

Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency

Regular Board Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
121 Palomino Drive, Big Bear City, CA 92314

1. Call to Order

A Regular Meeting of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency was called to order by Chair Miller at 5:00 p.m. on February 26, 2025 at 121 Palomino Drive, Big Bear City, California.

Board Members Present: Jim Miller, Chair; Rick Herrick, Vice-Chair; John Russo, Director; Kendi Segovia, Director; and Larry Walsh, Director

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Members Present: David Lawrence, General Manager; Christine Bennett, Finance Manager; Bridgette Burton, Administrative Services Manager/Board Secretary; Sonja Kawa, Human Resources Coordinator/Accounting Technician; and John Shimmin, Plant Manager

Others: Jared Cheek, General Manager, Big Bear Municipal Water District; Glenn Jacklin, General Manager, Big Bear City Community Services District; Megan Kilmer, Associate, Best Best & Krieger, LLP; Reggie Lamson, General Manager, City of Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power; and Sean Sullivan, Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works, City of Big Bear Lake

Members of the public who signed in: Jonathan Bishop, Big Bear City; Dan Gulbranson, Big Bear Lake; D.K. Meeder, Big Bear Lake; John Osborn, Big Bear Lake; John Saunders, Big Bear City; Cory Scranton, Big Bear City; and Sandy Steers, Fawnskin

2. Pledge of Allegiance – Director Russo

3. Approval of Agenda

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Director Segovia and carried, the Governing Board approved the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

4. Public Forum

Dan Gulbranson expressed concern over the length of meeting documents and suggested that the content could be condensed and expressed frustration that attorneys are used to protect council members instead of addressing the concerns of the public.

5. Presentation and Introduction

None

6. Information/Committee Reports

a. General Manager's Report

The General Manager highlighted the Agency is working on a 3rd Amendment to the Payment and Collection Agreement, extending it through June 2031. The budget workshop is scheduled for March 4th, revisions to the Governing Board Handbook are in progress, and the evaluation team will recommend a professional services contract for auditors at the March meeting.

The Governing Board asked about the drivers license requirement being removed from specific job descriptions.

b. Replenish Big Bear Report

The General Manager explained that the Replenish Big Bear Report outlines the project's status, including expenses, regulatory updates, funding, grants, media outreach, and recent meetings. The report also highlights efforts to address misinformation through public outreach, updates to the website, and revised fact sheets to better inform the community.

c. Force Main Project Report

The General Manager reported that the Force Main Project was advertised, with Porters selected as the lowest bidder at \$693,500, significantly under the engineer's estimate, resulting in savings of approximately \$186,500.

7. Consent Calendar Approved Items

- a. Meeting Minutes from the January 20, 2025 Special Meeting and January 22, 2025 Regular Meeting**
- b. Monthly Disbursements Report for January**
- c. Investment Report Identifying Agency Investments and Reporting Interest Income for January**
- d. Brown Act Teleconferencing Policy Revisions**
- e. Second Quarter Report, Six Months Ended December 31, 2024**

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Chair Miller and carried, the Governing Board approved the consent calendar as presented.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

8. Items Removed from the Consent Calendar

None

9. Old Business

- a. Resolution No. R. 01-2025, A Resolution of the Governing Board of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Adopting Environmental Findings Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and Certifying the Replenish Big Bear Program Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH #2022110595) and to Receive and File the Replenish Big Bear Program at this Time

The General Manager stated this item, brought back from the August meeting, is to certify the Replenish Big Bear Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and does not approve the Program or the Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Plan.

Tom Sitton criticized the wasteful spending on the project, questioning its legitimacy and the need for such an expensive project in light of no water shortage in Big Bear, while arguing that it was driven by governmental control and profiteering, and predicted that fraudulent projects would eventually be stopped by the Department of Government Efficiency.

Sandy Steers sought clarification on the process, understanding that although the PEIR was approved at that time, there would be another opportunity for feedback when the final design was presented.

Judy Keller expressed disappointment with the project, vowing to attend every meeting and advocate against it, stating that it is unaffordable.

Dan Gulbranson criticized the project as another costly and inefficient California project, comparing it to failed state projects and warning it would lead to increased taxes and costs.

Gary Keller expressed concerns about the high cost and limited benefits of the project, suggesting that funds would be better spent on addressing the area's water treatment needs.

