

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

1.1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Director Hedberg, who chaired the meeting.

1.2 Roll Call

- Voting Members Present:
 - Kathleen Hedberg, Vice President (Helix)
 - Mark Robak (Otay)
 - Dan McMillan (SDCWA)
 - Nicole Beaulieu DeSantis (City of San Diego)
 - Steve Castañeda (Sweetwater)
 - Dr. Lynn Neault, Secretary (GCCCD)
- Guests, Presenters, and Staff Members Present:
 - Brian Olney (Interim Administrator, The Garden; HWD General Manager)
 - Jennifer Bryant, Director of Administrative Service, Helix
 - Tenille Otero, Administration Services, Otay
 - Lauren Magnuson (Director of Garden Operations)
 - Tim Townsley (Facilities Manager, The Garden)
 - Yaily Gonzales (Community Programs Coordinator, The Garden)
 - Kristin Kjaero (Minutes)
 - Jaime Cuadra, Cube10 LLC (The Garden's Accountant)
 - Mary Jane Bailey, Ad Hoc Committee support
 - Rose Steinhardt
 - Vince McGrath
 - Kay McGrath
 - Frank Kalinoski
 - Harold Bailey
 - DeAna Verbeke
 - Ed Woodruff

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Director McMillan move to approve the agenda, and Director Castañeda seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

5. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

5.1 Approval of the Minutes of the December 13, 2024, Special Meeting

Director Castañeda move to approve the agenda, and Director McMillan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. See Attachment 1.

5.2 Update on Garden Operations and Finances

Lauren Magnuson presented an update on Garden operation and finances.

- Operations
 - Audit information has been submitted for review.
 - The formal garden has gained a statue dedicated to the volunteers, donated by Richard Wright.
 - The Verbeck ADA golf shuttle has been updated and repaired.
 - The roof on the Ed Center has been repaired and patched.
 - The Garden's website has been updated so that all the JPA minutes can be found on it.
- December Visitors
 - City of San Diego: 94
 - Helix: 246
 - Otay: 183
 - Sweetwater: 47
 - Padre/Lakeside: 25
 - Other: 71
- Membership
 - 223 New Members in December
 - YTD 435 new members.
 - 2,353 active memberships
- Volunteers
 - 5,000 hours for half of the physical year.
 - 11 new volunteers attended the training in January.
- Events
 - New Community Programs Coordinator
 - She introduced Yaily Gonzales, who will focus on revenue focused programs, education, workshops, coordinate with water districts on Free Fridays, upcoming events and marketing.
 - Groups
 - Girl Scouts, homeschools and regular schools continue to reach out for presentations and self guided tours.
 - We are consistently booking new events such as private parties and weddings, so we are updating our contracts. Some recent groups that have visited us for tours and presentations include San Diego City College Horticultural Program, Rakes and Blades, and the La Jolla Garden Club.
 - We are giving ADA tours with the Verbeck Golf Shuttle.
 - Classes and Workshops
 - January 18 class on how to hire a landscape architect was attended by 37 people.
 - February 8 and Mar 29: Planting Slopes
 - February 22: Planting Soil, Growing Water
 - Mar 8: Swales
 - March 7: Tomatomania. Will have a demonstration cooking class, that will also include talk about growing tomatoes, and lunch; cost \$25.
 - April 12: Living with Fire
 - May 3 will be the annual Spring Garden Event.
 - Two irrigation workshops are being planned with Hunter Industries, date TBD.
 - Solano Center will be holding a Master Compost workshop series of 5 classes on consecutive Saturdays Mar15-April 12.

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- Financials
 - See Attachment 2 (Statement of Activity, Agency Contributions FY 2025 YTD, Budget vs.Actuals FY25 December). See Attachment 3 (Water Conservation Garden Authority General Ledger July - December, 2024).
 - Director Hedberg asked about the cost of workshops, and whether the funding we receive covers them. Yes. We receive funding from the County for workshops, and the cost of instruction/stipends vary from \$100 to \$300.
 - Incoming funds:
 - The Friends of The Garden are finalizing their dissolution and have requested the Authority to accept an Endowment Fund in the Amount of approximately \$118,000 that provides semi-annual interest payments to support Garden operations.
 - Sam Cicatti is unfreezing his endowment to support The Garden.
 - An unrestricted \$100,000 donation has been deposited from the Maggie Barnett Charity Account for Garden operations.
 - They have been working with the San Diego Foundation so that there will be an entity in which the Authority can receive the above funds.
 - A check register will be added to financial reports moving forward.

5.3 Election of Officers and Appointment of the President and Vice President of the Board, and Adoption of Resolution 25-01

See Attachment 4 (Board Report - Election of Board Officers) and Attachment 5 (Draft Resolution 25-01 Appointment of President and Vice President).

Outgoing President Robak moved to nominate Director Hedberg as the new President. Director Castañeda seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Director Hedberg thanked Director Robak for his leadership and many years of dedicated service, and unveiled the Mark Robak dedicated bike rack made of recycled water bottles that will be here at The Garden.

