

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE CULTURE COMMITTEE

January 13, 2026

Chair McCoy called the meeting to order at 8:31 am

Members present: Directors Cordero, Dennstedt, Faessel (teleconference posted location), Fong-Sakai, Gray (teleconference posted location), McCoy, McMillan (teleconference posted location), Phan (entered after roll call, teleconference posted location), Seckel, and Ramos (entered after roll call, teleconference posted location)

Members absent: None

Other Board Members present: Directors Ackerman, Armstrong, Bryant, Erdman, Fellow, Kurtz, Miller, Ortega, Randall, and Shepherd Romey

Committee Staff present: Aguirre, Deshmukh, Hudson, Kasaine, Redin, Thomas, Salinas, and Wisdom

1. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

2. COMMITTEE ACTION (ONLY)

A. Subject: Approval of the Minutes of the Community and Workplace Culture Committee for November 17, 2025.

3. COMMITTEE ITEMS (FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

Director Seckel made a motion, seconded by Director Dennstedt, to approve the consent calendar for item 2A.

The vote was:

Ayes: Directors Cordero, Dennstedt, Faessel, Fong-Sakai, Gray, McCoy, McMillan, and Seckel

Noes: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: Directors Phan, and Ramos

The motion for item 2A passed by a vote of 8 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstentions, and 2 absent.

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS

4. COMMITTEE ITEMS (ACTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

8-3 Approve a limited waiver of the Brown Act closed session privilege regarding the closed session meeting of the Organization, Personnel, and Effectiveness Committee on October 14, 2025, for the limited purpose of conducting an attorney-client privileged investigation overseen by the Ethics Office, and authorize Metropolitan staff and directors present during the October 14, 2025 closed session Committee meeting to disclose information from the closed session to the assigned investigator pursuant to the limited waiver; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Presented by: Abel Salinas, Ethics Officer
Betty Kuo Brinton, Senior Deputy General Counsel

Motion: Approve a limited waiver of the Brown Act closed session privilege regarding the closed session meeting of the Organization, Personnel, and Effectiveness Committee on October 14, 2025, for the limited purpose of conducting an attorney-client privileged investigation overseen by the Ethics Office, and authorize Metropolitan staff and directors present during the October 14, 2025 closed session Committee meeting to disclose information from the closed session to the assigned investigator pursuant to the limited waiver.

Director Ramos entered the meeting.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Seckel
2. Cordero
3. Gray
4. Shepherd Romey
5. Fong-Sakai

Staff responded to the Director's question and comments.

After completion of the presentation, Director Cordero made a motion, seconded by Director McMillan, to approve item 8-3.

The vote was:

Ayes: Directors Cordero, Gray, McCoy, McMillan, and Ramos

Noes: Seckel

Abstentions: Directors Dennstedt, Faessel, and Fong-Sakai

Absent: Director Phan

The motion for Item 8-3 passed by a vote of 5 ayes, 1 noes, 3 abstentions, and 1 absent.

5. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

6. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Subject: Ethics Education – Financial Disclosure Requirements

Presented by: Hiroshi Ishikawa, Principal Administrative Analyst

Mr. Ishikawa presented a brief review of Directors' Financial Disclosure Requirements.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Seckel
2. Dennstedt
3. Ortega
4. Miller

Staff responded to the Director's question and comments.

b. Subject: Ethics Office Quarterly Report

Presented by: Dominic Berbeo, Senior Deputy Ethics Officer

Mr. Berbeo presented a brief informational update of the Ethics core program statistics for the period of October 2025 – December 2025.

Director Phan entered the meeting.

c. Subject: 2025 Non-Disclosure Program Results

Presented by: Cinthia Lupian, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager

Brenda Martinez, Unit Manager, DEI Workforce Development

The presentation reviewed Metropolitan's Non-Discrimination and Affirmative Action Programs, including legal requirements, workforce analysis, and current compliance status. Ms. Lupian explained the difference between representation and underutilization, emphasizing that underutilization is a statistical measure and does not indicate discrimination or the use of quotas or preferences. Workforce data as of June 30, 2025, was reviewed by EEO job categories and establishment, with some areas identified for underutilization of women and certain minority groups. The current hiring oversight and recruitment process was discussed, including HR and compliance review of recruitment, interviews, and selection practices. Ms. Martinez also highlighted expanded outreach efforts, use of automated communication tools, and partnerships with community organizations and educational institutions to support diverse and qualified applicant pools.

The following Director provided comments or asked questions:

1. Seckel
2. Randall

Staff responded to the Director's question and comments.

Director McMillan left the meeting.

d. Subject: Equal Employment Opportunity Statistical Report

Presented by: Marisol Arzate

The Deputy Chief EEO Officer provided a quarterly overview of EEO complaint activity for October–December 2025. Complaint levels remained consistent with prior quarters and previous years. The most common complaint bases included disability, race, gender, and retaliation, with some matters referred to other departments when outside EEO jurisdiction. Ms. Arzate reported continued compliance with established timelines for complaint processing and case closures. Overall, the EEO program remains stable and responsive.

The following Director provided comments or asked questions:

1. Seckel
2. Kurtz
3. Faessel
4. Dennstedt

Staff responded to the Director’s question and comments.

7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

a. Subject: Ethics Officer's report on monthly activities

Presented by: Abel Salinas, Ethics Officer

Ethics Officer’s report is available online.

b. Subject: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activities

Item deferred to February

c. Subject: Equal Employment Opportunity activities

Presented by: Jonaura Wisdom, Chief EEO Officer

EEO activities report is available online.

8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

None

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 am

Tana McCoy
Chair