

# MINUTES

## SPECIAL BOARD MEETING of the WEST VALLEY WATER DISTRICT March 16, 2017

PRESENT    ABSENT

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DIRECTORS

Dr. Clifford Young, Sr., President  
Linda Gonzalez, Vice President  
Gregory Young, Director  
Donald Olinger, Director  
Robert Bourland, Director

STAFF

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Matthew H. Litchfield, P.E., General Manager  
Robert Christman, Interim Chief Financial Officer  
Karen Logue, Human Resources/Risk Manager  
Wendy Strack, External Affairs Manager  
Linda Jadeski, Engineering Services Manager  
Jon Stephenson, Business Systems Manager  
Joanne Chan, Operations Manager  
Shanae Smith, Board Secretary  
Lauren Albrecht, Public Affairs Analyst  
Daisy Farias, Water Conservation Specialist  
Michelle Adams, Public Affairs Analyst

LEGAL

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David J. Olivas, Tafoya & Garcia, LLP

VISITORS

Anthony and Diana Araiza  
June Hayes, Director, SB Valley Municipal Water District  
Danielle Maurizio  
Scott Olsen, Redlands Tea Party

The Regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order by Dr. Clifford Young, Sr., at 6:00 p.m. at the District Office, 855 W. Baseline Road, Rialto, CA.

## **OPENING CEREMONIES**

Pledge of Allegiance – Vice President Gonzalez

Opening Prayer – Director Robert Bourland

Roll Call of Board Members – Quorum

## **ADOPT AGENDA**

Motion was made by Director Young to adopt the Agenda as presented, seconded by Vice President Gonzalez. The motion carried unanimously by the following vote:

Ayes:	Directors: <b>Gonzalez, Olinger, Young, Bourland, Young, Sr.</b>
Noes:	Directors: None
Absent:	Directors: None
Abstain:	Directors: None

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

President Young indicated that any person wishing to speak to the West Valley Water District (“District”) Board of Directors (“Board”) on matters listed or not listed on the agenda, within its jurisdiction, is asked to complete a Speaker Card and submit it to the District Clerk. Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. Under the State of California Brown Act, the Board is prohibited from discussing or taking action on any item not listed on the posted agenda. Comments related to noticed Public Hearing(s) and Business Matters will be heard during the occurrence of the item.

## **BUSINESS MATTERS**

1. **Review and Discuss Mid-Year Operating Budget – External Affairs Department** – External Affairs Manager, Wendy Strack gave an overview of the inception of the External Affairs Department, its staffing structure, conservation rebates and customer outreach programs, grant funding for community projects, the media release program, including a message effectiveness survey to determine how customers receive information and their perceptions of the District, as well as the goals of the department which will best meet the priorities of the Board. Ms. Strack also reported on support provided by the department to other departments within the District, including outreach efforts to sixty-six homeowners impacted by the Water Valve Maintenance Program implemented by the Maintenance Department. Ms. Strack also presented a detailed presentation regarding the framework for the draft Communications Master Plan, which would direct departmental activities and communicate the new Mission, Vision and Values derived from the November, 2016 Board retreat. Ms. Strack answered the following questions from members of the Board:

Director Olinger inquired whether or not the department is collaborating with other agencies and their External Affairs Departments. Ms. Strack answered that Water Conservation Specialist, Ms. Daisy Farias represents the District on the Basin Technical Advisory Committee's (BTAC) Conservation subcommittee. Director Olinger also inquired if Ms. Strack had an evaluation model and introspection regarding the District getting it's moneys worth. Ms. Strack commented that the Communications Plan ensures that we target the funds on activities that have the highest return on investment for the lowest cost and reaching the most amount of people. The 2016/17 budget was developed by previous Staff and she is unsure if the funds were resourced appropriately and that she is determined to ensure that the 2017/18 budget is in accordance with the draft Communications Plan.

Director Bourland inquired if Staff conducts a zero-based budgeting process or last year's O&M and base capital. Mr. Lichfield commented that the 2016/17 budget process was the first time downline supervisors were involved in the budgeting process and that he is committing to a zero-based budget for the 2017/18 Fiscal Year budget. A discussion ensued.

