'S RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR WATER SERVICE:** The General Manager provided an overview of the approved rate adjustments for the next five years, which are intended to fund the majority of the District's upcoming Capital Improvement Projects. A side-by-side comparison was presented outlining the differences between the approved 2026 rate adjustment and the proposed adjustment for the year, emphasizing the primary factors driving the proposed change. Anthony Elowsky of RDN

explained that the need for an updated rate adjustment is largely due to the District's substantial capital requirements and the need to ensure adequate financial coverage. This includes maintaining the District's ability to meet future debt obligations and sustaining long-term financial stability. **Public Comment:** Candace Delbo, a Sumac resident, inquired how the grant funding and solar project affects the water rate adjustment. **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that Board adopt Resolution 2026-01 approving modified Rules and Regulations for Water Service, including the rate adjustments. **Action:** Director Zwirn motioned to approve the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Lee, the motion carried unanimously.

- 8) **TICO CONSOLIDATION PROJECT – AWARD OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT:** The General Manager provided a brief overview of the Tico Consolidation Project, including the project scope. A project timeline and bid summary were presented to the Board. It was reported that J. Vega Engineering, Inc. submitted the lowest responsive and responsible bid. **Public Comment:** None **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board 1) Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract, in the form approved by Supplementary Legal Counsel, with J Vega Engineering, Inc., in the amount of \$1,267,950 for the construction phase of the Tico Consolidation project; and 2) Authorize the General Manager to approve change orders to the construction contract of up 10% of the contract amount (\$126,795) for this project, and 3) Direct the General Manager to notify the State Department of Industrial Relations of the award of contract (for projects greater than \$25,000). **Action:** Director Lary motioned to approve the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Zwirn, the motion carried unanimously.
- 9) **RESOLUTION 2026-02: NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF CASITAS WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT AND DROUGHT RESILIENCY PROJECT (PARKVIEW PIPELINE), AND RECORD NOTICE OF COMPLETION:** Phase 1 of the Casitas Mutual Consolidation, known as the Parkview Project, was completed. The project consisted of installing 670 feet of new 8-inch water main, 12 service connections, and 3 hydrants along Parkview Drive. The project was fully funded through a Department of Water Resources (DWR) grant and included five change orders, all within the General Manager's approval authority. **Public Comment:** None **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board 1) Adopt Resolution 2026-02 to accept the Casitas Mutual Water System Improvements as complete and 2) Direct Staff to record a Notice of Completion for the project and release retained funds 35 days after recordation. **Action:** Director Lary motioned to approve the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Lee, the motion carried unanimously.
- 10) **RESOLUTION 2026-03: AMENDMENT TO RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR WATER SERVICE: LEAK RELIEF POLICY & ABUSIVE WATER PENALTY AMENDMENT:** The General Manager presented a clean copy of the policy incorporating the revisions requested at the previous meeting. The General Manager reminded the Board that, under the District's current policy, there is no maximum limit on the amount of leak relief a customer may receive. The General Manager provided an overview of the proposed leak relief policy and outlined the conditions under which customers would be eligible for leak relief. **Public Comment:** None **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board 1) Review and modify as necessary the revised leak relief policy and 2) Adopt Resolution 2026-03 to amend the District's Rules and Regulations for Water Service **Action:** Director Wiles motioned to approve the revised leak relief policy with requested revisions, seconded by Director Lary, the motion carried unanimously.

- 11) **SOLAR PROJECT – APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER FOR BARRIER SOLAR, INC., DELGATION OF LIMITED CHANGE ORDER AUTHORITY:** The General Manager presented a summary of the change orders required by Barrier Solar for the Solar Project. **Public Comment:** None **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board 1) Approve Change Orders No. 1- 4 to the Barrier Solar contract, reflecting a contract reduction of (\$30,870.88), 2) Authorize the General Manager to sign Change Orders No. 1- 4, and 3) Authorize the General Manager to approve individual future change orders up to \$100,000 when required to maintain the project schedule to achieve interconnection and operation under NEM 2.0 **Action:** Director Wiles motioned to approve the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Lary, the motion carried unanimously.
- 12) **SOLAR PROJECT – APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER FOR PHOENIX CIVIL ENGINEERING, INC. – TASK ORDER #25:** The General Manager presented a detailed cost breakdown for the task order required to ensure the District received authorization to operate prior to the expiration of NEM 2.0. **Public Comment:** Sumac residents inquired about the grading plan associated with the Solar Project, as well as the long-term plans for the tank that will be constructed at the Parker site. **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board approve and authorize the General Manager to issue Task Order #25 to Phoenix Civil Engineering in the amount of \$42,500 for the Solar Project. **Action:** Director Lary motioned to approve the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Wiles, the motion carried unanimously.
- 13) **RESOLUTION 2026-04: RECOGNIZING 15 YEARS OF SERVICE – MARK ALBERTSEN:** The General Manager acknowledged Field Supervisor Mark Albertsen's 15 years of service and highlighted his accomplishments within the District. **Public Comment:** None **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board approve Resolution 2026-04 Recognizing Mark Albertsen for 15-years of service and authorize a one-time longevity pay of \$1,000 **Action:** Director Wiles motioned to approve the General Manager's recommendation, seconded by Director Zwirn, the motion carried unanimously.
- 14) **DISTRICT LEGAL COUNSEL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:** The Board reviewed survey responses submitted by both Board Members and the General Manager regarding legal services. A discussion was held acknowledging the Legal Counsel's dedication and hard work in service to the District, as well as outlining expectations regarding the scope and performance of duties moving forward. **Public Comment:** **Recommended Action:** The General Manager recommended that the Board conduct the evaluation in open session. **Action:** No motion required.

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS – RECEIVE & FILE:**

- 15) **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – WATER & DISTRICT STATUS:**  
The General Manager provided the Board with a comprehensive update on current capital improvements. This included the status of the well rehabilitation efforts for Wells 3 and 4, as well as progress on the District's Solar Project. Cost-saving opportunities and a plan to perform a full asset inventory were presented to the Board. A lockbox service is being implemented, and a newsletter will be sent on the upcoming change.
- 16) **BOARD REPORTS ON MEETING ATTENDED**  
Director Kuebler attended Association of Water Agencies (AWA) meeting and noted that a meteorologist presented weather predictions.

**17) OLD & NEW BUSINESS****A. STATUS OF CASITAS SPRINGS PROPERTY FOR COUNTY LEVEE IMPROVEMENT**

The Board previously agreed to sell the Casitas Springs parcel to the County to allow for realignment of the levee through the property. Upon follow-up regarding the status, County staff responded that they are now considering maintaining the original levee alignment rather than pursuing the tie-in that initially prompted interest in the property.

**B. BROWN ACT UPDATE**

Legal Counsel advised the Board that the matter had been reviewed during the prior month, and that the relevant legal briefing materials had been distributed. Counsel explained that the primary purpose of the update was to address statutory changes resulting from recent amendments to the law. Counsel noted that the majority of the substantive changes apply to larger legislative bodies rather than special districts, cities, or counties, and therefore do not materially impact the District.

**CLOSED SESSION** – After a brief break beginning at 4:04 pm, the Board entered closed session at 4:09 pm.

**18) CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-EXISTING LIGATION**

Action: No reportable action taken.

**19) ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 P.M.

Attested:

  
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Alma Quezada, Secretary