

County of Monterey

Schilling Government Center
1441 Schilling Place
Salinas, CA 93901



Meeting Agenda - Final

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

10:00 AM

**Saffron Conference Room
1441 Schilling Place, Salinas, CA 93901**

Water Resources Agency Planning Committee

For information on The Ralph M. Brown Act: Open Meetings please click on the link below:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?division=2.&chapter=9.&part=1.&lawCode=GOV&title=5

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Ken Ekelund, Chair

Deidre Sullivan, Vice Chair

Matt Simis

Mark Gonzalez

How to participate in this meeting: In-Person at the address listed above.

Via Zoom: Members of the public may participate in this meeting virtually via computer or smart device. To Join the Zoom Meeting, copy and paste the link into your browser: <https://montereycty.zoom.us/j/92329693521?pwd=vi52WPz8baA3EL2FbIp05wM0awv5fv.1>

Meeting ID: 923 2969 3521 Password: 901221

To Participate via phone, you can call the number below and enter the webinar ID number and password when prompted:

Phone Number: (669) 219 2599 Meeting ID: 923 2969 3521 Password:

901221

Public Comments: The following options are available to any member of the public participating virtually or in person who wishes to make any comments to the Water Resources Advisory Committee.

Before the Meeting via Email: Written comments can be emailed by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the Committee meeting, to WRAPubliccomment@countyofmonterey.gov. Please indicate the Committee name, meeting date and agenda number in the subject. Comments received by the deadline will be distributed to the Committee and placed in the record.

During the Meeting via Oral Comments: When the Chair calls for public comment, attendees can queue to speak by raising their hand in person. On the Zoom application, click the "Raise Hand" button. On the phone, or press *9 on the phone. The Secretary to the Board Committee will call speaker names and unmute speaker mics. You will have 3 minutes to provide your comments.

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The Chair and/or Secretary may set reasonable rules as needed to conduct the meeting in an orderly manner

Cómo participar en esta reunión: En persona: En la dirección indicada anteriormente.

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Comentarios del público: Las siguientes opciones están disponibles para cualquier miembro del público que participe de forma virtual o en persona y desee hacer comentarios ante el Comité Asesor de Recursos Hídricos.

Antes de la reunión por correo electrónico: Los comentarios escritos pueden enviarse por correo electrónico hasta las 5:00

p. m. del martes previo a la reunión del Comité a: WRAPubliccomment@countyofmonterey.gov

Por favor, indique el nombre del Comité, la fecha de la reunión y el número del punto de la agenda en el asunto del correo electrónico. Los comentarios recibidos antes de la fecha límite serán distribuidos al Comité y archivados como parte del registro oficial.

Durante la reunión mediante comentarios orales: Cuando el Presidente solicite comentarios del público, los asistentes pueden hacer fila para hablar levantando la mano en persona. En la aplicación de Zoom, haga clic en el botón “Levantar la mano”. Por teléfono, presione *9.

El/la Secretario/a del Comité llamará a los oradores por nombre y activará sus micrófonos. Cada persona tendrá 3 minutos para presentar sus comentarios. Tenga en cuenta que el tiempo permitido para quienes ya hayan presentado comentarios por escrito puede ser reducido.

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La solicitud debe realizarse a más tardar al mediodía del martes previo a la reunión del Comité, para permitir que la Agencia tenga tiempo de atender la solicitud.

El Presidente y/o el Secretario podrán establecer reglas razonables según sea necesario para conducir la reunión de manera ordenada.

Call to Order

Roll Call

Public Comment

Committee Member Comments

Consent Calendar

1. Approved the Action Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on April 1, 2026.

Attachments: [Draft Meeting Minutes April 1, 2026](#)

Staff Reports

2. Overview of the Outreach and Development of the 2026 Updated Strategic Plan. (Staff: Shaunna Murray)

Attachments: [Strategic Plan Update May 2026](#)

3. Receive an update on staff’s participation in the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency’s Advisory Committee. (Staff: Shaunna Murray)

Attachments: [Board Report](#)

4. Receive an update on the new Grazing Lease Cycle for November 2026. (Staff: Jessell Fenley)

Attachments: [Board Report](#)

Scheduled Items

5. Annual General Manager Performance Evaluation Process. (Staff: Ara Azhderian)

Attachments: [Annual General Manager Performance Evaluation Process](#)

Calendar

6. Set the next meeting date and discuss future agenda items.
Next scheduled meeting is set for June 3, 2026.

Adjournment



County of Monterey

Item No.1

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAPL 26-027

May 06, 2026

Introduced: 4/29/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WRA Planning Item

Approved the Action Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on April 1, 2026.

