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

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026
12:30 P.M.

The Regular Meeting of the Southeast Water Coalition (SEWC) Joint Powers Authority Administrative Entity (AE) was held on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at the City of Cerritos - Cerritos Sheriff Station, EOC Conference Room, 18135 Bloomfield Avenue, Cerritos, CA, 90703. The meeting was called to order at 12:31 p.m. by Jose Arroyo of the City of Cerritos, sitting in for AE Chair Chris Kuebert. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

Ms. Olivia Turner took attendance, and the following AE members were present:

ITEM 1 - ROLL CALL

Jose Arroyo	City of Cerritos
Andrew Caraveo	City of Commerce
Dan Mueller	City of Downey
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood
Jacque Koontz	City of Norwalk
Michelle Tse	City of Paramount
Sarina Morales-Choate	City of Santa Fe Springs
Chris Castillo	City of South Gate
Joanna Moreno	City of Vernon
Jim Homet	City of Whittier

STAFF AND GUESTS ON SIGN-IN SHEET:

Natalie Kalbakian	Richards Watson & Gershon
Kristin Aguila	City of Cerritos (Staff)
Amandeep Mann	City of Cerritos (Staff)
Jared Lee	City of Cerritos (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. Nguyen and seconded by Ms. Koontz. The motion passed by the following voice vote:

AYES: **Arroyo, Mueller, Nguyen, Koontz, Tse, Castillo, Moreno, Homet.**

NOES: **None.**

ABSTAIN: **Caraveo, Morales-Choate.**

ITEM 4 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SEWC FY 2024-25 AUDIT UPDATE

Mr. Arroyo introduced the item and turned the presentation over to Ms. Jacque Koontz, who provided a recap of the procurement of professional audit services. In October 2024, the City of Norwalk publicly advertised a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for professional audit services and distributed it to six audit firms recommended by SEWC AE members. SEWC received one proposal, from Price Paige & Company, which was approved by the SEWC Board in December 2024. The cost to complete the FY 2023-24 financial audit was $8,280. Because that agreement covered only a single fiscal year, the City of Norwalk requested a proposal from Price Paige & Company to perform the following year's audit at the same cost, which the Board approved. At that time, Price Paige & Company was asked to include an optional additional year of services to ease the transition to the incoming Lead Agency.

Ms. Koontz reviewed the draft FY 2024-25 audit report, which was performed in accordance with the auditing standards accepted in the United States and covers cash flows from Fiscal Year 2024 through June 30, 2025. She noted that the audit evaluated accounting estimates and internal measures to identify any cash-flow issues, and that SEWC's cash is maintained in an investment pool managed by the City of Norwalk. She reviewed balances and confirmed that the draft audit concluded that there were (1) no deficiencies identified with internal financial control measures, and (2) no instances of noncompliance or other matters required to be reported.

Mr. Nguyen asked about the accounts payable and liabilities reflected in the report and how the results compared to the prior year. Ms. Koontz noted that she would follow up with the auditors regarding the specific liabilities, and that there was not a significant difference from the prior fiscal year. It was also noted that

the effect of the lead agency no longer paying membership dues would be reflected in the next fiscal year's audit. Following discussion, there was consensus to forward the audit to the Board of Directors to receive and file at the August 6, 2026 Board Meeting.

ITEM 5 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SUPPORT LETTERS FOR GRANT FUNDING

Mr. Arroyo turned the item over to Ms. Jacque Koontz, who provided context regarding a request from the City of Norwalk for SEWC support of grant funding applications. She explained that Norwalk is one of the pumpers in the Central Basin experiencing groundwater contamination affecting its wells, most notably Well No. 10, which has experienced benzene concentrations exceeding California safe drinking water standards and was taken out of service. The City has been providing imported water at significant cost to its enterprise fund until treatment facilities can be constructed, and has already covered planning, CEQA, and design costs. The remaining construction cost is approximately $9 million. Norwalk has secured $2 million from the Water Replenishment District's State Water Program and is seeking grant funding for the remaining amount, including applications to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Drought Response Program and state revolving funds.

Ms. Koontz noted that the City of Norwalk wished to utilize the newly adopted board letter policy for grant support letters, and that the policy and draft letters were attached for review. She added that Norwalk is also pursuing grant funding for its other two wells (Well Nos. 4 and 5) and requested that the letters be duplicated to support those applications.

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

a. Review the draft funding application support letters and consider Administrative Entity approval to submit the letters on behalf of the Southeast Water Coalition.

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

AYES:	**Arroyo, Caraveo, Mueller, Nguyen, Koontz, Tse, Morales-Choate, Castillo, Moreno, Homet.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 6 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING SEWC WEBSITE UPDATE

Ms. Gallagher provided an update on the SEWC website, reviewing the current draft and the planned content. Staff will use the website to host meeting agendas, agenda packets, and minutes, including materials from at least the past two years, and the developers performed the initial editing so that the AE meeting agenda could be posted on time.

During discussion, members suggested several additions, including a calendar of upcoming and past meetings; an additional documents tab for items such as the JPA agreement, the Strategic Plan, and a member-benefits one-pager for interested cities, a tab listing member and AE representatives, updated photographs, refreshed and cohesive text, and the addition of city logos next to the city names. Members agreed that the website was a good start.

ITEM 7 – GENERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Arroyo turned the discussion over to Ms. Natalie Kalbakian of Richards Watson & Gershon, who provided a brief overview of pending state bills and federal regulations relevant to the coalition. She reported that AB 35, the Proposition 4 Implementation Acceleration Act, which would exempt bonded programs from certain requirements under specified conditions, had been amended and approved, and would take effect immediately upon being signed by the Governor. She noted that there was no progress on SB 1313, which remains stalled. She also recapped that SB 454, which would have created a PFAS mitigation fund, was vetoed by the Governor and the veto was sustained, and the measure was subsequently reintroduced as SB 1313.

Ms. Kalbakian also reviewed AB 1603, which addresses PFAS-based pesticides and their application to groundwater, drinking water, and soil. The bill would classify pesticides registered for agricultural use with PFAS ingredients as PFAS restricted materials and would prohibit the Department of Pesticide Regulation from registering such pesticides unless an application was submitted before January 1, 2027. The bill was amended and recommended for approval by committee in June 2026.

She also noted that with respect to the EPA's proposed PFAS rule announced May 18, 2026, eligible water systems seeking a compliance extension to 2031 under the National Primary Drinking Water Regulation must submit specified information to the EPA. The proposed rule would also rescind previously adopted regulations for certain PFAS constituents, potentially excluding PFOA and PFOS. The EPA held a virtual public hearing on July 7, 2026 and will accept public comments through July 20, 2026. There were no further questions.

ITEM 8 – DISCUSSION REGARDING ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES (ACWA) UPDATES

Ms. Koontz reported that ACWA has established two accounts for each SEWC agency and that the Coalition now has access to ACWA's resources and programs. Members were asked to review the account spreadsheet and confirm that it is up to date.

Ms. Koontz also announced an "ACWA 101" virtual training session, offering a behind-the-scenes look at how ACWA partners with member agencies and a comprehensive tour of ACWA's resources, including its advocacy and governance efforts. The event will be held on August 12, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., is open to all staff and Board members, and requires registration by August 10, 2026. Ms. Gallagher will send out the event invitation and the account spreadsheet.

ITEM 9 – AUGUST 6, 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA

Mr. Arroyo opened a discussion to confirm which items should be placed on the August 6, 2026 Board of Directors Agenda, and the following items were discussed:

1. SEWC FY 2024-25 Financial Audit
2. Support Letters for Grant Funding
3. Website Update
4. Reduced/No Dues for Lead Agency
5. General Legislative Update
6. ACWA Update

ITEM 10 – WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ITEM 11 – ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Koontz noted, as an addition to the website topic, that the domain southeastwatercoalition.org could also provide email addresses for the Coalition, if needed.

ITEM 12 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 16, 2026 at 12:30 p.m. at the Cerritos Sheriff Station, EOC Conference Room, 18135 Bloomfield Avenue, Cerritos, California 90703.

Chair

9/16/26
Date