

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION
REGULAR MEETING OF THE POLICY BOARD
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southeast Water Coalition Joint Powers Authority was held on Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Sproul Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk CA 90650. Chair Ana Valencia called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum of members was present.

Ms. Madeline Gallagher took attendance, and the following Board of Directors members were present:

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank Aurelio Yokoyama	City of Cerritos
Kevin Lainez	City of Commerce
Hector Sosa	City of Downey
Todd Rogers	City of Lakewood
Ana Valencia	City of Norwalk
Isabel Aguayo	City of Paramount
Andrew Lara	City of Pico Rivera
Joe Angel Zamora	City of Santa Fe Springs
Maria del Pilar Avalos	City of South Gate
Melissa Ybarra	City of Vernon
Octavio Martinez	City of Whittier

STAFF AND GUESTS ON SIGN-IN SHEET:

Andrew Caraveo	City of Commerce – AE
Dan Mueller	City of Downey – AE
Derek Nguyen	City of Lakewood – AE
Albert Mendoza	AE Chair, City of Norwalk
Michelle Tse	City of Paramount – AE
James Enriquez	City of Santa Fe Springs
Chris Castillo	City of South Gate – AE
Joanna Moreno	City of Vernon – AE

Ray Cordero	City of Whittier – AE
Jacque Koontz	City of Norwalk Staff
Michael Jea	City of Norwalk Staff
Madeline Gallagher	SEWC Staff
Nicholas Ghirelli	Richards Watson & Gershon
Paul Liu	Water Replenishment District (WRD)
Robles DeWitt	Water Replenishment District (WRD)
Lorraine Avila Moore	City of Lynwood Mayor Pro Tem

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Director Valencia introduced two guests present at the meeting, Paul Liu, Assistant General Manager at WRD, and Lorraine Avila Moore, Mayor Pro Tem City of Lynwood.

Paul Liu, Assistant General Manager WRD, invited SEWC members to tour their facilities. Specifically, he announced that if anyone hasn't seen their flagship treatment facility, WRD is offering a visit with lunch included.

ITEM 3 - CONSENT CALENDAR

Director Rogers moved to approve the consent calendar.

The motion was seconded by Director Avalos and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Yokoyama, Lainez, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Lara, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

Director Sosa entered the meeting at 7:08 pm.

ITEM 4 - DISCUSSION/ACTION REGARDING POTENTIAL NEW AND CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION

Mr. Mendoza reported that the consensus from the AE meeting was to send a letter to all SEWC members, emphasizing the importance of attending SEWC meetings. He noted that the AE drafted a letter, which is included in the agenda

packet, and requested direction of who the letter should be addressed to at each city.

Director Yokoyama, with general consensus from the Board, suggested that the letter be addressed to the City Council, City Manager, and Public Works Director from each member city.

Director Aguayo suggested that it may be a good time to revisit SEWC's bylaws and Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Agreement. Mr. Ghirelli noted that the JPA Agreement was last amended in 2005. Director Lara asked if membership was open to pumpers to which Mr. Ghirelli noted that the JPA Agreement states that additional members must be municipal corporations or public districts. Director Martinez then commented that SEWC members should prioritize attendance at meetings.

Director Lainez moved to approve the following:

a) Approve the letter and authorize Norwalk staff to send the letter to the City Council members, City Managers, and Public Works Directors of all current Southeast Water Coalition members.

The motion was seconded by Director Zamora and was approved by the following voice vote:

AYES:	**Yokoyama, Lainez, Sosa, Rogers, Valencia, Aguayo, Lara, Zamora, Avalos, Ybarra, Martinez.**
NOES:	**None.**
ABSTAIN:	**None.**

ITEM 5 - INFORMATIONAL UPDATE REGARDING THE WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT'S REQUEST TO JOIN THE SOUTHEAST WATER COALITION

Mr. Mendoza stated that WRD submitted an official written request to join SEWC signed by the General Manager. At the January AE Meeting, members discussed the letter from WRD to make a recommendation for the Board's consideration. There was a consensus among the AE group that WRD's application should be discussed further. To help provide clarity and to develop a recommendation to the Board, a subcommittee was formed.

After the subcommittee completes its evaluation, it will provide an update to the AE at their March meeting followed by a recommendation from the AE to the Board in April.

Director Valencia asked about the process for admitting new members, and Mr. Ghirelli noted that the decision on whether or not to admit a member is completely up to the Board. Director Valencia then gave the microphone to WRD to share their perspective and Director DeWitt from WRD noted that WRD would like to rejoin as a member and one primary reason why is because when going after federal and state grants, it would be positive to be together as a collective entity.

There was consensus to wait to hear from the subcommittee and this item was received and filed.

ITEM 6 – BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS

Director Yokoyama noted that at the City of Cerritos January 26th City Council Meeting, Prop 218 water and sewer rate adjustments were approved. He stated he would be happy to share his experience with fellow Board Members.

ITEM 7 – ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY CHAIR/LEAD AGENCY COMMENTS

Mr. Mendoza provided an update on SEWC's application for ACWA membership. He noted that SEWC officially is now a member and that he and Alvin Papa introduced themselves during the last ACWA meeting.

He also reported that Norwalk staff mailed out the new membership packets to five cities as requested by the Board. To date, the City of Lynwood responded by asking for more information to which the fact sheet and member benefits were sent. He concluded by stating that he will continue to update the Board on this matter as responses are received.

ITEM 8 - ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

The next regular Southeast Water Coalition Board Meeting will be on April 2, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex, Sproul Room, 13000 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk CA 90650.

Ana Valencia

Ana Valencia, Chair

4/2/26

Date