County of Monterey

*Schilling Government Center
1441 Schilling Place
Salinas, CA 93901*



Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

10:00 AM

Saffron Conference Room

Water Resources Agency Planning Committee

For information on The Ralph M. Brown Act: Open Meetings please click on the link below:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?division=2.&chapter=9.&part=1.&lawCode=GOV&title=5

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Ken Ekelund, Chair

Deidre Sullivan, Vice Chair

Matt Simis

Mark Gonzalez

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WRAPubliccomment@countyofmonterey.gov

La solicitud debe realizarse a más tardar al mediodía del martes previo a la reunión del Comité, para permitir que la Agencia tenga tiempo de atender la solicitud.

El Presidente y/o el Secretario podrán establecer reglas razonables según sea necesario para conducir la reunión de manera ordenada.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: Ken Ekelund, Matt Simis, Mark Gonzalez

Absent: Deidre Sullivan

Public Comment

None.

Committee Member Comments

None.

Consent Calendar

Upon the motion made by Matt Simis, seconded by Mark Gonzalez the committee approved the Consent Calendar.

Ayes: Ken Ekelund, Matt Simis, Mark Gonzalez

Noes: None

Absent: Deidre Sullivan

1. Approve the Action Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on March 4, 2026.

Attachments: [Draft Meeting Minutes March 4, 2026](#)

Scheduled Items

2. Consider recommending that the Board of Directors authorize One Water Econ, LLP's Dam Materiality General Benefits Study. (Staff Presenting: Ara Azhderian and Amy Woodrow)

Attachments: [Board Report](#)

[Draft Dam Materiality General Benefits Study Scope](#)

Upon the motion made by Mark Gonzalez, seconded by Matt Simis the committee approved the recommendation to authorize One Water Econ, LLP's Dam Materiality General Benefits Study.

Ayes: Ken Ekelund, Matt Simis, Mark Gonzalez

Noes: None

Absent: Deidre Sullivan

Abstained: None

Committee Member Comments: Matt Simis, Ken Ekelund, Mark Gonzalez

Staff Comments: Ara Azhderian

Public Comments: Nancy Isakson, Christopher Bunn

3. Recommend that the Board of Directors authorize Flow West's Flood Reduction Benefits Study. (Staff Presenting: Ara Azhderian and Jason Demers)

Attachments: [Board Report](#)

[Draft Flow West Scope of Work](#)

Upon the motion made by Ken Ekelund, seconded by Mark Gonzalez the committee approved the recommendation to authorize Flow West's Flood Reduction Benefits Study.

Ayes: Ken Ekelund, Matt Simis, Mark Gonzalez

Noes: None

Absent: Deidre Sullivan

Abstained: None

Committee Member Comments: None

Staff Comments: Paul Frank with Flow West

Public Comments: Christopher Bunn, Nancy Isakson

Staff Reports

4. Overview of the Development of a Deep Aquifers Management Recommendations Memorandum. (Staff Presenting: Amy Woodrow)

Attachments: [Board Report](#)

Committee Member Comments: None

Staff Comments: Amy Woodrow, Ara Azhderian, Piret Harmon

Public Comment: Thomas Virsik

5. Overview of Coordination on Groundwater Monitoring and Remedial Measures Plan. (Staff Presenting: Amy Woodrow)

Committee Member Comments: Ken Ekelund, Matt Simis

Staff Comments: None

Public Comment: None

6. San Antonio Spillway Replacement Update. (Staff Presenting: Elise Harden)

Committee Member Comments: Ken Ekelund, Matt Simis, Mark Gonzalez

Staff Comments: None

Public Comment: None

7. Receive an update on staff's participation in the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Advisory Committee. (Staff Presenting: Shaunna Murray)

