

## CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT External Relations Committee Meeting

### OUR MISSION

Protect, enhance, and develop Calaveras County's water resources and watersheds to provide safe, reliable, and cost-effective services to our communities.

2021-2026 Strategic Plan, Adopted April 28, 2021, can be viewed at this [link](#)

External Relations Committee  
Thursday, January 4, 2024  
1:00 p.m.

Calaveras County Water District  
120 Toma Court  
San Andreas, California 95249

**Board Chambers are open to the public and the following alternative is available to members of the public who wish to participate in the meeting virtually:**

### Microsoft Teams meeting

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 234 590 087 530

Passcode: A9RFTX

**Or call in (audio only)**

[+1 323-647-8603,,211743932#](#)

Phone Conference ID: 211 743 932#

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Administration Office at 209-754-3028. Notification in advance of the meeting will enable CCWD to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. Any documents that are made available to the Board before or at the meeting, not privileged or otherwise protected from disclosure, and related to agenda items, will be made available at CCWD for review by the public.

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

#### **CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

1. **ROLL CALL**
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

---

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Director Underhill, Chair

Russ Thomas, Director

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3a Approval of Minutes for August 22, September 26, October 31, and December 7, 2023  
Committee Meetings

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

4a\* Customer Service Update  
(Kelly Richards, Business Services Manager)

4b\* External Affairs Update  
(Kelly Gerkenmeyer, External Affairs Manager)

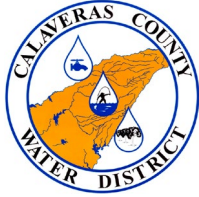
**5.\* GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

**6.\* DIRECTOR COMMENTS OR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**7. NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**



# CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT External Relations Committee Meeting

**MINUTES  
AUGUST 22, 2023**

The following Committee Members were present:

Director Underhill  
Director Secada

Staff Present:

Michael Minkler, General Manager  
Rebecca Hitchcock, Clerk to the Board  
Jeffrey Meyer, Director of Admin Services  
Damon Wyckoff, Director of Operations  
Kelly Richards, Customer Service Supervisor  
Kelly Gerkenmeyer, Water Resources Specialist  
Kate Jesus, Engineering Coordinator

Others Present:

Ralph Copeland  
Francisco de la Cruz  
Michael Rogers

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### **1. ROLL CALL**

Director Underhill called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

#### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Francisco de la Cruz stated the outreach for the rate increase was a failure. He addressed the need for a District wide dashboard showing metrics of the District.

Michael Rogers asked the Committee about past District consolidations.

#### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3a Approval of Minutes for July 20, 2023, Committee Meeting

Directors Secada/Underhill approved the Minutes for the July 20, 2023, Committee Meeting.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

- 4a External Affairs Update and Rate Communication Strategy  
(Michael Minkler, General Manager)

**Discussion:** Michael Minkler updated the Committee on the rate communications. He stated that the rate increase had been discussed at many public meetings since late 2022 including three town hall meetings at the beginning of 2023. He added that information regarding rate increases had been included in the customer billings for several months.

He reviewed items that were covered in the recent rate workshop presentations. He addressed some of the rumors circulating around regarding the District. Staff are continuously responding to emails and questions stemming from the rate workshops.

He addressed the request for a District Dashboard with metrics. He stated many of the items requested are covered regularly at the various Committee meetings such as Finance and Engineering Committees. There was extensive discussion between Mr. Minkler and the Committee regarding metrics.

There was discussion regarding the protest letters and how they are being tallied.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Francisco de la Cruz stated the presentations for the rate public hearings were too complicated for general consumption. He also stated that the District should post the totals of protest letters received daily on the website.

Mike Rodgers stated that he felt measures taken to reduce costs were a missing item from the presentations.

Kelly Gerkenmeyer addressed the Committee about the rate increase. He talked about how unique the District is and how hard staff worked to try to tell the story of the need for the increase.

Damon Wyckoff addressed the Committee regarding the winter storms and how dedicated staff are to keep the community in service with water and wastewater.

- 4b Customer Service Update  
(Kelly Richards, Business Services Manager)

**Discussion:** Kelly Richards reported on the following items: 1) work going on to prepare for the customer portal and what the portal offers; 2) quality control on AMI meter data 3) the Customer Assistance Program renewals; 4) the LIWAP program through the state; 5) campaign to ask customers to update their contact information; and 6) the cost of trying to reach customers through the mail versus social media.

#### **5. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

Mr. Minkler commended the outreach team for their hard work over the past few months.

#### **6. DIRECTOR COMMENTS OR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Director Secada stated she really likes the format of this committee meeting with the open dialog with the members of the public.

Director Underhill had nothing additional to report.

7. **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

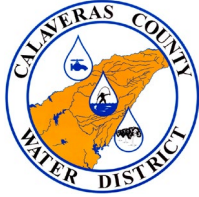
The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Rebecca Hitchcock  
Clerk to the Board

DRAFT



# CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT External Relations Committee Meeting

**MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023**

The following Committee Members were present:

Director Underhill  
Director Thomas

Staff Present:

Michael Minkler, General Manager  
Rebecca Hitchcock, Clerk to the Board  
Jeffrey Meyer, Director of Admin Services  
Kelly Richards, Customer Service Supervisor  
Kelly Gerkenmeyer, Water Resources Specialist  
Kate Jesus, Engineering Coordinator  
Stacey Lollar, Human Resources Manager

Others Present:

Francisco de la Cruz  
Mike Rodgers

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### **1. ROLL CALL**

Director Underhill called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

#### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Francisco de la Cruz would like to discuss the District's grant writing program.

Mike Rodgers asked about tours of facilities.

#### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

3a Discussion regarding District Metrics and Dashboard  
(Michael Minkler, General Manager)

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Minkler introduced the Performance Metrics item to be presented by Francisco de la Cruz.

Mr. de la Cruz presented a PowerPoint presentation:

Why metrics are needed.

- Stakeholders need information to guide decisions and actions.
- Ratepayers need information to build trust and develop understanding.
- Employees need reliable feedback on work performance results.

Metrics serve a variety of purposes.

- External-facing metrics provide ratepayers with information that they can take personal actions to affect performance, e.g., consumption, payments, CCWD services, financial results, etc.
- Internal-facing metrics inform operators, managers, and administrators of CCWD performance on key indicators for service levels/effectiveness.

Start small, add metrics as end-users acclimate and behaviors start normalizing around effective use of metrics.

- Use easy-to-understand metrics at first to get the various stakeholder groups informed, educated, trained, and acclimated to using the metrics to focus discussions and behaviors that affect CCWD performance results.
- Add metrics incrementally as stakeholders improve their understanding and proper use of metrics.
- Use technology to mitigate costs of capturing, displaying, distributing, or publishing desired metrics data.

Recommended metrics:

- Number of new connections and disconnections per month, derived net meter connection growth.
- Average daily water consumption per capita, and Total water consumption by month, compared to COS volumes, in HCF and as % of COS Estimate
- Water loss percentage, i.e., losses through leaks, breaks, before reaching the customer
- Operations & Maintenance Cost per Million Gallons Treated
- Meter accuracy
- Staffing levels per 1000 customers
- The Cost-of-service (COS) model serves as the underlying framework for a number of key performances metrics
- Overtime as percent of total labor
- Debt Service Coverage ratio
- Drinking water quality (compliance with health & safety regulations)
- Wastewater Treatment Compliance (discharge permit compliance)
- Water Main Break Frequency (breaks per 100 miles of pipe, <25)
- Energy Use per Million Gallons Treated (typical is 1,500-4,500 kWh per million gallons treated)
- Accounts Receivable Days (how long it takes to collect payments, benchmark is 30-45 days)
- Asset Renewal Rate (target 1% of assets per year minimum)
- Maintenance Cost per Asset, annually, per asset.

Ratepayers need to be better informed, trust rebuilt.

- Ratepayer portal OR CCWD website should contain date-sensitive information about CCWD Work Schedules: What are we doing for you this week?
- If a customer portal has texting or emailing functionalities, it should be used for customers desiring that level of notification.
- Should also consider including weekly ads in local papers indicating the work projects being undertaken in various neighborhoods: road closures, detours, delays, etc., could be shared early enough for affected areas to adjust.

The data interface should be easy to use and understand.

- We suggest using a geographic map showing where major CCWD facilities are located and using the map locations as URL links, clicking on the locations redirects you to location-specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for those facilities.

- A CCWD-wide set of KPIs would replace the current Home page for the District website, highlighting the externally facing results.

External Funding sources need their own report page.

- Grant applications should be tracked, depicting various life-cycle stages: Submitted, Awaiting Response, Granted, Failed, with post-failure analytics to improve future grant application submissions.
- Amounts received are then tracked to potentially offset future rate increases.
- Other identified external sources of funds are similarly tracked and reported.

There was a discussion between the Committee, staff, and Mr. de la Cruz and Mr. Rodgers regarding the metrics.

3b External Affairs Update  
(Michael Minkler, General Manager)

**DISCUSSION:** Mr. Minkler reported on the following items: 1) Water Resources Manager is leaving the District in addition to other vacancies; 2) priorities of Website updates and customer portal; 3) advocacy efforts with Senator Alvarado-Gil; 4) Engineering Coordinator vacancy; and 5) grant funding opportunities.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.

3c Customer Service Update  
(Kelly Richards, Business Services Manager)

**DISCUSSION:** Kelly Richards reported on the following items: 1) call queues, email, and work order quantity; 2) customer portal update; 3) Mueller AMI and Tyler Incode; 4) past due reminders; and 5) the CAP and LIWAP programs.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Francisco de la Cruz would like a more concrete date on getting the customer portal complete. He is also concerned about the reinstatement of delinquencies.

Mike Rodgers asked about the possibility of evening meetings and of the presentations are posted on the website.

#### **4. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

Mr. Minkler had nothing additional to report.

#### **5. DIRECTOR COMMENTS OR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Director Thomas thanked Mike and Francisco for their presentation. He wants a tour set up before the next meeting.

Director Underhill discussed the AARP Bulletin about the Surging Cost of Water.



6. **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

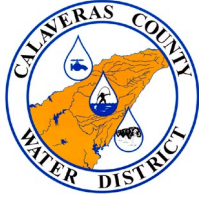
The meeting was adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Rebecca Hitchcock  
Clerk to the Board

DRAFT



**CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT  
EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MINUTES  
OCTOBER 31, 2023**

The following Committee Members were present:

Director Underhill  
Director Thomas

Staff Present:

Michael Minkler, General Manager  
Rebecca Hitchcock, Clerk to the Board  
Kelly Richards, Customer Service Supervisor  
Kelly Gerkenmeyer, Water Resources Specialist  
Kate Jesus, Engineering Coordinator  
Stacey Lollar, Human Resources Manager  
Jesse Hampton, Plant Operations Manager  
Pat Burkhardt, Construction and Maintenance Manager  
Mark Rincon-Ibarra, District Engineer

Others Present:

Ralph Copeland  
Francisco de la Cruz  
Mike Rodgers  
Mike Castro  
Cindy Secada

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**1. ROLL CALL**

Director Underhill called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mike Rodgers thanked the District for the tour of the Jenny Lind Water Treatment Plant and would like to do more tours.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

3a External Affairs Update  
(Kelly Gerkenmeyer, External Affairs Manager)

**DISCUSSION:** Kelly Gerkenmeyer gave a presentation on how he plans to handle public outreach. He wants to focus on community, communication, inform/educate, and metrics. He has recently planned community tours of facilities and would like to broaden that to virtual tours in order to reach more people. There are plans for town halls and special events as well. He addressed various ways

to communicate with customers such as Facebook, Nextdoor, Instagram, and Twitter. There are plans for a newsletter and an updates bill backer with information. He plans on creating documentation on past, current, and future CIP projects to educate customers on what the District is doing. He discussed the tour of Jenny Lind and how informative it was. He reviewed changes that have been made to the website and planned website improvements. He stated the Ops report is not being extracted from the Board meeting videos and posted separately on the Operations page on the website to make it simpler to view the report out. There was discussion between Mr. Gerkenmeyer and the Committee regarding the outreach plan.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mike Rogers asked to be involved in website changes.

Francisco de la Cruz asked about metrics for water quality compared to other agencies and report outs on grants.

