

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
INDIAN WELLS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

January 12, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Indian Wells Valley Water District was called to order by President Kicinski at 4:30 p.m. in the Board of Directors Hearing Room, 500 West Ridgecrest Boulevard, Ridgecrest, California.

PLEDGE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by David Saint-Amand.

ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS PRESENT: President Ronald R. Kicinski
Vice President David C.H. Saint-Amand
Director Charles D. Griffin
Director Stan G. Rajtora

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Director Mallory J. Boyd

STAFF PRESENT: George Croll, General Manager
Jim Worth, Attorney
Renée Morquecho, Chief Engineer
Tyrell Staheli, Chief Financial Officer
John Svika, Operations Manager
Isabel Tejada, Recording Secretary

AGENDA DECLARATION

Recording Secretary, Isabel Tejada, reported that the agenda for today's Regular Board Meeting was posted on Thursday, January 8, 2026.

**AGENDA
DECLARATION**

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

None.

**CONFLICT OF
INTEREST**

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ON CLOSED SESSION

None.

**PUBLIC
COMMENTS**

With no further Board or Public comments, President Kicinski recessed the meeting and adjourned to Closed Session at 4:32 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

The meeting was reconvened in Closed Session at 4:35 p.m.

**CLOSED
SESSION**

Closed Session was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened to Open Session at 6:05 p.m.

No action was taken which would require disclosure under the Brown Act.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: was made by Vice President Saint-Amand and seconded by Director Griffin approving the Minutes of the December 08, 2025, Regular Board Meeting, and Payment of Accounts Payable totaling \$309,100.28. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Griffin, Kicinski, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: Boyd.)

KP Public Affairs Contract Amendment/Extension

KP PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Staff presented the revised contract from KP Public Affairs that was approved at the previous Regular Board Meeting. The contract includes pricing for legislative work as well as additional services such as finding project funding for The District, total price for these services would be \$7,500 monthly. This new price is \$2,500 more than the previous contract due to the additional services. The Board discussed the benefits of these services. There was no objection to the updated pricing from the Board. Ty Staheli discussed offsetting the increase in price by postponing a connection fee study that was previously budgeted for this year to next year.

Board heard public comment from Renee Westa-Lusk and Judy Decker.

MOTION: was made by Director Griffin and seconded by Director Rajtora to approve KP Public Affairs Contract Amendment/Extension. Motion was carried unanimously, by the following roll call vote:

- President Saint-Amand: Aye
- Vice President Griffin: Aye
- Director Boyd: Absent
- Director Kicinski: Aye
- Director Rajtora: Aye

MURPHY & EVERTZ LEGAL FEES

Approval of Murphy & Evertz Legal Fees

Staff presented a rate increase summary from Murphy & Evertz legal team. Murphy & Evertz has represented the District in the comprehensive adjudication, this will be their first rate increase request since the beginning of the adjudication. The Board discussed how reasonable the rate increase is in comparison to similar services.

Board heard public comment from Renee Westa-Lusk and Dan Tolbert

MOTION: was made by Director Griffin and seconded by Vice President Saint-Amand to approve Murphy & Evertz rate increase. Motion was carried unanimously, by the following roll call vote:

- President Saint-Amand: Aye
- Vice President Griffin: Aye
- Director Boyd: Absent
- Director Kicinski: Aye
- Director Rajtora: Aye

COMPREHENSIVE ADJUDICATION

**COMPREHENSIVE
ADJUDICATION**

Jim Worth reported the Phase 2 trial for the determination of the Basin's Safe Yield is still set for June 1, 2026. Both expert and rebuttal reports have been exchanged. Expert deposition for retained and non-retained experts is in the process of being finalized. First deposition should be starting at the end of January and go until early March.

The first Mediation session is scheduled to take place February 18, 2026. Currently the process of finalizing mediators and the structure of the mediation is being worked on.

The District filed a supplemental brief on January 12, 2026 giving further argument on why the District would like to continue the reverse validation originally filed by Searles Valley, which challenges the GSP. Opposition briefs will most likely be filed later in January. The hearing is set for February 6, 2026.

The Board heard public comment from Renee Westa-Lusk and Judy Decker.

INDIAN WELLS VALLEY GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY (IWVGA)

IWVGA

David Saint-Amand reported on the Agenda for the upcoming meeting of the IWVGA, he noted there are two approved expenditures that are still under review. The 2024 Audit will be reviewed; a copy will be retained for Mr. Staheli to review.