Committee Member Comments: None

Staff Comments: Ara Azhderian, Piret Harmon

Public Comment: Thomas Virsik

8. Update on the Request for Proposals process for the Strategic Plan Update Consultant. (Staff Presenting: Shaunna Murray)

Committee Member Comments: Matt Simis, Mark Gonzalez

Staff Comments: None

Public Comment: None

Calendar

9. Set the next meeting date and discuss future agenda items.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.



County of Monterey

Item No.2

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAPL 26-028

May 06, 2026

Introduced: 4/29/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WRA Planning Item

Overview of the Outreach and Development of the 2026 Updated Strategic Plan. (Staff: Shaunna Murray)

Strategic Plan 2026 Update Monterey County Water Resources Agency

Planning Committee

May 6, 2026

**Contracted with Jacob Green
& Associates to Update the
Agency's Strategic Plan**

Overview

**STEP 1: PROJECT KICKOFF &
REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT**

**STEP 2: STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT**

**STEP 3: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
UPDATE WORKSHOPS**

**STEP 4: DRAFT AND FINAL
STRATEGIC PLAN**

**STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND
PERFORMANCE MEASURES**



STEP 1: PROJECT KICKOFF & REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

April 1st: Project Kickoff

- confirm project goals, roles, communication protocols, and schedule

Collect and Review Background information

- Shared key documents to help team understand current priorities and strategic direction



STEP 2: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Develop a stakeholder engagement plan that is practical, efficient, and designed to gather meaningful input to inform the Strategic Plan

- Surveys for the public and staff/BOD
- One-on-one interviews
- Small focus groups

Results: identify common themes, areas of alignment, and key issues



STEP 3: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK UPDATE WORKSHOPS

Build alignment between the Board and staff and guide participants through a structured, high-impact process to reaffirm the Agency's purpose and how it can best serve its customers and the broader community

- Review and discuss information gathered through engagement and assessment activities
- build on this foundation and focus on finalizing the Agency's vision, mission, and values, confirming or updating strategic goals, and developing supporting objectives and initiatives



STEP 4: DRAFT AND FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN

- Draft Strategic Plan to be presented to the Agency's Planning Committee
- Final Strategic Plan, based on feedback received, presented to the Board of Directors and the Board of Supervisors for adoption



STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Staff workshops with the Agency's team and experts to translate each Objective into clear, actionable steps

- Defines priorities, assigns responsibilities, and establishes outcomes
- Moves into implementation with clear accountability and a practical roadmap for progress
- Provides a custom-built Work Plan Tracker to support execution of the Plan.



Project Schedule

Step	Time for Completion	Timeframe
Step 1: Project Kickoff & Review and Assessment Deliverable: Project Work Plan and Schedule	2 weeks	April 1, 2026 – April 14, 2026
Step 2: Stakeholder Engagement Deliverable: Environmental Scan and Stakeholder Engagement Summary	8 weeks	April 15, 2026 – June 9, 2026
Step 3: Strategic Framework Update Workshops Deliverable: Two, one-day workshops	4 weeks	June 10, 2026 – July 10, 2026
Step 4: Draft and Final Strategic Plan Deliverables: Draft Updated Strategic Plan and Final Strategic Plan	12 weeks	July 11, 2026 – Sept. 29, 2026
Step 5: Implementation and Performance Measures Deliverable: Implementation and Performance Measurement Framework		

Next Steps



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- **Surveys** will be posted this week!

mcwater.info under **news/announcements**

- One-on-one **interviews** to be scheduled for **end of May/early June**
- **Small focus groups** to be scheduled for **early June**

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK UPDATE WORKSHOPS

- **Workshops** will be held in **July**





County of Monterey

Item No.3

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAPL 26-029

May 06, 2026

Introduced: 4/29/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WRA Planning Item

Receive an update on staff's participation in the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Advisory Committee. (Staff: Shaunna Murray)



County of Monterey

Item No.3

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAPL 26-029

May 06, 2026

Introduced: 4/29/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WRA Planning Item

Receive an update on staff's participation in the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency's Planning Committee:

Receive an update on staff's participation in the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Advisory Committee.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Background

The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) has an Advisory Committee which plays a key role in shaping groundwater management in the Salinas Valley by providing input and consensus-based recommendations to the SVBGSA Board of Directors. The Advisory Committee reflects a broad range of perspectives, representing agencies and groundwater users across the region. Members collaborate to support the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act through the integrated execution of six Groundwater Sustainability Plans. The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) has a seat on the Advisory Committee and will provide periodic updates to the Agency BOD as it affects or is of interest to the Agency.

