



BIGHORN-DESERT VIEW WATER AGENCY

"To provide a high-quality supply of water and reliable service to all customers at a fair and reasonable rate."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SPECIAL MEETING - WORKSHOP MINUTES

BOARD MEETING OFFICE
1720 N. CHEROKEE TRAIL
LANDERS, CALIFORNIA 92285

May 2, 2026
Time – 9:30 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

President Miller-Boyer called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Directors present: Rodney Miller-Boyer
William Aldridge
Megan Close-Dees
JoMarie McKenzie
Jose Martinez

Staff present: Jennifer Cusack, General Manager
Marina West, Chief Engineer
Susan Allen, Ortega Strategies Group
Yasmeen Nubani, Ortega Strategies Group

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice President Aldridge made a motion to approve the agenda and Director Martinez seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Any person may address the Board on any matter within the Agency's jurisdiction on items not appearing on this agenda. When giving your public comment, please have your information prepared. If you wish to be identified for the record, then please state your name. Due to time constraints, each member of the public will be allotted three minutes to provide their public comment. State Law prohibits the Board of Directors from discussing or taking action on items not included on the agenda.

2. WORKSHOP PURPOSE & OPENING REMARKS

President Miller-Boyer delivered opening remarks and went over the purpose of the workshop. The purpose is for the board to reflect on the mission and purpose of the Agency

and provide strategic input to the staff for the development of a strategic plan.

3. BOARD HANDBOOK REVIEW

Agency Legal Counsel Jim Ciampa went through the Board Notebook and over the Brown Act. A full copy of the Brown Act was included in the Board Workshop packet and as such meets the criteria of AB707 to provide it to the Board annually. Mr. Ciampa went over mandatory training, the role and purpose of the board and key policies the handbook and supplemental to including the Employee Handbook, Procurement Policy, Investment Policy, and Reserve Policy. The role of the Board represent the community as it relates to the Governance of the District including setting policy, pass a budget, hire the General Manager, auditor and legal counsel.

4. CURRENT STATE OF THE AGENCY

Staff presented an overview of the Agency including the current organizational structure approved by the board and current staffing levels. The overview continued with the finances, infrastructure overview, capital projects, and compliance requirements. A PowerPoint was presented during the meeting and made available to the board and public at the meeting and online.

5. GENERAL MANAGER BRIEFING

Jennifer Cusack shared her initial observations and first 30 days on the job. Overall the staff has been receptive, and the organization is well run. There is need for another person in the office to cover key tasks including accounting, administrative tasks and customer service. Recruitment has begun for another Accounting Technician/Customer Service Representative I/II/III either part or full time depending on the candidate. The bare minimum is a part-time position to provide minimum coverage. This position has been open since December 2025.

Short-term priorities include filling this position, training the new operations staff member, transitioning work from Marina to Jennifer, working with the Board of Directors, and continue to be present daily to support staff and learn the work and needs of the Agency, while complying with all compliance deadlines, and moving key projects forward.

6. BOARD PRIORITIES & IDEA SHARING SESSION

The Board shared their individual ideas and Susan Allen with Ortega Strategies captured the ideas on big white tablets into categories (aka buckets), as follows:

Board

- *Direct Board to resources and guidance in running for re-election.*
- *Review and potentially realign and rename Committees. Potential names – Infrastructure & Development and Finance and Communications*
- *Schedule regular 1-1 meetings for board members with General Manager*
 - *Share responses to questions and requests with full Board*
- *Support required Board training*
- *Engage in planning for the Agency's future*

Customers & Community

- *Assess cost-benefit/impact of community newsletter (* required for CSDA District of Distinction)*
- *Commit to regular attendance at community meetings by General Manager and Board*
- *Identify and review community association memberships (e.g. Basin wide Foundation, Chamber of Commerce, Morongo Basin Historical Association, Yucca Valley Association)*
- *Identify and review industry associations including ACWA, CWSA, AWWA, etc.*
- *Consider enhanced engagement with sister water districts*
- *Coordinate with Board of Supervisors and Special Roads District*
 - *Address challenge of exposed water infrastructure in course of road maintenance*

