Southeast Water Coalition
A joint powers authority to protect the Central Groundwater Basin

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026
12:00 NOON

The Regular Meeting of the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC) Joint Powers Authority Administrative Entity (AE) was held on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650. The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by Norwalk Staff member, Fabian Lucarelli. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

Ms. Madeline Gallagher took attendance, and the following AE members were present:

ITEM 1 - ROLL CALL

Chris Kuebert	City of Cerritos
Dan Mueller	City of Downey
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood
Michelle Tse	City of Paramount
Joanna Moreno	City of Vernon
Ray Cordero	City of Whittier

STAFF AND GUESTS ON SIGN-IN SHEET:

Natalie Kalbakian	Richards Watson & Gershon
Andrew Lujan	City of Whittier
Fabian Lucarelli	City of Norwalk (Staff)
Marco Ramirez	City of Norwalk (Staff)
Patricia Santana	City of Norwalk (Staff)
Madeline Gallagher	SEWC Staff
Olivia Turner	SEWC Staff

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ITEM 3 - CONSENT CALENDAR

A motion to approve the Consent Calendar was made by Mr. Mueller and seconded by Mr. Kuebert. The motion passed by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Kuebert, Mueller, Nguyen, Tse, Cordero.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**Moreno.**

ITEM 4 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING DRAFT SEWC BUDGET

Mr. Lucarelli introduced the draft SEWC Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget and reviewed the anticipated ending fund balance, expenditures, and key line items, including the standalone website and financial services. He noted that anticipated member dues would remain at $6,500 and that no substantive changes were proposed. Mr. Lucarelli also drew attention to the Board compensation line and requested feedback from AE members.

During this discussion, Mr. Nguyen raised a question regarding the carryover balance, noting an apparent discrepancy of approximately $70,000 between the anticipated carryover and the amount reflected in the proposed budget. Members discussed that because expenditures had not increased, the carryover balance should remain consistent or leave a larger balance remaining, and Staff agreed to confirm the figure. Members requested three edits to the draft budget: (1) confirm the budgeted amount for meals; (2) add an asterisk to the board meeting compensation line clarifying that compensation is budgeted for one voting member per city per meeting; and (3) confirm the carryover balance.

Mr. Cordero moved to approve the following recommendation:

a. Make recommended edits to the draft SEWC FY 2026-27 Budget and take final version to the June Board Meeting for adoption.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Moreno and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Kuebert, Mueller, Nguyen, Tse, Moreno, Cordero.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 5 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY (AE) MEETING DATE AND TIME

Mr. Lucarelli provided context regarding the need to update the AE meeting date and time and presented the results of the member survey. He noted that the change would be implemented via resolution and would help address occasional scheduling conflicts from the lead agency. The overall consensus among members was to approve the results of the poll.

Following general discussion, Ms. Moreno moved to approve the following recommendation:

a. Confirm the new AE Meeting date and time and take it to the June Board Meeting for formal approval.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Tse and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Kuebert, Mueller, Nguyen, Tse, Moreno, Cordero.**
NOES: **None.**
ABSTAIN: **None.**

ITEM 6 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING UPDATES TO LEAD AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Mr. Lucarelli provided context regarding the proposal to procure a standalone SEWC website. Staff obtained two quotes from recommended vendors and discussed both options. AE Members asked Staff to confirm the contract commitment terms, including whether the agreement could be terminated after one year and whether an escalator clause would apply. Staff confirmed that historic agendas would be preserved on the new website. AE Members agreed that the website should be presented as a standalone item at the Board meeting, along with the two quotes and allow the Board to decide whether to move forward.

Mr. Mueller moved to approve the following recommendation:

a. Proceed with procuring a standalone SEWC website and bring the item, along with the vendor quotes, to the Board for consideration and direction.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Nguyen and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Kuebert, Mueller, Nguyen, Tse, Moreno, Cordero.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

Members then discussed the proposals regarding paid staff time and support for the management of accounting, finances, and audit coordination. The City of Norwalk Staff noted that approximately 478 hours had been devoted to SEWC over the last two years, or approximately 528 hours including finance-related work, representing an estimated hourly cost of $63,420, which impacts the overall budget.

