January 21, 2026
Regular Meeting
5:00 p.m.

The Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District convened in regular session on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the San Benito County Water District office at 30 Mansfield Road, Hollister, California. Members present were: President Mark Wright, Vice President Joe Tonascia and Directors Sonny Flores, John Freeman and Doug Williams. Also present were General Manager Dana Jacobson, District Counsel Jeremy T. Liem, Assistant General Manager Brett Miller, Operations and Maintenance Manager Michael Craig, Water Conservation Program Manager Lundi Barroso-Osorio, Senior Engineer David Macdonald, Office Specialist II Shannon Darnall and Executive Assistant/Board Clerk Barbara Mauro. Jeff Cattaneo participated via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER

President Wright called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

President Wright led the Pledge of Allegiance.

b. Roll Call

Mrs. Mauro called roll. Members present were: President Wright, Vice President Tonascia and Directors Flores, Freeman and Williams.

c. Speakers will be limited to 5 minutes to address the Board; rebuttal will be limited to 3 minutes; no new business agenda items will be heard after 8:00 p.m.

d. Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Mauro stated, staff would like the Board to amend the agenda for item #8, to read, Consider Approval of Contract with Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. for a Compensation Study, not to exceed, $27,500. She explained the information was not available at the time the agenda needed to post on Friday, January 16, 2026. Noting the change, a motion was made by Director Flores and seconded by Vice President Tonascia; the Agenda was approved by 5 affirmative votes, Wright, Tonascia, Flores, Freeman and Williams.

e. Public Input: Members of the Public are Invited to Speak on any Matter not on the Agenda

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **Approval of Minutes for:** **December 17, 2025 Regular Meeting**
   January 5, 2026 Special Meeting
   January 12, 2026 Special Meeting
2. **Allowance of Claims**
3. **Acknowledgement of Paid Claims prior to the January Board Meeting**
4. **On Call Contracts – Status Updates**

Vice President Tonascia asked for item #5 to be removed from the Consent Agenda, so the report could be presented. With a motion by Director Freeman and a second by Director Williams, the

Consent Agenda items #1-4, were approved by 5 affirmative votes, Wright, Tonascia, Flores, Freeman and Williams.

5. **Water Resources Association-Water Conservation Program Manager's Report December 2025**

Mrs. Osorio reviewed the report for the Board. Vice President Tonascia asked if the landscape audits were for new development. Mrs. Osorio stated yes and gave details on the process. Vice President Tonascia asked about the status of the toilet program for residential use and Mrs. Osorio stated WRA is redirecting their efforts. Also discussed was reaching out to businesses and Vice President Tonascia suggested leaving flyers at businesses such as ACE Hardware and Brigantino Irrigation.

Director Freeman asked about the water softener rebates. Mr. Cattaneo added education is important on this subject, as the old perception is the need for the softeners. The District is working on a $55 million project to improve and provide reliable water.

Director Flores stated WRA has stated previously that they may have reached a saturation point on the toilet and water softener programs. WRA continues to try and get the message out about conservation.

President Wright asked about Facebook and Instagram and Mrs. Osorio stated WRA and the District have both now.

<u>REGULAR AGENDA</u>

6. **Consider Resolution Adopting the San Benito County Water District 2025 Agricultural Water Management Plan/U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Water Management Plan**

Mrs. Osorio reviewed this item for the Board. She gave the background of the plan and that it is considered every 5 years. The Board's action would be to approve and adopt the plan and the next step would be federal posting for public review. Mrs. Osorio stated once the review is complete, Todd Groundwater will turn the final report into the Department of Water Resources on the District's behalf. Mrs. Osorio added a report such as this, is often needed for state grants and loans.

Director Freeman asked why the San Juan Bautista water levels show a decline. Mr. Jacobson stated it isn't an issue. Mr. Cattaneo further stated the decline is intentional, because back in 2005, that area was oversupplied and resulted in high groundwater. He stated it is now where it should be.

With no questions from the public, a motion was made by Director Williams and seconded by Director Flores, the Board approved Resolution #2026-03, *A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District Adopting the San Benito County Water District 2025 Agricultural Water Management Plan/U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Water Management Plan* by 5 affirmative votes, Wright, Tonascia, Flores, Freeman and Williams.

7. **Public Hearing regarding Zone 6 Standby or Availability Charge for the 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 Water Years**

   a. **Proof of Publication submitted for Notice of Public Hearing**
   Mrs. Mauro verified the Proof of Publication.

   b. **Presentation of the Methodology for Establishing Standby or Availability Charge for the 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 Water Years**
   Mr. Miller presented this item for the Board, giving a brief background on the charge and stated it was being presented at $6 per acre foot and that amount was unchanged since approval three years ago.

   There were no questions from the Board.

   c. **Open Public Hearing**
   President Wright opened the Public Hearing.

      i. **Consider Written Protests**
      Mrs. Mauro verified there were no written protests received.

   d. **Closing Public Hearing and Adjourn if there is a Majority Protest or continue to a later date**
   There were no public comments made, therefore President Wright closed the Public Hearing.

   e. **If there is no Majority Protest, Consider Resolution Establishing Standby or Availability Charge for the 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 Water Years**
   Without a majority protest, a motion was made by Vice President Tonascia and seconded by Director Freeman, the Board approved Resolution #2026-04, *A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District Establishing Standby or Availability Charge for the 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 Water Years* by 5 affirmative votes, Wright, Tonascia, Flores, Freeman and Williams.

