



THE WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN AUTHORITY  
FOUNDED 1992

**Regular Meeting of the Water Conservation Garden Authority  
Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 3:30 p.m.  
Water Conservation Garden Multipurpose Room  
12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, California 92019**

## **1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

### **1.1 Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:42 p.m. by Director Hedberg, who chaired the meeting.

### **1.2 Roll Call**

- Voting Members Present:
  - Kathleen Hedberg, President (SDCWA)
  - Jose Lopez (Otay), Vice President (appointed under Item 5.2)
  - Dan McMillan (Helix)
  - Nicole Beaulieu DeSantis (City of San Diego)
  - Ditas Yamane (Sweetwater) (arrived at 3:52 p.m.)
  - Lynn Neault, Secretary (GCCCD)
- Guests, Presenters, and Staff Members Present:
  - Brian Olney (Interim Administrator, The Garden; HWD General Manager)
  - Lauren Magnuson (Director of Garden Operations)
  - Steve Zolezzi (Garden Volunteer Coordinator)
  - Mike Williamson (Meeting Recorder/GCCCD)
  - Jennifer Bryant (Helix)

## **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## **3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Director Lopez moved to approve the agenda, and Director McMillan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Director Yamane absent.

## **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

## **5. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **5.1 Approval of the Minutes of the February 25, 2025, Regular Meeting**

Director McMillan moved to approve the Minutes of the February 25, 2025, Regular Meeting, and Director Lopez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Director Yamane absent.

## **5.2 Update on Garden Operations and Finances**

Lauren Magnuson presented an update on Garden operation and finances.

- A [report outline](#) was distributed to the board members.
- Steve Zolezzi provided an update regarding the volunteers.
- Jennifer Bryant from Helix reviewed and explained the Budget Summary and Financial Statements included as attachments in this agenda item.
- The reasons for the higher cost of the JPA audit was discussed, noting that Garden operations are now included in the JPA books, and the auditor now has additional accounting.

## **5.3 Election of Officers to Serve Two-Year Terms per Article 10 of the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement Creating the Water Conservation Garden Authority and Adoption of Resolution 25-05 Appointing the Vice President**

Director Jose Lopez was nominated to serve as Vice President of the JPA Board of Directors. He accepted the nomination. The nomination and adoption of Resolution 25-05 Appointing the Vice President were approved unanimously.

## **5.4 Draft Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget**

Lauren Magnuson and Brian Olney reviewed and explained the draft 2025-2026 budget. The Board discussion included the following:

- Director Hedberg requested a summarized, succinct, side-by-side comparison of the 2025-2026 budget with the prior year budget, both as budget-to-budget and actual-to-budget comparisons.
- Director Yamane requested a comparison of the 2024-2025 actuals and the 2025-2026 projected budget.

## **5.5 Options for Continued Funding and Operations of the Garden after June 30, 2025**

The Board discussed the options for continued funding and operations of the Garden after June 30, 2025, including the following:

- Director Lopez reported that the Otay board will be discussing membership in the Garden JPA at their April meeting. If the JPA membership shrinks to just Helix and Otay, he is uncertain whether they will support remaining in the JPA. He shared some concerns about water conservation issues, and expressed his personal longstanding passion for the Water Conservation Garden.
- Director Yamane requested that the Garden JPA have a representative come to the next Sweetwater board meeting and present a letter of reconsideration regarding membership in the Garden JPA.
- Director McMillan assured the JPA Board that, after in-depth discussions, Helix's board is committed to supporting the Garden for one more year, even if all other members withdraw, and will likely extend for an additional year if other members remain in the JPA. The Helix board will be rescinding their letter of withdrawal from the Garden JPA.
- Director DiSantis reported that the City of San Diego's membership in the Garden JPA will go to the City's Environmental Committee in April, and to the full City Council in May, with a recommendation from City staff to withdraw from the Garden JPA. Director Hedberg encouraged the City of San Diego, despite its likely withdrawal, to consider supporting the San Diego County Water Authority remaining in the Garden JPA.

- Director Neault noted that the current reality facing GCCCD is five letters of withdrawal from all of the other agencies in the Garden JPA. GCCCD needs to know if it should start planning to take over the Garden, and what the future looks like – a year from now, two years from now, and five years from now. Director McMillan opined that the path forward for GCCCD will become much clearer in the next couple months.
- Director Hedberg shared that she is looking forward to the Garden JPA Board strategic planning retreat in July.

#### **5.6 Board of Directors Comments**

A representative from Otay shared upcoming events, and Helix reported on a groundbreaking electrification project.

#### **5.7 Board President Comments**

President Hedberg had nothing further to report.

#### **5.8 Acting Administrator Comments**

Acting Administrator Olney had nothing further to report.

#### **5.9 Legal Counsel Comments**

Legal Counsel Jungreis was absent.

### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

**Next meeting April 22, 2025, 3:30 p.m. at the Water Conservation Garden Multipurpose Room.**