



Biola Community Services District
Minutes of the
Board of Directors
Regular Board Meeting July 18, 2024
6:00p.m.

The Board of Directors of the Biola Community Services District met for its Regular Board Meeting on July 18, 2024 at the Biola Community Center, Biola, California.

Directors present: Jennifer Duarte, President
Carlos Rodriguez, Vice President
Martha Madera, Treasurer
Reyes Lozano, Board Member

Directors absent: None, (1) Vacancy

Staff Present: Present

Public present: Natalio Vasquez, Soledad Lopez, Simranjit Singh, Imelda Zarate, Carmen Zamora, Delfino Garcia, Maria D. Soto, Liliana Vargas, Natalia Meza, Martha Palmeno, Andrea Cortez, Juana Hernandez, Monique Dolores, Herminia Ruiz, Irma Placencia, Lucrear Soriano, Maria G. Carbajal, Horacio Carbajal, Joel Matias, Domenica Lopez, Enrique Colmenares, Amelia Ponce, Maria Ponce, Manuel Diaz, Guillermo Lopez, Marcelina Lopez, Alicia Altamiro, Rodriguez DeJesus, Moises Rodriguez, Mercedes Ramos, Cristino Rodriguez, Francisco Moreno, Francisco Diaz, Brenda Diaz, Baltazar, Angelica Martinez, Elizabeth Pozos, Maximo Pozo, Maria Guerrero, Daniel Rodriguez, Candelario Raya, Juana Santos, Dora Villafana, Eugenio Gutierrez, Maria Vargas, Juan Diaz, Maria M. Cruz, Joaquim Soto, Aureliano Antonio, Abel Garcia, Miguel Rodriguez Diaz, Rosalina Lopez, Rene Diaz, Francisco Rodriguez, Demecio Flores, Griselda Hernandez, Maria Villafana, Alvaro Villafana.

Roll Call- Roll Call was called.

Call to Order- President Duarte called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. Spanish translation was provided for this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people made a public comment: Amelia P., Manuel D., Juana H., Eugenio G., Mercedes R., Rodrigo D., Rene D., Joaquin S., Monique D., and Carmen Z.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a. APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES DATED JUNE 20, 2024.
- b. APPROVAL OF FINANCIALS ENDING JUNE 30, 2024

A motion was made to approve the minutes and financials.

Motion made by: Martha Madera

Motion seconded by: Reyes Lozano

Voting:

Jennifer Duarte- Yes

Carlos Rodriguez- Yes

Martha Madera- Yes

Reyes Lozano- Yes

Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS-

3. PRESENTATION ON NON-CAPITALIST OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS WITH JAKARA MOVEMENT

Presentation: Simranjit Singh (Sim) is actively involved with the local non-profit organization Jakara Movement, which has partnered with Valley Seed to bring new opportunities to Biola. Their current initiative focuses on transforming vacant lots into valuable community spaces like parks, health centers, and community gardens. Several vacant and abandoned lots in the community have been identified as potential sites for these projects. However, before moving forward, there are essential steps to follow, such as identifying property owners and testing the areas for toxic or chemical waste. Sim is eager to hear ideas from the community and encourages anyone interested in joining the committee to sign up with him. Dominica Lopez, from the UC Merced Labor Center, mentioned that they are working on securing grants to ensure the entire process, including EPA cleaning and space maintenance, will be cost-free for the District.

Public Comments: The following people made a public comment- Carmen Z., Juana H., and Rodriguez D.

Director Comments: Vice President Carlos Rodriguez stated he would like to bring things to Biola for the kids.

No direction provided by the Board of Directors. Simranjit Singh will be in contact with the General Manager.

4. HOLD PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE 2025-2026 FRESNO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The Board of Directors held a public hearing to discuss the approval of 2025-2026 Fresno County Community Development Block Grant Program funding for improvements to Well #3 and Well #4.

President Jennifer Duarte opened the hearing at 6:51 PM.

Presentation: Elaine Cervantes, General Manager, presented the item, noting that the application deadline for the grant is August 30th. The District's engineer, AM Consulting Engineers, along with the water operator, Mountain Valley Environmental Services, Inc., have encountered significant issues with the wells. Staff recommended applying for this \$300,000 grant to address the electrical parts and valves of Well #3 and Well #4 needed for maintaining proper water pressure.

Public Comments: The following people made a public comment-Carmen Z. and Mercedes R.

President Jennifer Duarte closed the public hearing at 6:57PM.