Summary

Staff participated in the Advisory Committee's regular meeting held on April 16, 2026, and the special meeting held on April 29, 2026.

The significant topics at the April 16th meeting were the Integrated Implementation Strategy Process Roadmap, the Baseline and No Action Alternative Simulation, Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Feasibility Study Overview, and the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) Optimization Overview.

The Integrated Implementation Strategy (IIS) Process Roadmap reiterated the roles that the 6 subbasin committees have played and the current efforts of the Advisory Committee to get to a consensus-based recommendation for the SVBGSA Board of Directors. Now that the various feasibility studies have been completed, SVBGSA staff and consultants are currently developing portfolios that bring the various Project and Management Actions (PMAs) together to meet SGMA's Sustainable Management Criteria (SMC). These individual feasibility studies are being presented in numerous meetings, including this one, and portfolios will be forthcoming. The selection of PMAs are needed in October/November, and possibly sooner to

meet the Department of Water Resources deadlines. There was a discussion about moving the Minimum Thresholds (MTs), which are the target for the PMAs to reach by 2040. It was clarified that action is outside of the Advisory Committee's scope and to stay focused on recommending the PMAs to the Board.

Next was the Baseline and No Action Alternative Simulation. The Baseline is the status quo and the modeling results for all PMAs are evaluated against this simulation. The progression of SWI was modeled in 10-year time increments through 2070. In contrast, the No Action Alternative assumes no project implementation, no laws are violated and attempts to achieve the MT for SWI by 2040 using only pumping reductions. This is also referred to as Demand Management. They ran 6 scenarios but none of those achieve the MT by 2040. Additionally, the regional economic effects of agricultural pumping limits were evaluated resulting in a \$1.845 Billion to \$2.781 Billion reduction on annual economic output (based on 30-50% pumping reductions, respectively).

SVBGSA staff presented the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Feasibility Study Overview. The ASR project addresses SWI in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin by maximizing surface water diversion, injecting treated surface water to raise groundwater elevations, and reducing pumping. There were multiple scenarios developed that utilize stored reservoir water or winter flows to provide to CSIP. Multiple challenges with the current infrastructure and permitting were discovered and the projects did not stop SWI. An IIS Scorecard was developed to summarize the key criteria to evaluate each PMAs. Those criteria are: Effectiveness of meeting SWI and groundwater level MTs; Geographic reach; Timeline to SMCs; Reliability; Total Cost; and Adaptability/Scalability. The ASR project received mostly low scores on the IIS Scorecard.

Finally, Agency staff presented the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) Optimization Overview. The CSIP Optimization project addresses seawater intrusion (SWI) in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin by enhancing water production from recycled sources and conveyance through the CSIP Distribution System via several upgrades that remedy conveyance limitations and distribution reductions. There are three Capital Improvement Projects that resulted from this study. Additional evaluation of this PMA is needed before the IIS Scorecard can be completed. That will be shared in a future agenda packet.

The significant topics at the April 29th meeting were the Brackish Groundwater Restoration (BGR) Feasibility Study Overview, Castroville & Eastside Canals and Alternatives (C&E) Feasibility Study Overview, New Seawater Intrusion Project (NSIP) Feasibility Study Overview, and the Integrated Implementation Strategy Portfolios Concept Overview.

The Brackish Groundwater Restoration Project (BGRP) installs a row of wells parallel to the coast to extract brackish water, treats it, and injects treated water into the 180 and 400-foot aquifers inland of the SWI front. The BGRP Injection Only was the preferred scenario selected by Board in October 2025. This scenario allows for existing agricultural and domestic wells to continue operating but does not include any direct delivery of treated water. BGRP Injection Only meets SWI MT and reduces chloride concentrations. The BGRP received mostly medium and high scores on the IIS Scorecard.