Some AE members expressed hesitation about paying additional compensation for staff time, noting that the lead agency role has traditionally been performed without such compensation. Others were not opposed, as long as members were informed based on the estimated hours and time allocated to serving as Chair.

As an alternative, AE members discussed whether the lead agency could be exempt from paying membership dues, or receive a discount, in lieu of additional compensation. AE Members discussed that if the lead agency did not pay dues, the remaining member cities might need to increase their contributions, and agreed this option should be placed before the budget discussion and brought back to a future meeting. It was noted that this was not a permanent decision, but rather, a recommendation to the Board.

Mr. Mueller moved to approve the following recommendation:

a. Bring to the Board the option of providing support for the management of accounting, finances, and audit coordination in lieu of, or in addition to, adjusting lead agency membership dues.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Nguyen and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Kuebert, Mueller, Nguyen, Tse, Moreno, Cordero.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **None.**

ITEM 7 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION FORMAL POLICIES

Mr. Lucarelli provided context regarding the draft formal policies, specifically a Reserve Policy and a Lead Agency Transition Policy. Members discussed that it would be preferable to bring these policies back to a later AE meeting for further review, and that the reserve level should be based on what is a healthy and

appropriate amount for the agency, with a clear rationale for the figures selected, including what is the appropriate reserve target.

For the Transition Policy, members discussed including the history of the transition process and the reasons for the approach taken, noting that the framework was approved shortly before the City of Commerce served as lead agency. However, it was also discussed that this document is more of a helpful guide, rather than a formal policy.

AE Members agreed to have the Reserve Policy addressed at a later meeting so they could be incorporated into the budget within the coming year.

After general discussion, members directed Staff to continue developing the draft formal policies, such as a Reserve Policy and/or a Lead Agency Transition Policy.

ITEM 8 – GENERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Lucarelli turned the discussion over to Ms. Natalie Kalbakian of Richards Watson & Gershon, who provided a brief overview of two bills. She noted that SB 454, which would have established PFAS mitigation requirements, was vetoed by the Governor, and that the veto was sustained in May 2026 due to insufficient votes. A similar bill amending a different part of the code, SB 1313, a remediation bill, has been stalled; since March, the bill was amended, referred, and placed in a suspense file, which typically occurs when there are budget concerns. As of May 14, 2026, the bill remained stalled but may be taken up in the future.

Ms. Kalbakian also provided an update on the proposed EPA PFAS rescission rule. The EPA announced proposed rules that would provide an extension to 2031 for compliance with enforceable levels under the National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, for which member agencies may need to apply. The proposed rules would also rescind previously adopted regulations for certain PFAS constituents, potentially excluding PFOA and PFOS, and address the procedures under which those regulations were adopted. Public comments on the proposed rules will be accepted, with a meeting scheduled for July 7, 2026.

ITEM 9 – DISCUSSION REGARDING ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES (ACWA) UPDATES

Staff noted that ACWA emails are being confirmed and that additional updates would follow.

ITEM 10 – JUNE 4, 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA

Mr. Lucarelli opened up a discussion to confirm which items should be on the next Board Agenda, and the following items were discussed:

1. 26/27 Budget

2. WRD Fiscal Year 26/27 Budget Update
3. Website Item
4. Reduced/No Dues for Lead Agency
5. New AE Meeting Date and Time
6. General Legislative Update
7. ACWA Update

ITEM 11 – WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ITEM 12 - ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

ITEM 13 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity Meeting will be held on July 15, 2026 at 12:30 p.m. at the Cerritos Sheriff Station, EOC Conference Room, 18135 Bloomfield Avenue, Cerritos, California 90703.

Chair

7/15/26
Date