8. **Consider Approval of Contract with Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. for a Compensation Study, not to exceed $27,500**
   Mr. Miller reviewed this item for the Board. He stated that from the RFP he distributed, only 1 firm responded, Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. The proposal included both a class study and a compensation study, for a total of $59,760. Mr. Miller contacted the vendor and asked what it would be for just the compensation study. Gallagher responded that just the compensation study would be in the amount, not to exceed $27,500.

   Director Freeman asked if Mr. Miller solicited other companies. Mr. Miller stated he sent the RFP to a number of vendors, who all confirmed receipt, but in the end, he only received 1 proposal.

   With no further questions from the Board and no questions from the public, a motion was made by Director Williams and seconded by Director Flores, the Board approved of a

Contract with Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. for a Compensation Study, not to exceed, $27,500 by 5 affirmative votes, Wright, Tonascia, Flores, Freeman and Williams.

9. **Consider disbanding the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project Committee and the Gavilan College New Campus Ad Hoc Committee**
Mrs. Mauro reviewed this item for the Board. Per Counsel, just as the Board takes action to add committees, it needs to do the same to disband a committee. At a meeting in January, staff and the Board President determined the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project Committee, and the Gavilan College New Campus Ad Hoc Committee were no longer needed and could be permanently disbanded.

With no questions from the Board or the public, a motion was made by Director Flores and seconded by Director Williams, the Board approved of disbanding the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project Committee and the Gavilan College New Campus Ad Hoc Committee by 5 affirmative votes, Wright, Tonascia, Flores, Freeman and Williams.

10. **Committee/Agency Representative Reports:**
   a. **San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority (Tonascia/Jacobson)**
   As per Director Tonascia, the Operations and Maintenance Budget was discussed. Per Mr. Jacobson, he will add additional information in his manager's report.

   b. **Administration Committee (Flores/Williams)**
   As per Directors Flores and Williams, this has already been covered.

   c. **Personnel Committee (Flores/Tonascia)**
   As per Directors Flores and Tonascia, this has already been covered.

11. **Monthly Operations and Maintenance Report**
Mr. Craig gave an update to the Board. Hernandez Reservoir is at 3854 acre-feet; Paicines is at deadpool; San Justo Reservoir is at 8000 acre-feet and the Paicines Canal is looking good. He reported there is a planned shutdown in March, so the District will be on reverse flow. He further reported meter replacements continue and staff is doing soil sampling for the San Juan Bautista Pipeline.

Vice President Tonascia and President Wright complimented Mr. Craig and his staff on the state of the Paicines Canal. Director Williams reported the Paicines Ranch won't allow the District to spray for weeds, so he will contact them about letting the sheep take care of that.

12. **General Manager's Report**
   a. **Reach 1 Operations**
   Mr. Jacobson reported Mr. Craig covered this.

   b. **Zone 3 Operations**
   Mr. Jacobson reported Mr. Craig covered this.

   c. **Zone 6 Operations**
   Mr. Jacobson reported a capital improvement project for replacement of the sectionalizing valves will be underway, as all 3 are leaking. Mr. Jacobson stated

it is a several million-dollar job and is of great importance to the District. Vice President Tonascia asked if the Bureau could contribute to this cost and Mr. Jacobson stated no, but there is a funding arm for the District to borrow from and pay back. Mr. Cattaneo added the Board could consider a committee to assign this to, for long term obligations.

d. Accelerated Drought Response Project (ADRoP)

Mr. Jacobson reported the expansion work at West Hills Water Treatment Plant continues to go well. He further reported change orders are nearing the 5% limit, and also reviewed the change orders to date.

Mr. Jacobson reported the well contracts are all in various stages and data from the wells will be used to design the pumps.

Mr. Jacobson reported the pipeline project is going well, as the weather has been dry. There were some minor delays during the last storm.

Mr. Cattaneo reported, regarding the well contracts, that #4 well, is only showing an output of 400/gallons/minute. The advantage, per Mr. Cattaneo, of working with Todd Groundwater is to use the data to decide if it's worth $700,000-$800,000 to redrill this well, as the others are showing 1000/gallons/minute.

Director Williams asked if redrilled, would it be in the same area? Mr. Cattaneo stated it would be in the same area, but likely 15 feet away from the original drill site. President Wright asked which well is #4? Mr. Cattaneo reported it is the one closest to Fallon Road.

e. San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority Activities

Mr. Jacobson further reported the Authority has significant Capital Improvement Projects and have secured funding through the Bureau. Action 5-Operations in the Delta would bring meaningful improvement to their operations and should improve salinity.

f. City of San Juan Bautista Water Supply Plan

Mr. Jacobson stated he had nothing to report at this time.

g. B F Sisk Dam Raise Project

Mr. Jacobson reported next month he will have some information to report to the Board. There will be upcoming cash calls for the District for this project. April 2026, it will be $82,000 and September 2026 and February 2027, the cash calls will be $225,000 each. There will also be a true-up, per Mr. Jacobson, in March 2027 which could be $327.000.

h. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Compliance

Mr. Jacobson reported the TAC (Technical Advisory Committee) was reinstated and met in early January. It was the first of 2-3 meetings that will be needed.

i. Miscellaneous District items

Mrs. Mauro discussed the future use of Zoom Webinar to protect the District from "Zoom bombing" and make meetings more secure. There will be some testing so we will know how to use it in regards to closed session breakout/return to open session.

13. **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

The minutes were approved at the February 25, 2026 Board meeting and signed by the presiding board member.

/s/Mark Wright
Mark Wright, President

/s/Barbara L. Mauro
Barbara L. Mauro, Executive Assistant/Board Clerk