

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

THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2025
12:00 NOON

The Regular Meeting of the Southeast Water Coalition Joint Powers Authority Administrative Entity was held on Thursday, July 17, 2025 at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650. The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m. by Norwalk Staff member, Jacque Koontz. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

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

ITEM 1 - ROLL CALL

Andrew Caraveo	City of Commerce
Dan Mueller	City of Downey
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood
Michelle Tse	City of Paramount
Sarina Morales-Choate	City of Santa Fe Springs
Chris Castillo	City of South Gate
Ray Cordero	City of Whittier

STAFF AND GUESTS ON SIGN-IN SHEET:

Madeline Gallagher	SEWC Staff
Nicholas Ghirelli	RWG
Jacque Koontz	City of Norwalk (Staff)
Michael Jea	City of Norwalk (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. Cordero. The motion passed by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Caraveo, Mueller, Nguyen, Tse, Castillo, Cordero.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**Morales-Choate.**

ITEM 4 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING GENERAL COUNSEL PROPOSED FEE AMENDMENT

Ms. Koontz presented the proposed fee amendment by Richards Watson & Gershon (RWG) and noted that rates had not been raised since 2006. After general discussion, there were no additional comments.

Mr. Cordero moved to approve the following:

a. Review the requested billing rate fee proposal from Richards Watson & Gershon and bring it to the Board for approval.

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

AYES:	**Caraveo, Mueller, Nguyen, Tse, Castillo, Cordero, Morales-Choate.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 5 – DISCUSSION REGARDING PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SUPPORT PROPOSAL

Ms. Koontz noted that Koa Consulting, Inc. has provided services for 2 years and the contract expires in November. She reached out to legal counsel and confirmed there is no formal SEWC policy for procurement. Ms. Koontz noted that according to the JPA Agreement, in the absence of policies, SEWC is governed by exercise of powers in the same manner as the City of Downey. Downey's procurement policy dictates that any agreement over $75,000 needs a formal bid process.

After general discussion, AE members and legal counsel determined that with no renewal options in the original contract, an extension could be considered as an amendment with an updated cost and term.

AE members requested that Koa Consulting Inc. provide updated pricing in a proposal to extend the contract through an amendment. Upon consensus, AE members noted that if the cost increase is no more than 10%, they would take action at the next AE Meeting to recommend Board approval. However, if it was more than 10%, then the AE members would like to discuss it further before going to the Board. The AE also requested that the updated term be 2 years 7 months to align with the fiscal year budget and also include an option to extend the contract for two additional years.

ITEM 6 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERSHIP OF SEWC

Ms. Koontz provided context regarding the Board's discussion of potential interest in SEWC membership. She noted that the Board asked for a member benefit sheet and map to show cities that are members of SEWC and non-member cities that are surrounding SEWC. She presented the draft map of SEWC cities and surrounding cities and opened the discussion of what should be included in the member benefits one-pager.

When reviewing the map, Mr. Castillo helped provide context on the City of Cudahy's water system. Mr. Mueller then asked about the JPA and what cities are allowed to be included, and Mr. Ghirelli noted that the JPA was started to manage groundwater contamination in the Central Basin, and that any city or agency in Los Angeles area is permitted to be a member. Mr. Cordero then suggested that the map should be layered over the Central Basin map. Mr. Mueller noted that the purpose of SEWC is related to protection from contamination, though it has evolved. He noted that Central Basin should really be the jurisdictional limits of SEWC membership.

Some benefits that were discussed by AE members as potential benefits to include in the one-pager were: the ability to use the collective voice of 11 cities serving millions of people to amplify concerns to any regional issue and updates on new legislation. Ms. Gallagher noted that she will be collecting any additional member benefits ideas via email.

After discussing both the map and member benefits one-pager, Mr. Nguyen noted that there is a chance that only the City of Lynwood is interested in joining, as they showed interest in joining previously. He asked AE members if this is something that the AE needs to be proactive about or if the map and one-pager is simply something that is kept on-hand in case of interest. It was noted that there are a lot of different agencies, so the future of SEWC shouldn't create too much overlap. The general consensus was to ask the Board during the August meeting

if they envision this being a proactive effort to onboard more cities or if these resources are to be kept on-hand or on the Lead Agency's website for future inquiries.

ITEM 7 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING POTENTIAL ACWA MEMBERSHIP

Ms. Koontz noted that the AE asked about ACWA membership, so she reached out to ask about pricing and member benefits. She noted that member benefits include discounts for events, updates on water management, alerts for breaking water news, guides for regulatory requirements and more. Ms. Koontz brought four separate handouts to share with AE group and noted that the type of membership that SEWC qualifies for is affiliate membership.

She noted that ACWA provided a cost estimate for membership, which is based off a public agency's operational cost. Based on SEWC's costs, the dues would be $840. They do have a step up to membership program, where it is 50% off the first year and 25% off the second year. She also confirmed that ACWA won't invoice for a full year until the 3rd year.

Ms. Koontz asked for feedback and Ms. Tse asked about accessibility and which cities would have access to ACWA. Ms. Koontz noted that she would need to confirm how many emails would have direct access.

Mr. Cordero noted that joining would be good experience and exposure and the other AE members were in favor of joining. AE members noted that after joining, Staff could print conferences and schedules for the year and bring to AE to see who wants to commit to each conference or event. It was noted that there may be extra costs for such events. Because the cost of membership was lower than the required amount to bring this item to the Board for approval, everyone agreed to move forward and asked Ms. Koontz to please initiate the membership process.

ITEM 8 – DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

Ms. Koontz noted that the Strategic Plan was brought up at both the latest Board and AE meetings and that the update to the Strategic Plan would also tie into the SEWC new membership. She presented the Strategic Plan, last edited in 2017 and asked for direction or edits.

AE members noted that in the past, they had a consultant assist with putting together the Strategic Plan. Mr. Nguyen noted some inconsistencies in the JPA vs. the Strategic Plan and highlighted potential room for improvement.

The general consensus from AE members was to present the 2017 version of SEWC's Strategic Plan to the Board at the August Board Meeting and allow them

to provide direction. Ultimately, AE members wanted to understand the level of interest the Board has in updating the Strategic Plan through a virtual workshop.

ITEM 9 – AUGUST 7, 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA

Ms. Koontz opened up a discussion to confirm what items would be on the Board Agenda, and the following items were suggested:

1. General Counsel Fee Amendment
2. Membership Formal Process (Map & Fact Sheet & Process)
3. Strategic Plan
4. PFAS Update (Virtual Teams Update with Cossich Law to provide an update on the PFAS lawsuits)
5. Legislative Update – Nick to give update

Mr. Mueller also noted that Cossich Law could speak at a future AE meeting if there is any interest.

ITEM 10 – WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ITEM 11 - ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY MEMBER COMMENTS

Ray Cordero asked if anybody knows Midland Park Water Trust, but AE members were not familiar.

Ms. Koontz noted that Norwalk has not received enough responses for scheduling the MET Pure Water tour, so the SEWC chair requested to attempt to coordinate a group for Tuesday, August 12th. She noted that if members know anyone who would be available and interested, to please reach out to her or fill out the survey being sent via email. She noted that the tour would be 90 minutes.

Ms. Gallagher noted that if there are any updates to SEWC AE or Board members that are not reflected in the sign-in sheet or name plates, please let her know. She also noted that she sent an email from Grace Kast regarding GWMA Regional Grants - Groundwater Contamination Treatment to all AE members. She reminded them to take a look and reach out to Grace accordingly.

ITEM 12 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Administrative Entity Meeting will be held on September 18, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Hargitt Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk, CA 90650.

Chair

9.18.2025
Date

on behalf of Glen Kau