Director Hedberg talked about her priorities for the coming year.

The board agreed that selection of Vice President will be delayed until March, because several new representatives will replace seats on the Board next month.

Director Hedberg moved that Director Neault continue as Secretary, with Michael Williamson taking the minutes. Director Neault seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5.4 Resolution 25-02 Appointing the Treasurer of the Water Conservation Garden Authority

See Attachment 6 (Board Report - Appointment of Treasurer) and Attachment 7 (Draft Resolution 25-02 Appointment of Treasurer)

Interim Administrator Olney referred to the restated Joint Power Agreement for the requirements for the role of Treasurer. It has been performed by GCCCD Vice Chancellor of Business Services, Sahar Abushaban, who is not available to continue the job for the coming year. Director Neault moved that Jennifer Bryant of Helix Water District be appointed, and Director McMillan seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

(The meeting jumped to item 5.9 because someone has to leave early.)

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5.5 Resolution 25-03 Authorizing Banking Signers on the Garden Bank Account

See Attachment 8 (Board Report - Bank Signing Authorization) and Attachment 9 (Draft Resolution 25-03 Bank Signing Authorization).

Interim Administrator Olney stated the purpose of this resolution is to bring signing in line with the election of the new Treasurer. Director McMillan moved the draft resolution be adopted, and Director Castañeda seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5.6 Resolution 25-04 Authorizing Acceptance of an Endowment Fund from the Friends of the Garden

See Attachment 10 (Board Report - San Diego Foundation Endowment Fund) and Attachment 11 (Resolution 25-04 San Diego Foundation Authorization).

Interim Administrator Olney stated that he and Lauren Magnuson have been working on preparing for a new entity in which the Authority can accept funds, as mentioned in item 5.2 above. Regarding funds at the San Diego Foundation, only interest income can be spent. Our new Treasurer will provide a report on how much is held, and what is available to be spent.

Director Castañeda moved to adopt the draft resolution, and Director Beaulieu DeSantis seconded his motion. It passed unanimously.

5.7 Quarterly Report of the Treasurer

See Attachment 12 (Board Report - Treasurer's Report) and Attachment 11 (Statement of Position WCG Dec 24).

Treasurer Bryant said that we are currently in a good financial standing, and have almost \$400,000 to carry us to the end of the year.

5.8 Use of Fidelity Funds Donated to the Garden

See Attachment 12 (Board Report - Use of Donated Funds).

Interim Administrator Olney said The Garden was given a gift of \$100,000 held at Fidelity Funds from a garden volunteer, Maggie Barnett. It has now been transferred to the Garden's account. He said that there are significant repairs that have to be made at the Garden that these funds could be applied to.

Director Neault asked that the money be directed to pay back the GCCCD loan.

Director Castañeda said that if they are applied to repairs, it will still benefit GCCCD if it takes over The Garden, as money it would not have to spend on the repairs. Director McMillan suggested that a decision of directing of these funds not be made at this meeting, which was agreed upon.

5.9 Options for Continued Funding and Operations of the Garden after June 30, 2024

See Attachment 13 (Board Report - Continued Funding and Operations of the Garden).

Interim Administrator Olney stated that in order to develop a budget for next year, staff will need to have an idea which members will continue in the JPA. With that in mind legal council has created a draft Memorandum Of Understanding of how it might work going forward, as a starting point for discussion for each JPA members' Boards. No decisions are expected to be made today, which give the member Boards time to discuss their participation before the February meeting.

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If there are fewer than three or four participants going forward, we would need to start working with GCCCD for their take over of The Garden.

Director Castañeda listed large expenditures coming up for Sweetwater Authority. He says his board is resolute that they do not want The Garden to shut down, but they don't know what future finances will be in terms of their ability to continue funding at the same level.

Counsel Jungeis said the draft was written with the assumption that the City of San Diego will be withdrawing. Director Neault reiterated that GCCCD needs a definitive answer as soon as possible whether they will be taking over The Garden if they are to be ready in two years.

Staff was directed to come back with a modified MOU to address GCCCD's concerns on minimum notification times to the college if the JPA discontinues funding.

(The discussion moved back to item 5.5 and continued in order.)

5.10 Recommendation Directing Legal Counsel to Send Denial of Demand to San Diego Housing Commission

See Attachment 13 (San Diego Housing Commission Demand Letter).

The San Diego Housing Commission sent a letter to the JPA, which stated they had not received a letter from the Court about the Friend's bankruptcy, and demanded payment. JPA Counsel Jungreis stated that the JPA does not have a contract with them. He will respond with a letter directing them to the Friends, with whom they had a contract.

5.11 Acting Administrator Comments

None.

5.12 Legal Counsel Comments

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Next meeting February 25, 2025, 3:30 p.m. at the Water Conservation Garden Multipurpose Room.