



**SAWPA COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 16, 2024**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Bruce Whitaker, Chair, Orange County Water District
Mike Gardner, Vice Chair, Western Municipal Water District
T. Milford Harrison, Secretary-Treasurer, San Bernardino Valley
Municipal Water District
David J. Slawson, Eastern Municipal Water District
Jasmin A. Hall, Inland Empire Utilities Agency

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

None

**ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS
PRESENT; NON-VOTING**

Gil Botello, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Mosher, Karen Williams, David Ruhl, Rachel Gray, Shavonne
Turner, Rick Whetsel, Ian Achimore, Sara Villa, Melissa Bustamonte,
Dean Unger, John Leete, Alison Lewis, Marie Jauregui, Zyanya
Ramirez

OTHERS PRESENT

Andrew Turner, Lagerlof, LLP; Joe Mouawad, Eastern Municipal
Water District; Nick Kanetis, Eastern Municipal Water District; Ken
Tam, Inland Empire Utilities Agency; John Kennedy, Orange County
Water District; Lisa Haney, Orange County Water District; Sheryl
Parsons, Orange County Water District; Adekunle Ojo, San
Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District; Mallory O’Conor,
Western Municipal Water District; Melissa Matlock; Western
Municipal Water District; Robert Enis, Riverside Public Utilities
Agency; Tom Lindsey; Yorba Linda Water District; Gene Hernandez,
Yorba Linda Water District; Doug Johnson, Ralph Andersen &
Associates

The Regular Meeting of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission was called to order at 9:32 a.m. by Chair Bruce Whitaker on behalf of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

An oral roll call was duly noted and recorded by the Clerk of the Board.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments; there were no public comments received via email.

4. ITEMS TO BE ADDED OR DELETED

There were no items to be added or deleted.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: JULY 2, 2024

Recommendation: Approve as posted.

MOVED, to approve the Consent Calendar as posted.

Result:	Adopted by Roll Call Vote
Motion/Second:	Harrison/Gardner
Ayes:	Gardner, Hall, Harrison, Slawson, Whitaker
Nays:	None
Abstentions:	None
Absent:	None

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STUDY (CM#2024.38)

Jeff Mosher introduced Doug Johnson of Ralph Andersen & Associates and he provided a presentation on the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Compensation Study, contained in the agenda packet on pages 23-33. Mr. Johnson highlighted the purpose of doing compensation surveys and noted they are a necessary part of assessing and updating an organization’s compensation plan to help anticipate and understand what the labor market is doing. The survey data informs decision-makers and provides a data-driven framework for allocating resources to wages and benefits. It also provides defensibility and public accountability for employee compensation and optimizes the Authority’s ability to recruit and retain employees.

Mr. Johnson outlined the metrics utilized by surveying agencies, encompassing total revenues, expenditures, employee count, estimated driving distance proximity, and cost of living analysis. Reference was made to pages 27-28 of the agenda packet regarding the Market Summary – Base Salary and Cash Benefits slides, which cited the market median at the 50th percentile as the benchmark. Mr. Johnson emphasized the salary range and presented a summary of recommended job classifications, along with the rationale for internal alignment and salary setting, illustrating which positions were benchmarked against the market data. Per the report findings, Mr. Johnson provided his recommendations to adopt the salary range/equity adjustments based on the data collected for FY 2023-24, then further adjust salary ranges by 4.3% (approved COLA) for the FY 2024-25 and consider further review and adjustments for insurance benefits due to SAWPA being below market.

Commissioner Hall asked what SAWPA’s current policy is for cash compensation and healthcare compensation. Mr. Johnson noted its longevity pay, some agencies pay a longevity amount that is above the maximum of the salary range, which is a retention mechanism, and some agencies have employer paid deferred compensation so essentially an additional contribution. Karen Williams noted that SAWPA does not have longevity pay and does not contribute to any 457 PERS, employees are paying 100%, and retiree medical benefits, as of 2005, was taken away for everyone, there are only four (4) employees that have retiree medical benefits. SAWPA does not have a current policy, if a benefit gets added or taken away it is brought to Commission for approval and then becomes part of the handbook listing of benefits.

Commissioner Slawson expressed that this was a fair exercise to go through, and asked if there was a policy in place for the General Manager to promote an employee or be moved up to the next level based on performance. Ms. Williams noted that there is a policy in place that gives the General Manager the ability to change positions without having to come back to the Commission as long as it is within the budget parameters. It was requested that the Policy be distributed to the Commission.

Ms. Williams informed the Commission that the report’s findings by Ralph Andersen & Associates were provided to the General Managers and are provided today as a receive and

file item. She asked the Commission to review and provide any questions or comments, staff will then bring this item back to Commission with recommendations and approval.

