



THE WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN AUTHORITY
FOUNDED 1992

Regular Meeting of the Water Conservation Garden Authority Minutes
Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 3:30 p.m.
Water Conservation Garden Multipurpose Room
12122 Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, California 92019

OPEN MEETING

1. Call meeting to order and roll call.

- a. The meeting was called to order at 3:38 p.m. by President Hedberg.
- b. Voting members present:
 - i. Kathleen Coates Hedberg, President, Helix Water District
 - ii. Jose Lopez, Vice Chair, Otay Water District
 - iii. Steve Castaneda, Sweetwater Authority
- c. Guests, presenters and staff members present:
 - i. Jeremy Jungreis, Rutan & Tucker (via phone)
 - ii. Delfina Gonzalez, Alternate, Otay Water District
 - iii. Lauren Magnuson, Water Conservation Garden
 - iv. Steve Zolezzi, Garden Volunteer Coordinator
 - v. Brian Olney, Helix Water District
 - vi. Jennifer Bryant, Helix Water District
 - vii. Jessica Mackey, Helix Water District
 - viii. Tim Townsley, Water Conservation Garden
 - ix. Yaily Gonzalez, Water Conservation Garden
 - x. Tenille Otero, Otay Water District

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

- a. Chair Hedberg led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approve agenda (additions and/or deletions).

- a. **Motion:** Director Castaneda moved to approve the agenda and Director Lopez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Director Neault absent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

4. Public comments.

- a. There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

5. The board approve the January 27, 2026, regular board meeting minutes.

- a. **Motion:** Director Castaneda moved to approve the January 27, 2026, minutes, and Director Lopez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Director Neault absent.

6. The board adopt Resolution 26-02 approving the Water Conservation Garden Authority Event Alcohol Use Policy.

- a. Acting Administrator Brian Olney confirmed the policy was revised per the board's request for clarifying approving authority.
- b. **Motion:** Director Castaneda moved to adopt Resolution 26-02 approving the Water Conservation Garden Authority Event Alcohol Use Policy, and Director Lopez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Director Neault absent.

7. The board approve a one-time performance bonus to the Director of Garden Operations in accordance with the Director of Garden Operations employment contract.

- a. Acting Administrator Brian Olney confirmed the board reviewed the financial performance of the Director of Garden Operations and agreed to moved forward with the one-time performance bonus of \$8,300.
- b. **Motion:** Director Castaneda moved to approve a one-time performance bonus to the Director of Garden Operations in accordance with the Director of Garden Operations employment contract, and Director Hedberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Director Neault absent.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

8. The board receive an update on Garden operations and finances from Director of Garden Operations Lauren Magnuson.

- a. Ms. Magnuson reported attending the recent tour of the East County Advanced Water Purification facility and the R.M. Levy Water Treatment Plant; updating the website with an interactive exhibits map; updating signs around the Garden; and gave an overview on upcoming Garden events. Garden Volunteer Coordinator Steve Zolezzi reviewed January volunteer hours. Treasurer Jennifer Bryant reviewed the Garden's Treasurer's Report.

9. The board receive the Annual Independent Financial Audit Report from West Rhode and Roberts.

- a. Christopher Roberts, partner from audit firm West Rhode and Roberts, presented the draft Annual Financial Audit Report for the Water Conservation Garden Authority and reported that his firm had issued an unqualified opinion on the Garden's financial statements.
- b. **Motion:** Director Castaneda moved to approve the Annual Independent Financial Audit Report from West Rhode and Roberts, and Director Lopez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Director Neault absent.

10. The board receive the Evaluation of the Water Conservation Garden Free Programming report performed by San Diego State University.

- a. Director of Garden Operations Lauren Magnuson reviewed the evaluation report and noted the information found in the report will be used moving forward.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

11. Director comments.

- a. Director Castaneda noted he was excited to hear the positive news about the Garden. Director Lopez noted he was very pleased with the work being accomplished.

12. President comments.

- a. President Hedberg showed her updated Helix Water District business card with the Garden information on the back.

13. Acting administrator comments.

- a. Acting Administrator Brian Olney confirmed bringing a draft of the JPA agreement to the March WCGA board meeting.

14. Legal counsel comments.

- a. Legal counsel Jeremy Jungreis recommended at the next meeting the board authorize sending the draft JPA agreement to the member agencies.

15. Adjourn regular board meeting.

- a. The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.