Director Rajtora expressed concerns about bylaws being violated due to Kern County not serving as president as well as not providing General Council for the IWVGA. Mr. Rajtora would like to see Kern County be held accountable for not adhering to bylaws and would like to see them fulfill their commitment or step away from their position on the IWVGA Board. Jim Worth will be looking further into the verbiage of the bylaws and report back to staff.

George Croll presented a summary of the Pipeline Cost Estimate report that was done in 2024 as a refresher for the Board and the public.

The Board heard public comment from Judy Decker.

2026 Annual Board Workshop Agenda

**2026 ANNUAL
BOARD
WORKSHOP**

George Croll presented the current Workshop Agenda items. The Board discussed additional items that they would like to add to the Agenda.

The Board heard public comment from Renee Westa-Lusk.

General Manager Update

**GENERAL
MANAGER
UPDATE**

George Croll reported on issues with the software that is used for the District's bulk water station. The staff worked diligently to come up with a temporary solution while the software issue was corrected so no customer went without water. There was nothing significant to report in regards to personal safety and injury reports. No update on AB 1413, Isabel Tejada reported on SB 707 updates that are pertinent to the District. Board was presented with a list of potential conferences that either Board or staff should consider attending.

The Board heard public comment from Judy Decker.

Engineering Update

Water Systems Consolidations:

**ENGINEERING
UPDATE**

- o Inyokern CSD: Renée Morquecho gave a summary of the consolidation process since June when the orders from the state were received to December 29, 2025 when the District provided a written response to the state regarding the status of the consolidation. No further update, at this time everything is on hold until the State responds.
- o Rademacher Way: Renée Morquecho presented a map of the phase 2 area, and reported there is still ongoing efforts with legal to get final easements needed. IWVGA has mentioned the possibility of getting a third party to get the right of ways, the District is open to getting help for this final step.
- o Dune 3: State has approved the plans and specs, now staff is waiting on approval of bid solicitation. Plans were signed by President Kicinski and are now awaiting signatures from Mrs. Morquecho and Mr. Croll so they can send back to the consultant. Once State grants authorization to go to bid the District will proceed.
- o Stark Street: Located outside of the District's boundaries, they have 10 connections and are regulated by the county. Currently the State has been paying for water hauling for 2 years now and they are very interested in getting them a long-term solution. There are discussions ongoing in regards to funding for this consolidation coming from grant money the IWVGA already has or emergency funding from the State Water Resource Control Board. There will be further discussion from the IWVGA at their next meeting. Staff expressed concerns with finishing the process before the grant funding expiration.

The work has begun on Brady Street, Renée Morquecho reported that the county will be handling the compaction testing.

BRADY STREET

Inspection and cleaning of water storage tanks is in process and should be completed by Thursday January 15, 2025.

The Board heard public comment from Judy Decker and Renee Westa-Lusk.

Financial Update

Ty Staheli reported on billable consumption for the fiscal year through December and year to date. Also gave an update on Solar Site security, Well 33 is online and Well 34 will be installed this week. Staff is still awaiting solar power units, which should be arriving later this week. George Croll commented that most of the work was done in house, from cementing the poles to getting the cameras online.

**FINANCIAL
UPDATE**

Mr. Staheli reported year-to-date actual revenue is \$9.5 million which is below budget. Expenditures are \$9.16 million which is almost one million below budget. Currently the net revenue is \$330,000 which is better than budget. To date the District has paid \$19,441,368 to the IWVGA of that \$15,796,316 is in replenishment fee payments.

Staff also provided an update on meter installations; delinquent account turn offs and WaterSmart alerts.

Operations Update

**OPERATIONS
UPDATE**

John Svika reported that Arsenic plants are still offline due to the time of year so no new production to report on at this time. Mr. Svika presented heat map that highlights areas where work was done throughout town.

For the last month there were 25 valves exercised which brings the total year to date 452. There were 244 USA North tickets which totals 1833 for the year. There was no NO-DES flushing, 10 service lateral repairs and 20 service lateral replacements. Staff also reported 14 after hour callouts which led to 4 service replacements and 3 service repairs. John Svika announced that the property in Inyo County is in the clear with code enforcement, the District will be monitoring the property periodically going forward.

BOARD COMMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Director Rajtora would like to send a letter to Kern County regarding the JPA and bylaws. Director Griffin thanked Renee Westa-Lusk for her active participation in community conversations. Director Saint-Amand welcomed the new Customer service representative.

**BOARD
COMMENTS**

DATE OF NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The date of the next Regular Board Meeting is Monday, February 09, 2026.

**DATE OF NEXT
BOARD MEETING**

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,



Isabel Tejada
Recording Secretary

APPROVED: February 09, 2026