Director comments: Treasurer Madera emphasized that the grant would be a significant help to the community, particularly given the high costs associated with electrical work and valve replacements—persistent issues over the past decade. She pointed out that previous grants had been beneficial to the District, funding projects like sidewalks and other necessities. For example, the SCATA project for the sewage plant cost \$260,000 due to aging infrastructure. Water-related projects tend to receive high scores on grant applications. Vice President Rodriguez, an electrician, noted that many of the parts are outdated and stressed the importance of proactive maintenance. President Jennifer Duarte agreed, adding that the District often faces unforeseen challenges when starting a project, which are beyond its control.

5. APPROVAL OF 2025-2026 FRESNO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING FOR WELL #3 & WELL #4 SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

Public Comment: The following people made a public comment -Mercedes R., Monique D., Carmen Z., Juana H., and Maria P.

Director comments: Treasurer Martha Madera reported that the District currently holds two grants: one for \$5 million for the Sidewalk Project and another for \$7 million for the Sewage Plant. President Jennifer Duarte acknowledged the vacancy on the Board and emphasized that the deficit issues developed over time. Director Reyes Lozano shared that he was present during the installation of the water system and provided some history regarding the water line pipes in his home. Elaine Cervantes corrected Martha Madera, clarifying that the Wastewater Treatment Plan upgrade is actually \$22 million. She also noted that the Biola Chamber of Commerce had previously installed street lights as part of a past sidewalk project.

A motion was made to approve the 2025-2026 Fresno County Community Development Block Grant Program Funding for Well #3 & Well #4 System Improvement.

Motion made by: Martha Madera

Motion seconded by: Reyes Lozano

Voting:

Jennifer Duarte- Yes

Carlos Rodriguez- Yes

Martha Madera- Yes

Reyes Lozano- Yes

Motion passed.

6. DISCUSS AND REVIEW PROPOSED BCSD POLICY NO. 2907 WATER SHUT-OFF POLICY FOR NON-PAYMENT OF RESIDENTIAL WATER SERVICE

Presentation: Elaine Cervantes, the General Manager, mentioned that a resolution was established in 2018 or 2019, but it has not been located. As a result, a rough draft was created to proceed. This draft has been submitted to legal for approval to initiate the water shut-offs.

Public Comment: The following people made a public comment – *inaudible*, Carmen Z., Rodriguez D., Juana H., Mercedes R., and Joaquin S.

Director comments: Treasurer Martha Madera asked if Mid Valley Disposal could take over residential accounts and bill residents directly. She also inquired about the number of days' notice residents would receive before their water service would be shut off. Vice President Carlos Rodriguez asked where this policy was found, and Elaine clarified that the policy had been recently created.

The board of directors provided direction to staff to work with legal counsel and bring the item back for approval.

7. BOARD MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION

President Jennifer Duarte commented on the successful turn out of the Binational Event that took place on July 17th. She also highlights the vacancy. Anyone interested in joining the Board of Directors should contact the County. She also stated the Special Meeting for the Budget is rescheduled for Tuesday, July, 30 6:00PM. Vice President Carlos Rodriguez thanked the public for attending the meeting and encouraged people to continue to attend.

8. STAFF REPORTS

General Manager Elaine Cervantes presented the staff report and mentioned that the air conditioning unit at the community center is not functioning.

9. CLOSED SESSION- NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The Ralph M. Brown Act allows the Governing Board to meet in closed session with members of its staff and its attorneys on certain matters. These sessions are not open to the public and may not be attended by members of the public. Any public reports of action taken in closed session will be made in accordance with Government Code.

(a) Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Pursuant to Gov. Code, § 54957)

Executive Assistant
Customer Service Representative
Maintenance

(b) Conference with Labor Negotiators (Pursuant to Gov. Code, § 54957.6)

Agency Designated Representatives: Elaine Cervantes
Unrepresented Employee: Marisol Camacho, Morelia Avila, Pedro Cerna

Public comment: Prior to going into Closed Session, the following people made a public comment - Carmen Z.

The Board of Directors went into Closed Session at 7:41PM.
The Board of Directors came out of Closed Session at 8:22PM.
No reportable action was reported for item 9(a).
No reportable action was reported for item 9(b).

10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at **8:22PM**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, August 15, 2024.

At 8:22 p.m. on July 18, 2024 the Meeting of the Board of Directors was adjourned.

I, Marisol Camacho, Board Clerk to the Board for the Community of Biola, do hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the above Minutes are a true report of all action minutes taken at the Regular Board of Directors meeting held on July 18, 2024 at the Biola Community Services District, 4925 N. Seventh Street, Biola, CA 93606.

Approved:

8/15/24
Date



Marisol Camacho, Board Clerk

NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

August 15, 2024 – Regular Meeting, Biola, CA at 6:00PM