

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

COMMUNITY AND WORKPLACE CULTURE COMMITTEE

August 18, 2025

Chair McCoy called the meeting to order at 1:32 pm.

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

Members absent: Directors Cordero, Gray, Luna, and Phan

Other Board Members present: Directors Ackerman, Alvarez, Erdman, Jay, Miller, Ortega, and Shepherd Romey

Committee Staff present: Aguirre, Beatty, Kasaine, Rubin, Salinas, Thomas, Upadhyay, and Wisdom

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

None

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS — ACTION

2. CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS – ACTION

- A. Subject: Approval of the Minutes of the Special Community and Workplace Culture Committee for July 7, 2025.

3. COMMITTEE ITEMS (FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

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

The vote was:

Ayes: Directors Faessel, McCoy, McMillan, and Seckel

Noes: None

Abstentions: Directors Fong-Sakai, and Ramos

Absent: Directors Cordero, Dennstedt, Gray, Luna, and Phan

The motion for item 2A passed by a vote of 4 ayes, 0 noes, 2 abstentions, and 5 absent.

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS

4. COMMITTEE ITEMS (ACTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

5. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

6. COMMITTEE ITEMS

a. Subject: Ethics Education – Misuse of Authority

Presented by: Hiroshi Ishikawa, Principal Administrative Analyst

Mr. Ishikawa provided an overview of Metropolitan’s “Misuse of Position or Authority” rule.

b. Subject: Fiscal Year 2024/25 Ethics Office Complaint Data

Presented by: Dominic Berbeo, Assistant Ethics Officer

Mr. Berbeo provided additional detail on the Ethics Office FY 2024/25 Annual Report.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Faessel
2. Dennstedt
3. Ortega

Staff responded to the Directors’ questions and comments.

- c. Subject: Civil and Inclusive Workplace Training Update
 Presented by: Liji Thomas,

Ms. Liji Thomas reported on the ongoing rollout of Civil and Inclusive Workplace Training, highlighting steady progress, strong participation, and positive feedback from attendees. The sessions continue to reflect high levels of engagement and overall effectiveness.

- d. Subject: Quarterly Business Outreach Update
 Presented by: John Arena, Business Outreach Section Manager

Mr. John Arena delivered a comprehensive update on Business Outreach activities, highlighting key milestones achieved over the past quarter. His presentation covered the various contracting types utilized by the district, along with an overview of the Contract Compliance Accountability program designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and effective monitoring of participation. He also shared the team's achievements to date, including progress on expanding opportunities for small businesses, and reported on current performance metrics that demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of ongoing outreach efforts.

- e. Subject: Quarterly Workforce Development Update
 Presented by: Brenda Martinez, Unit Manager DEI Workforce Development

Ms. Brenda Martinez provided an update on Metropolitan's workforce development efforts, highlighting the success of the inaugural Workforce Development Summit, which brought together member agencies, educators, and community partners to address sector challenges. Key initiatives include expanding school and community partnerships, engaging Native American and desert region communities, and launching an innovative mobile app to connect individuals with job opportunities and resources. Moving forward, Metropolitan will continue quarterly meetings, expand mentorship, and outreach programs, and strengthen strategies to fill critical positions.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Seckle
2. Ortega

Staff responded to the Directors' questions and comments.

7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

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

Presented by: Abel Salinas, Ethics Officer

Mr. Salinas presented an update on the Ethics Office's recent activities. The office did not enter into any new legal or professional services contracts in July. Mr. Salinas also reported one open investigation. The investigation, concerning alleged misuse of authority, was initiated in September and is expected to be completed by the end of the month. In the month of July, the Ethics Office received 3 new complaints.

b. Subject: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activities

Presented by: Liji Thomas, Diversity Equity & Inclusion Officer

Ms. Thomas reported there was nothing further to add to the written report.

c. Subject: Equal Employment Opportunity Activities

Presented by: Jonaure Wisdom, Equal Employment Opportunity Officer

Ms. Wisdom presented the follow-up information regarding complaints previously requested by Director Ramos during the Community Workplace Culture Committee meeting on July 7, 2025. She also reminded Board members to keep an eye out for upcoming emails regarding their expired or upcoming sexual harassment training.

The following Director provided comments or asked questions:

1. Ortega

8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

Ethics Office to bring back information regarding the number of complaints compared with other entities in our region.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:46 pm

Tana McCoy
Chair