Cory Scranton raised concerns about the cost and sought clarity on the studies justifying the project's expenses.

The Governing Board clarified that approving the PEIR is moving the project to the design phase to create a blueprint and better understand costs.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Director Segovia and carried, the Governing Board adopted Resolution No. R. 01-2025 and directed staff to schedule a Replenish Big Bear Committee meeting and a Governing Board workshop to review the final design at least 30 days prior to Governing Board consideration.

Ayes: Herrick, Segovia, Miller
Noes: Russo, Walsh
Absent: None
Abstain: None

- b. Introduction and First Read of Ordinance O. 01-2025, An Ordinance of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Code Amending Section 2.04.040 of the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency Code Regarding Time Limits on Public Testimony at Governing Board Meetings

The Administrative Services Manager/Board Secretary introduced the item.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Chair Miller and carried, the Governing Board waived the full reading of the proposed Ordinance O. 01-2025 and directed staff to place it on the agenda for consideration and adoption at a public hearing on March 26, 2025.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

- c. Consideration of Pine Knot Marina Trailer Storage

The General Manager stated that Pine Knot Marina is requesting to store approximately 100 boat trailers at the bottom of Pond 1, which would minimize the visual impact, with temporary relocation of the trailers if the ponds are required for emergency overflow.

The Governing Board inquired about the timeline for removing the trailers from Pond 1, whether the City had any objections, and emphasized the importance of maintaining good neighborly relations.

Dan Gulbranson expressed confusion over the decision to move 100 trailers to another location, questioning why the City Manager was involved in the decision, and whether the trailers were simply being relocated to another unsightly area.

The Governing Board noted that temporary use permits for similar projects have been approved by the city in the past.

Vice-Chair Herrick motioned to authorize the General Manager to negotiate an agreement with Pine Knot Marina for the use of the east portion of Pond 1 at the end of Garstin Drive (APN 2328-011-01) for boat trailer storage, with the final agreement to be presented to the Governing Board for approval. The motion was seconded by Chair Miller. The motion did not pass.

Ayes: Herrick, Miller
Noes: Russo, Segovia, Walsh
Absent: None
Abstain: None

10. New Business – Discussion/Action Items

a. Fixed and Variable Rate Discussion

The Finance Manager presented the line items for the fixed and variable rates.

The Governing Board confirmed that the discussion regarding the formula would occur annually before the budget process and acknowledged that any changes to the formula would affect billing for the Member Agencies. The Governing Board directed staff to present this list annually before the budget workshop.

b. Appropriate \$157,300 to the Ditch 1 Rotor 2 Shaft Replacement Project from the Contingency Fund and Find the Project Exempt from Environmental Review under the California Environmental Quality Act Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities)

The General Manager explained that the oxidation ditch rotor failed in January and requested an appropriation of \$157,300 for replacement parts and installation.

Upon motion by Vice-Chair Herrick, seconded by Director Segovia and carried, the Governing Board appropriated \$157,300 to the Ditch 1 Rotor 2 Shaft Replacement Project from the Contingency Fund and Found the Project Exempt from Environmental Review under the California Environmental Quality Act Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities).

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

c. Reallocate \$135,000 from the Capital Budget for the RAS Header Replacement Project Engineering

The General Manager outlined the project and requested an appropriation of \$135,000 for the engineering specifications required to bid on the installation, which is anticipated to be constructed in next year's budget.

Upon motion by Director Segovia, seconded by Director Russo and carried, the Governing Board reallocated \$135,000 from the Capital Budget for the RAS Header Replacement Project Engineering.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller

Noes: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

d. Governing Board Reorganization

The Governing Board discussed the past practice of Member Agency rotation for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

Upon motion by Director Russo, seconded by Vice-Chair Herrick and carried, the Governing Board appointed Director Segovia to the position of Chair.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Upon motion by Director Segovia, seconded by Chair Miller and carried, the Governing Board appointed Director Walsh to the position of Vice-Chair.

Ayes: Herrick, Russo, Segovia, Walsh, Miller
Noes: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

11. Comments and Announcements

a. General Manager Comments

None


b. Governing Board Comments

The Governing Board congratulated the new Chair and Vice-Chair and requested staff to research the Agency forming its own community services district and present this information at the March or April meeting.

12. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Governing Board, Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Attest:



Bridgette Burton, Secretary to the Governing Board
Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency