Agenda Item No. 7A

SAN ELIJO JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
HELD ON OCTOBER 20, 2026
AT THE SAN ELIJO WATER CAMPUS

Luke Shaffer, Chair — David Zito, Vice Chair

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority (SEJPA) was held Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., at the San Elijo Water Campus.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Shaffer called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Directors Present:

Board Chair	Luke Shaffer
Vice Chair	David Zito
Board Member	Jim O'Hara
Board Member	Kristi Becker

Others Present:

General Manager	Michael Thornton
Deputy General Manager	Thomas Falk
Director of Operations	Christopher Trees
Director of Finance and Administration	Kevin Lang
Administrative Coordinator	Vanessa Hackney

SEJPA Counsel:

Snell and Wilmer	Adriana Ochoa

City of Encinitas:

Senior City Engineer	Will Trax

City of Solana Beach:

Senior Civil Engineer	Olga Reyes

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

General Manager Thornton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

None.

5. NEW HIRES, AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

None.

6. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Moved by Board Chair Shaffer and seconded by Vice Chair Zito to make the following order changes to the Agenda:

1. Move Closed Session, Item 13, before the Consent Calendar; and

2. Move Item 9D, Proclamation of the Board of Directors Honoring Michael Thornton's Retirement After 26 Years of Service to the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority, after Item 11, General Counsel's Report.

Motion carried with the following vote of approval:

AYES:	Shaffer, Zito, O'Hara, Becker
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

13. CLOSED SESSION

A closed session was held for:

CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION (Gov. Code 54956.9(d)(4))

- One potential matter

The closed session began at 8:31 am and ended at 8:47 am with no reportable actions taken.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

Agenda Item No. 7A	APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 15, 2026 MEETING
Agenda Item No. 7B	APPROVAL FOR PAYMENT OF WARRANTS AND MONTHLY INVESTMENT REPORTS – SEPTEMBER 2026
Agenda Item No. 7C	WASTEWATER TREATMENT REPORT – AUGUST 2026
Agenda Item No. 7D	RECYCLED WATER REPORT – AUGUST 2026
Agenda Item No. 7E	REPORTABLE MEETINGS

Agenda Item No. 7F CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION ACCEPTANCE – EMERGENCY RECYCLED LATERAL REPAIR ON SAXONY ROAD IN ENCINITAS

Agenda Item No. 7G WANKET TANK CONSTRUCTION PHASE AMENDMENTS

Moved by Vice Chair Zito and seconded by Board Member O'Hara to approve the Consent Calendar.

Motion carried with the following vote of approval:

AYES: Shaffer, Zito, O'Hara, Becker
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

9A. AGREEMENT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

General Manager Michael Thornton presented on the need for open space management at the San Elijo Water Campus (SEWC). The SEWC property includes approximately 6.5 acres which are subject to a Coastal Bluff Conservation Open Space Easement held by the City of Encinitas. This area, along the western coastal bluff, contains native habitat and invasive vegetation that contributes to wildfire risk, particularly along slopes adjacent to structures.

On June 11, 2025, the City adopted Ordinance 2025-07, updating the CAL FIRE Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones and designating the Water Campus area as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. To understand the impact of this ordinance and to develop a proactive open space management plan, SEJPA contracted with the Nature Collective to prepare an Open Space Management and Fire Risk Reduction Plan (Plan), which balances wildfire mitigation with conservation easement requirements. The Plan was completed in April 2026.

Implementation of the Plan will prioritize high-risk fire areas, with work scheduled to begin in winter 2026–2027. Initial vegetation clearing is planned for completion before nesting bird season begins in mid-February 2027. The Nature Collective was selected to implement the Plan based on its more than 25 years of habitat restoration experience, management of the adjacent San Elijo Lagoon Ecological Reserve, and existing regional permits and state agency authorizations applicable to the proposed work.

The proposed five-year, time-and-materials agreement for Plan implementation and maintenance has an estimated value of $391,950. The majority of costs are anticipated in Years 1–3 for initial vegetation removal and habitat restoration, with Years 4–5 focused primarily on retreatment and ongoing maintenance. The adopted FY 2026–27 Budget includes funding for work planned during the current fiscal year. Funding for FY 2027–28 through FY 2030–31 will be included in the respective future recommended annual budgets.

Moved by Vice Chair Zito and seconded by Chair Shaffer to:

1. Authorize the General Manager to execute a five-year Technical Services Agreement with the Nature Collective for open space management services in an amount not to exceed $391,950.

Motion carried with the following vote of approval:

AYES: Shaffer, Zito, O'Hara, Becker
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

9B. AWARD CONSTRUCTION PHASE CONTRACTS FOR THE AERATION BASIN MIXING PROJECT

Deputy General Manager Thomas Falk presented the Aeration Basin Mixing Project, explaining that staff pilot-tested large-bubble mixers in Aeration Basins Nos. 2 and 3. Testing demonstrated improved solids suspension and process reliability, supporting staff's recommendation to install a permanent mixing system.

SEJPA is coordinating construction with the upcoming late-fall maintenance window, when treatment conditions are expected to allow the basins to be temporarily taken offline. To meet this limited construction window, SEJPA pre-procured 16 large-bubble mixers under the General Manager's procurement authority.

The Request for Bids (RFB) for installation of the mixers was posted on SEJPA's PlanetBids procurement portal and advertised in The Coast News Group. Five bids were received and evaluated for compliance, contractor qualifications, and price. Staff recommends awarding the project to SS Mechanical Construction Corp., the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

Staff also recommends amending the existing Valley CM contract by $39,900 to provide construction management and inspection (CM&I) services. Valley CM's successful performance on the Biosolids Dewatering Improvements Project and familiarity with SEJPA's facilities and operations provide continuity during the limited construction window. The project was identified as a priority in the current capital program and will be funded through previously collected wastewater capital funds.

Moved by Board Member O'Hara and seconded by Vice Chair Zito to:

1. Authorize the General Manager to award and execute a contract for the construction of the Aeration Basin Mixing Project to SS Mechanical Construction Corporation in the lump sum amount of $159,365; and

2. Authorize the General Manager to amend existing construction management and inspection contract with Valley CM for construction management services for the Aeration Basin Mixing Project in an amount not to exceed $39,900.

Motion carried with the following vote of approval:

AYES: Shaffer, Zito, O'Hara, Becker
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

9C. AMENDMENT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRE-FILTER CHLORINATION STUDY

Deputy General Manager Thomas Falk presented the efforts to improve the disinfection of treated recycled water at the SEWC. SEJPA's recycled water disinfection uses both sand filters and microfiltration/reverse osmosis filters as key components of the tertiary treatment process. SEJPA's sand filters, constructed as part of the original Recycled Water Program in 2000, consistently meet turbidity requirements, and the chlorine disinfection system maintains required contact time and dosage. However, intermittent total coliform exceedances continue to occur, requiring operational intervention and occasionally resulting in recycled water permit violations.

SEJPA engaged Trussell Technologies (Trussell) to investigate recurring coliform detections and evaluate treatment improvements. The investigation identified particle shielding associated with the sand filters as a likely contributing factor and recommended evaluating pre-filter chlorination, an approach successfully implemented at another recycled water facility in San Diego County.

Staff proposes a six-month, full-scale demonstration using temporary modifications to the existing treatment facilities. The demonstration system will be configured to maintain compliance with existing recycled water and ocean discharge permit requirements. Following the demonstration, Trussell will prepare a technical memorandum summarizing the results and recommending a long-term operational strategy and any permanent facility improvements needed to improve disinfection reliability. Demonstration project costs will be funded through Recycled Water Program operating reserves.

Moved by Chair Shaffer and seconded by Vice Chair Zito to:

1. Authorize the General Manager to amend Professional Services Agreement with Trussell Technologies to an amount not to exceed $88,056 for technical oversight of the Pre-Filter Chlorination Study.

Motion carried with the following vote of approval:

AYES: Shaffer, Zito, O'Hara, Becker
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

10. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

General Manager Michael Thornton provided a brief update to the Board regarding staff's ongoing work to finalize the PREP Plan (Facility Plan) and staff will bring the draft to the Board in the near future. General Manager Thornton also gave a summary of the 3rd annual Water Career Day hosted at the San Elijo Water Campus on October 8, 2026 in partnership with Olivenhain Municipal Water District and Leucadia Wastewater District.

11. GENERAL COUNSEL'S REPORT

General Counsel Adriana Ochoa reported that she attended the CASA annual meeting in early October and reported on SB 1159, a new law that address A.I. as it relates to public agencies, including removal of bots from public meetings, social media, and response requirements to Public Record Requests that are sent by bots.

9D. PROCLAMATION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HONORING MICHAEL THORNTON'S RETIREMENT AFTER 26 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE SAN ELIJO JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Deputy General Manager Thomas Falk presented on behalf of the Board, a proclamation recognizing General Manager Michael T. Thornton's 26 years of distinguished service to SEJPA and the community it serves upon his upcoming retirement. Mike joined the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority (SEJPA) in October 2000 and was appointed General Manager in December 2002.

Throughout his tenure, Mike has provided exceptional leadership and made lasting contributions to SEJPA, the communities it serves, and the broader water industry. His dedication to public service, environmental stewardship, and organizational excellence has helped shape the SEJPA into the organization it is today.

In recognition of his 26 years of distinguished service, the Board of Directors presented a proclamation honoring Mike's leadership, accomplishments, and lasting legacy. The full proclamation can be found as Attachment 1 to these meeting minutes.

Moved by Chair Shaffer and seconded by Board Member Zito to:

1. Adopt by motion a proclamation recognizing Michael T. Thornton for 26 years of dedicated service to the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority on the occasion of his retirement.

Motion carried with the following vote of approval:

AYES:	Shaffer, Zito, O'Hara, Becker
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

12. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 a.m. The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, November 17, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.