The Castroville & Eastside Canals and Alternatives (C&E) Project primarily uses MCWRA's

Water Right Permit 11043, to divert Salinas River water, to address four groundwater sustainability goals: raise groundwater levels in the central and/or southern Eastside and 180/400 Subbasins; raise groundwater levels in the northern Eastside Subbasin; slow or halt SWI in the coastal aquifers; support groundwater recovery in the Deep Aquifers and seawater intruded area. The study found that diversion of Salinas River water, when paired with storage and recharge or injection, can meaningfully contribute to SGMA groundwater goals, but that no single project concept is sufficient on its own to fully resolve all groundwater challenges. The Eastside Recharge Basins provides the most cost effective and geographically widespread groundwater benefits. The C&E Project received mostly low and medium scores on the IIS Scorecard.

The New Seawater Intrusion Project (NSIP) proposes to serve existing agricultural users outside of the existing CSIP system and west of the City of Salinas to offset dependence on groundwater supplies. The source water supply portfolio includes numerous surface and recycled waters, in close proximity to the use area, which would be treated and stored or directly delivered, in the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin. The study found that available source supply is variable due to hydrologic conditions but that the Maximum NSIP scenario could be served in most years. Although the modeling showed groundwater levels rising in some areas, the SWI MT would not be met by 2040. The NSIP received mostly medium scores on the IIS Scorecard.

Staff then described the Integrated Implementation Strategy Portfolios Concept. No single project meets the SMCs in all four subbasins and therefore a portfolio of projects will be needed to meet them comprehensively. Staff are working on developing two portfolios, one that will be representative of a bare minimum approach and the other that covers all SMCs in the four subbasins. These will be presented to the Advisory Committee on May 15th for discussion as well as thoughts on additional portfolios in the future.

Additional information related to the Advisory Committee can be found on the SVBGSA's website: <https://svbgsa.org/about-us/board-and-committees/advisory-committee/>

The Advisory Committee has a special meeting tentatively scheduled for May 15, 2026, and the next regular meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2026.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

FINANCING:

Staff participation on the SVBGSA's Advisory Committee can be covered with the existing staffing appropriations included in the FY2025-26 Adopted Budget and will not require any additional funding needs.

Prepared by: Shaunna Murray, Deputy General Manager, (831) 755-4860

Approved by: Ara Azhderian, General Manager, (831) 755-4860



County of Monterey

Item No.4

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAPL 26-030

May 06, 2026

Introduced: 4/29/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WRA Planning Item

Receive an update on the new Grazing Lease Cycle for November 2026. (Staff: Jessell Fenley)



County of Monterey

Item No.4

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAPL 26-030

May 06, 2026

Introduced: 4/29/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WRA Planning Item

Receive an update on the new Grazing Lease Cycle for November 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency's Planning Committee:

Receive an update on the new Grazing Lease Cycle for November 2026.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Background

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) manages a livestock grazing program on some of its properties in and around Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs. Currently, the Agency administers eight cattle leases, that are currently in a holdover until October 31, 2026, when they will be made available to the public through a formal solicitation process.

The grazing program, which began in the 1960s, currently covers a total of 16,400 acres, including approximately 10,300 acres above the high-water mark. Cattle grazing is one of the land management tools the Agency uses to achieve goals such as protecting lands and preserving open space around the Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs.

Summary

The Agency has revised and updated the current lease agreement to clarify previously unclear provisions and to streamline the associated terms and conditions. Some of the proposed updates include, but are not limited to, extending the lease term to ten years; establishing clear processes and guidelines; implementing fees for non-compliance; adding pre-bid qualification requirements; defining overgrazing and undergrazing conditions; reinvesting revenue into property improvements; identifying survey and protection areas; and introducing the Grazing Land Management Plan (GLMP) as a new strategic approach.

Building on these program improvements, the Agency is now preparing for the implementation phase to ensure a smooth transition to the new grazing leases. Several key next steps are required to meet the goal of having new grazing leases in place by November 1, 2026.

First, all relevant information will be made available on the Agency's website, on the Grazing Lease Program page, for potential bidders to review. This will include the lease agreement template, detailed descriptions of each lease, maps of the lease areas, minimum bid amounts, and a pre-qualification checklist. The target is to have all materials posted by the end of May.