This item is to receive and file; no action was taken on agenda item no. 6.A.

B. SUMMARY OF RIVERWALK DATA (CM#2024.39)

Ian Achimore provided a presentation on the Summary of Riverwalk Data, contained in the agenda packet on pages 147-165. Since 2006, SAWPA has led the annual implementation of the Santa Ana River Habitat Survey, also known as the "Riverwalk". This work is lead by SAWPA as the administrator for the task force known as the Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team. Watershed stakeholders use the data from the Riverwalk surveys to for their region-wide habitat planning and mitigation projects. The Riverwalk data has been collected at the same geo-located points each year, with each point labeled with a designating number (1-18). At each field point a transect line is drawn from bank to bank. To identify the area to monitor, a 4-meter-wide band is centered at the transect. The area within the band is then surveyed by visually identifying what type of material makes up the river bottom (mud, sand, gravel, cobble, or boulder).

Mr. Achimore noted that native fish habitat projects have been implemented in areas such as the Santa Ana River mainstem and tributaries, such as the SBVMWD Santa Ana Sucker Conservation and Conjunctive Use Tributaries projects, and OCWD maintenance of Sunnyslope Creek. Mr. Achimore referenced the Riverwalk Atlas document, which summarizes the data collected annually from 2006-2023. The purpose of the Atlas is to share results of the Riverwalk for experts and the public. The draft conclusions of recent data show poor transect were at first related to more precipitation in a sequential year due to storms flushing sand (poor habitat) downstream. For 2023, there was a lot of data not collected due to lack of volunteers and also safety was an issue particularly from dogs at homeless encampments in the upstream areas.

The next steps are to incorporate timing of flows and precipitation overlaid on Riverwalk ranking data. The annual average of precipitation is not granular enough. The Santa Ana Sucker Team finalizes the Atlas, and discusses updating the Riverwalk data collection process, as well as enhancing the type of data collected. The new data collected can include suspended sediment concentrations, streamflow, algae detection, and overall size of riverbed at monitoring points.

Commissioner Hall asked if the member agency contribution is enough to help set the cost to provide more data. Mr. Achimore noted that the task force is going to do a cost benefit analysis to weigh in on the costs and benefits of collecting and surveying the data and anticipates bringing it back as part of the budget discussion in November. Commissioner Gardner noted that between both Chino Desalter 1 and 2 they are pumping about 35,000-acre feet a year and have achieved hydraulic control so that groundwater is not rising any longer downstream from the desalter wells, have we looked to see if that is having any impact from the data results that are seen. Mr. Achimore noted that they can look into the existing data and put it in context.

This item is to receive and file; no action was taken on agenda item no. 6.B.

7. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Recommendation: Receive for Information.

A. CASH TRANSACTIONS REPORT – MAY 2024

B. INTER-FUND BORROWING – MAY 2024 (CM#2024.40)

- C. **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS/FINANCIAL REPORTING – MAY 2024 (CM#2024.41)**
- D. **PROJECT AGREEMENT 25 – OWOW FUND – FINANCIAL REPORT, APRIL 2024**
- E. **PROJECT AGREEMENT 26 – ROUNDTABLE FUND – FINANCIAL REPORT, APRIL 2024**
- F. **STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT**
- G. **GENERAL MANAGER REPORT**
Jeff Mosher informed the Commission that the Climate Bond was passed and signed, and it will appear on the November Ballot as Proposition 4. There is \$100 million for IRWM in categories related to watershed resilience and climate resilience.
- H. **CHAIR’S COMMENTS/REPORT**
There were no comments/reports from the Chair.
- I. **COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS**
Commissioner Hall commended staff for their presentations and noted she looks forward to the Classification and Compensation Study to help support staff and the General Manager on making decisions for the future recruitment of employees and retention of the current employees.
- J. **COMMISSIONERS’ REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
Commissioner Hall requested an update on the Santa Ana River Trail.

Chair Whitaker recessed the meeting at 10:41 a.m. for Closed Session.

8. CLOSED SESSION

- A. **CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION**
Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(4) | One Case

9. CLOSED SESSION REPORT

Chair Whitaker resumed Open Session at 11:06 a.m. and Legal Counsel, Andy Turner announced that the Commission received a report from SAWPA staff and Counsel; no action was taken on Agenda Item No. 8.A.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for review, Chair Bruce Whitaker adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Approved at a Regular Meeting of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority Commission on Tuesday, August 6, 2024.

DocuSigned by:

Bruce Whitaker

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Bruce Whitaker, Chair

Attest:

DocuSigned by:

Sara Villa

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Sara Villa, Clerk of the Board