Vice President Gonzalez commented that she represents a community that is primarily Hispanic, Spanish speaking customers and took massive media in Spanish regarding the drought and lack of water. Now that we have had a lot of rain and everything is green all over, we must maintain the mentality of 2020. We need Staff to go visit the schools and engage with the teachers and the community. If we are not reaching our consumers and customers, it is a waste of money. The department and Staff are great but we have to reach the people and put in their mind that we have no water even though it rained.

Director Greg Young thanked Ms. Strack and her team. He stated that since he has been on the Board, there has been a strong desire to have better communications with our customers in all venues and capacities in which they interact with West Valley Water. Director Young inquired as to what accomplishments have we achieved and that some have been laid, but the community is going to ask us. Don't lose sight of the deliverables especially when we are asking this kind of money from a fairly poor community. We have committed as Board members that we want a robust outreach and a robust external affairs, however we need the deliverables. Director Young inquired about the stakeholder analysis, which has several aspects we can improve on. Some people are in the wrong categories, sheriffs and fire departments are not local businesses, Bloomington Christian schools are not listed, neither is the Bloomington Church of the Nazarine, one of the largest church in the areas. St. Bartholomews is not listed either. Director Young stated that Ms. Strack listed several churches not within our District and there needs to be a little bit of refinement there. He wants to see particular things, including what is their interest in West Valley, and what impact they could have on our District. He would like to see them scored by impact, their interest what we are doing in certain areas. Additionally, what is their preferred method of communication and what are the intervals? Director Young stated this can be a very powerful tool for the department and would like to know what have we achieved for our investment.

President Young commented that we are committed to \$1.6 million to External Affairs and the District has never done that level before. We have had great conservation programs, but never have we done this before. President Young stated that he has asked before and has not received an answer regarding what are we getting for the \$1.6 million that we are putting into this budget. A subquestion to that is how are we directly communicating to our ratepayers? We have consultants

and all of that, most of which he approved of. What type of return are we getting on our investment? We had federal consultants; are they bringing dollars to this community or are they taking dollars out of this community? He was hoping tonight to hear that and he has not heard it. The reports are fairly abstract out there, but he thought there was some recommendations coming forth to directly relate to our rate payers. Embedded in questions from the other directors is the same question. Ms. Strack stated that they were attempting to address those questions in the presentation and that several programs tie directly back to the ratepayers. The majority of the non-personnel budget is dedicated to the turf replacement grants and rebate programs. That is the bulk of where we are spending the expenditure dollars, outside of salaries and benefits. The bulk of it is going to our grant program administration, customer outreach and rebates. When combined, they account for 59.5% of the budget. Arguably, rebate and grant programs that provide direct benefit to the ratepayers could be easily articulated as a benefit back to the ratepayer. One of the challenges is the way the budget was structured, as it does not allow us to pull apart the data in the way that we would like. We want to highlight the education programs, which are part of the customer outreach programs, in the classrooms, with community groups, building gardens in the community which are a direct benefit to the ratepayers. When we are doing promotional materials and event participation, they are interacting with the ratepayers directly. Printing, mailing, redesign, website redesign and subscriptions are support costs for how we communicate with the ratepayers. Ms. Strack stated that you cannot communicate with the ratepayer without those costs. Regarding the administration and advocacy portion, the Board did struggle with the federal advocate and whether there was a return on investment of that account and why the contract was cancelled. Director Young commented that two thirds of the budget is non-personnel related. Of that, below 60% is related to direct rebates from the customer or these grants and their applications. Most of the outreach items, door hangers and rebate communications or correspondence are in that 32%.

Director Bourland inquired whether the professional consultants, who are people, had been listed in personnel or non-personnel. Ms. Strack confirmed they are listed under professional services/consultants. Director Bourland stated that one half of the budget is going toward people. It is misleading to not include the consultants as people. Professional services consultants should be looked at, as they are very expensive and we need to see what we are getting for the money. For the budget next year, if there is an on-going need, we should not hire external professional services, we should be hiring people, as he assumes it should be cheaper to hire as employees. If it is a one time use, it is appropriate to hire professional services. Take a look at staffing for next year.

President Young clarified that 19% of the budget is going to outreach within the community in our service area and that he would like to see where we are devoting 60%-70% of our budget directly communicating to the people who are paying our bills. He would like the budget moving more to direct communications with our rate payers. That is what we should reach for, as opposed to the 19%. We have forgotten who our customers are and to communicate with our customers. President Young suggested Ms. Strack may want to come back or include it in the budgeting and that he is hearing bits and pieces of the same from the other directors.