3b Customer Service Update  
(Kelly Richards, Business Services Manager)

**DISCUSSION:** Kelly Richards reported on the following items: 1) call queues, emails, and work orders; 2) the Customer Portal update; 3) the Customer Assistance program including the open slots in Warer and Wastewater; 4) and the recruitment for the vacant Customer Service Representative. There was discussion between Ms. Richards and the Committee regarding the types of customer service calls the department is experiencing. Director Thomas was very surprised to hear about the openings in the assistance program.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Mike Rogers asked about the convenience fee and what type of payments they are assessed on.

Mike Castro asked if the District makes a profit off the convenience fees or if they strictly pay the cost of the transaction. He also asked about the funding behind the Customer Assistance Program.

Francisco de la Cruz commented on how expensive it is to accept credit cards. He also addressed concerns about how long it is taking for the customer portal.

#### **4. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

Mr. Minkler reported the following items: 1) the Copper Cove Lift Station project is underway and spoke of the outreach plans for residents; 2) the Redwood tank project and West Point Water Treatment project completions and possible ribbon cutting ceremonies; 3) he is presenting at the MCWRA Water Forum regarding infrastructure funding; and 4) legislation that is being tracked such as Water Rights Reform and the Water Bond.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ralph Copeland asked about the Copper Cove Lift Station project.

#### **5. DIRECTOR COMMENTS OR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Director Thomas thanked the advisory group and would like a customer portal update in December.

Director Underhill also thanked the advisory group and asked if they have any participation from Ebbetts Pass.

6. **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.- The meeting was moved to December 7, 2023.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

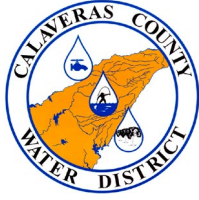
The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Rebecca Hitchcock  
Clerk to the Board

DRAFT



# CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT External Relations Committee Meeting

MINUTES  
DECEMBER 7, 2023

The following Committee Members were present:

Director Underhill  
Director Thomas

Staff Present:

Michael Minkler, General Manager  
Rebecca Hitchcock, Clerk to the Board  
Kelly Richards, Customer Service Supervisor  
Kelly Gerkenmeyer, Water Resources Specialist  
Kate Jesus, Engineering Coordinator  
Stacey Lollar, Human Resources Manager  
Jeff Meyer, Director of Administrative Services  
Pat Burkhardt, Construction and Maintenance Manager  
Tiffany Burke, Administrative Technician

Others Present:

Francisco de la Cruz

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

### **CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

#### **1. ROLL CALL**

Director Underhill called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

#### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Francisco de la Cruz asked for data on the new billing volumes and information on the status of the dashboard.

#### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

3a Customer Service Update  
(Kelly Richards, Business Services Manager)

**DISCUSSION:** Kelly Richards reported on the following items: 1) call queues, emails, and work orders; 2) the vacancy in customer service has been filled. There was discussion regarding remaining the temporary position; 3) the go live date of the Customer Portal; 4) and the Customer Assistance program including the open slots in Warer and Wastewater; and 5) the LIWAP program

through ATCAA has been closed. Assistance of \$52,242 was provided to CCWD customers through that program.

There was discussion between Ms. Richards and the Committee regarding the call volume and the possibility of a reduction when the customer portal goes live.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.

3b External Affairs Update  
(Kelly Gerkenmeyer, External Affairs Manager)

**DISCUSSION:** Kelly Gerkenmeyer reported on the following items: 1) the Copperopolis town hall the previous evening; 2) the outreach exposure on the town hall; 3) the recent tours in West Point and Jenny Lind; 4) the status of the dashboard; 5) the Ops reports; 6) the customer survey presented at the town hall; and 6) the location of the 2022 Water Quality Report on the website.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Francisco de la Cruz commented on the Dashboard sample presented. He said it did not show trends in cost effectiveness.

#### **4. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

Michael Minkler discussed the roll out of the customer portal, the presentation at the MCWRA Water Forum, and the Copperopolis Town Hall.

#### **5. DIRECTOR COMMENTS OR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Director Thomas stated he enjoyed attending the ACWA Fall Conference.

Director Underhill discussed winter storms now that winter has arrived.

#### **6. NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

- Thursday, January 4, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

#### **7. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Rebecca Hitchcock  
Clerk to the Board