To support an informed and competitive bidding process, staff will then work directly with

potential bidders by offering site tours and responding to questions. A bidding auction will be held in July, with results to be certified by the Agency's Board of Supervisors in August. Following certification, the transition from existing leases to the new leases will begin, including land inspections, orientation and training for new lessees, and other necessary preparations throughout September and October.

Additional information related to the Grazing Program can be found on the Agency's website and will be updated periodically to reflect the upcoming bid cycle:
<https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/government/government-links/water-resources-agency/programs/grazing-lease-program>

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

FINANCING:

Staff participation in this program is included in the FY2025-26 Adopted Budget and the FY2026-2027 Recommended Budget.

Prepared by: Jessell Fenley, Administrative Services Assistant, (831) 755-4860
Approved by: Ara Azhderian, General Manager, (831) 755-4860



County of Monterey

Item No.5

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAPL 26-031

May 06, 2026

Introduced: 4/29/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: WRA Planning Item

Annual General Manager Performance Evaluation Process. (Staff: Ara Azhderian)



WATER RESOURCES AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

Monterey County

DATE: April 28, 2026

TO: Planning Committee

FROM: Ara Azhderian, General Manager

SUBJECT: Annual General Manager Performance Evaluation Process – Staff Survey

BACKGROUND:

The Agency Act (§62) provides that the Agency’s Directors prepare an annual performance evaluation of the General Manager in cooperation with the County Administrative Officer and that the evaluation be sent to the Board of Supervisors for their final review. Current practice is for the Agency to rely upon the County’s consultant to facilitate the evaluation. The full-year evaluation typically occurs in late spring, while the mid-year evaluation occurs in late fall. To complement the existing evaluation process, the Board of Directors has requested development of a staff survey to help bring intra-Agency perspectives to inform the General Manager’s annual evaluation.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Timing: When should the survey be conducted? December through May is a demanding period for staff as budget preparation is underway and the uncertainty of winter storm response is always present. April through October is a demanding time as annual maintenance, water operations, and groundwater monitoring activities are in full swing. Thus, it is recommended that an annual staff survey be performed in the November timeframe.
- Performance: Shall the survey be developed and performed by Agency staff, County staff, and/or consultants? As consulting cost can be significant, it is recommended that the initial survey be developed by the Agency with assistance of a consultant and performed by the County Counsel Office, to maximize objectivity and confidentiality, and ensure compliance with the relevant labor Memorandums of Understanding and the law. Consultant supported review and revision of the survey should happen periodically, i.e. every 5 years, or as conditions warrant.
- Scope: Shall the survey focus narrowly on the General Manager, or more broadly to consider the performance of the Board of Directors and/or Agency as a whole? While the Agency does not have a large workforce, staff have widely varying opportunities to engage

with the General Manager and Directors, therefore, one's ability to respond to questions narrowly focused upon executive management and/or policy direction is limited. Therefore, it is recommended a comprehensive survey be developed that provides opportunity for staff to respond to questions about the General Manager and/or Directors to the extent that they can, but to also share perspectives about their experiences working for the Agency, which can help inform future decisions affecting both management and policy.

- **Criteria:** What categories of issues should the survey test? It is recommended a final decision on this question be made in consultation with a consultant; however, categories could include: Leadership & Governance; Strategic Planning; Financial Management; Staff Management, Development, & Ethics; Operational Performance; Community Relations; and Emergency Response & Risk Management.
- **Tools & Scoring:** How should a survey be conducted and responses assessed? It is recommended a final decision on this question be made in consultation with a consultant; however, considerations include use of a standardized rubric and grading criteria, classifying categories of issues, and providing opportunity for narrative comments.
- **Deliverables:** How should survey results be delivered to the Directors? Maintaining respondent confidentiality to the extent allowed by law will likely improve candor and the survey's value towards evaluating the General Manager, Agency governance, and Agency performance overall. Therefore, it is recommended County Counsel consolidate and anonymize the survey results into a confidential report for presentation to the Directors and executive management team in Closed Session. Subsequently, the Directors could direct preparation of an Open Session presentation.
- **Other?**

A finalized annual survey process will be documented in a section of the forthcoming Governance Policies Manual.



County of Monterey

Item No.6

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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Set the next meeting date and discuss future agenda items.
Next scheduled meeting is set for June 3, 2026.