Director Olinger suggested that this is about accountability, as mentioned before regarding assessment and evaluation and that it would be helpful if Ms. Strack's staff could get together and respond to the Board in writing regarding their concerns.

Ms. June Hayes, Director of the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (“Valley District”) addressed the Board and commented in response to the information presented by Ms. Strack. A list of rebate programs and the remaining funds from the previous fiscal year. Valley District would like to offer money and she represents District 1 and if the District could find a way to help Valley District spend approximately \$92,000 in funding. Ms. Hayes also commented that the Colton Unified School District (“CUSD”) approached Valley District at their external affairs meeting regarding their weather based irrigation controller program they would like to install in schools. Valley District will be assisting and that West Valley was unable to help them due to running out of money in the weather based irrigation controller program. They are doing a fantastic job and need West Valley’s help. Following discussion, Director Young made a motion to Approve the Mid-year Budget Adjustments and directed the External Affairs Manager to provide a response to questions from the Board in writing, seconded by Director Olinger. The motion carried by the following unanimous vote:

Ayes:	Directors: <b>Gonzalez, Olinger, Young, Bourland, Young, Sr.</b>
Noes:	Directors: None
Absent:	Directors: None
Abstain:	Directors: None

- 2. Review and Discuss Senate Bill 415 – Changing the Regular Election of the West Valley Water District Governing Board of Directors from November Odd-Years to Statewide General Election in November of Even-Numbered Years** – General Counsel David J. Olivas reported that more voters participate in even-numbered year elections than odd-year elections. The Board is being asked to make a calculation that there is a significant decrease in voter turn-out, which means the voter turn-out for a regularly scheduled election, political subdivision is at least 25% less than the average voter turn-out within that political subdivision for the previous four statewide general elections. Mr. Litchfield described a voter analysis prepared by the External Affairs Department regarding the calculation required to determine whether or not the District meets the threshold for moving to even-numbered years. A discussion ensued regarding the actual voter turnout on odd year elections, which is significantly low. Following discussion a motion was made by Director Young to Change the Regular Election of the West Valley Water District Governing Board of Directors from November Odd-Years to Statewide General Election in November of Even-Numbered Years commencing in 2022, seconded by President Young. A discussion ensued. Following discussion, a substitute motion was made by Director Bourland to Change the Regular Election of the West Valley Water District Governing Board of Directors from November Odd-Years to Statewide General Election in November of Even-Numbered Years commencing in 2020, seconded by Vice President Gonzalez. The Board directed legal counsel to bring back a resolution to the board at the next regular Board meeting. Following discussion, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes:	Directors: <b>Gonzalez, Olinger, Bourland</b>
Noes:	Directors: <b>Young, Young, Sr.</b>
Absent:	Directors: <b>None</b>
Abstain:	Directors: <b>None</b>

3. Review and Discuss California Supreme Court Ruling in *City of San Jose v. Superior Court of Santa Clara County* – Mr. Olivas led a discussion regarding the recent Superior Court ruling regarding its decision to uphold a city employee’s use of personal accounts to communicate regarding the conduct of public business and summarized the report from Mr. Robert Greenfield, the Association of California Water Agencies Joint Powers Authority’s (“ACWA/JPIA”) General Counsel. Following discussion, Mr. Olivas answered questions from the Board and was directed to bring back guidelines for implementing

Mr. Scott Olsen addressed the Board and commented that at the last San Bernardino City Council meeting that he attended with Mayor Davis where there was an issue being discussed regarding the way the City of San Bernardino does things. There is a group of people who are not happy and have retained an attorney who brought this issue up. He stated that “he is going hunting.”

Vice President Gonzalez thanked Mayor Deborah Robertson and the City of Rialto for honoring her as one of the trailblazers in labor and business. There was several fantastic women and over seven hundred people in attendance, as this is the eleventh year. She is very grateful and very humble.

## ADJOURN

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, PRESIDENT YOUNG MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:20 P.M.**

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Dr. Clifford Young, Sr.  
President of the Board of Directors  
of West Valley Water District

ATTEST:

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Shanae Smith  
Board Secretary