Finance

- *Explore opportunities for reducing the cost of power (e.g. solar, pumps, conservation, etc.)*
- *Identify potential income generating opportunities*
- *Develop a list of consultants and contractors and ensure regular board review of terms of engagement and performance. Contractors provide support with the audit, engineering, finances, outreach, public relations, organizational transition and technology.*
- *Continue efforts to identify grant opportunities to address Agency needs*
- *Continue to explore potential shared service agreements with regional water districts*
- *Clarify impact of consultant error in rate study and alternatives for applying proposed rate increases*
- *Automate processes and reduce printing paper to improve efficiency and save money.*

General Manager

- *Create shared calendar for Board to help with tracking meetings*
- *Maintain CSDA District of Distinction*
- *Solicit feedback and suggestions from staff and facilitate staff engagement*
- *Update short-wave radios in Agency trucks to ensure redundant field communications*
- *Explore purchase of software to support geolocation of infrastructure (GIS)*

- *Identify and review Agency's professional association memberships and clarify the benefits of each*
- *Schedule rotating visits/presentations from Mojave Water Agency and regional water agencies to share updates*
- *Provide the Board with a quarterly report with an update on operations and critical incidents*
- *Share legislative updates and invite participation in legislative process*

Projects

- *Develop system assessment and maintenance plan*
- *Develop guide/resource for Board to help with Project management – potential elements may include project fact sheet, photographs and chart to track milestones and status*
- *Explore opportunities for water banking*

7. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES DISCUSSION

The Board will prioritize at a future board meeting once the information is compiled. Cost considerations were added to the ideas to be a factor to consider when setting priorities.

Lunch break 11:15 a.m. to 12:03 p.m.

8. DIRECTION TO GENERAL MANAGER

The Board would like General Manager to compile the information and bring it back to future board meetings. The General Manager will work on items that can be easily implemented as a matter of daily work and normal duties. The Board would like to have more time to discuss the ideas once a draft Strategic Plan document is available. The Board would like to have the committees start meeting again. Communications regarding matters pertaining to the District should be directed to the General Manager. If there are concerns in the community, please share them right away by calling or texting the General Manager. The General Manager will be a resource to the Board members and will help to set up training and meetings.

9. NEXT STEPS & FOLLOW-UP

Notes will be compiled and brought to the May 12, 2026, the General Manager will work on a draft Strategic Plan document for board discussion at regular board meetings. The next workshop will be scheduled no later than January 2027 at the mid-year budget. The Board would like more training and opportunities to discuss.

10. ITEMS FOR NEXT OR FUTURE AGENDA

11. VERBAL REPORTS – Including Reports on Courses/Conferences/Meetings.

- General Manager Report – no report.
- Directors' Reports – JoMarie McKenzie reported on her attendance at the

SBCSDA Dinner in April and the topic of Ai in Special Districts.

12. ADJOURNMENT – 1:41 p.m.

In accordance with the requirements of California Government Code Section 54954.2, this agenda has been posted in the main lobby of the Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency, 622 S. Jemez Trail, Yucca Valley, CA not less than 72 hours if prior to a Regular meeting, date and time above; or in accordance with California Government Code Section 54956 this agenda has been posted not less than 24 hours if prior to a Special meeting, date and time above. As a general rule, agenda reports or other written documentation have been prepared or organized with respect to each item of business listed on the agenda. Copies of these materials and other disclosable public records in connection with an open session agenda item, are also on file with and available for inspection at the Office of the Agency Secretary, 622 S. Jemez Trail, Yucca Valley, California, during regular business hours, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. If such writings are distributed to members of the Board of Directors on the day of a Board meeting, the writings will be available at the entrance to the Board of Directors meeting room at the Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency.

Internet: Once uploaded, agenda materials can also be viewed at www.bdvwa.org

Public Comments: You may wish to submit your comments in writing to assure that you are able to express yourself adequately. Per Government Code Section 54954.2, any person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, in order to participate in the meeting, should contact the Board's Secretary at 760-364-2315 during Agency business hours.

Calendar Reminder - Upcoming Director Meetings

- Regular Board Meeting – second Tuesday every month at 6 p.m.
- Mojave Water Agency Board of Directors Meeting – second and fourth Thursday every month (regular schedule)
- Landers Homestead Valley Community Association Meeting – second Monday at 5 p.m. every month
- ASBCSD Monthly Dinner Meeting – third Monday (regular schedule)

Approved by:


Megan Close-Dees, Secretary of the Board



