

MEETING MINUTES



SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APRIL 1, 2026, 9:00 AM

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Doolittle called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM & ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present: President Doolittle, Director Floen, Director Fick

Board Members Absent: Vice President Short, Director Jarlsberg

Staff Present: General Manager Johnson, Director of Administration Shook, Interim Director of Operations, Ray Kolisz, Accounting Supervisor Rich, Executive Assistant Thompson

Consultant(s) Present: Legal Counsel, Jeff Hoskinson, Public Outreach Consultant, Kathleen Radnich, West Coast Civil Principal Engineer, Kyle McCarty.

County Representatives Present: Moe Yousif, Noel Castillo, David Doublet, Darren Meeka, Noel Mondragon, and Greg Snyder

Citizens Advisory Council Member(s) Present: David Carrillo

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Director Fick moved to approve the agenda and seconded by Director Floen and approved by the following vote:

1st / 2nd Fick/Floen
Ayes: Doolittle, Floen, Fick
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Short, Jarlsberg

4. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. DRAFT MINUTES – 03.19.26

Director Floen made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar 03.19.26 draft minutes and seconded by Director Fick, approved by the following vote:

1st/ 2nd Floen/Fick
Ayes: Doolittle, Floen, Fick

Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Short, Jarlsberg

6. ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR FOR DISCUSSION -None

7. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. SEPTIC TO SEWER – SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY (SB COUNTY) DISCUSSION

PRESENTED BY: GENERAL MANAGER, SARAH JOHNSON

RECOMMENDED ACTION: DISCUSS THE PRESENTATION FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN.

General Manager Sarah Johnson introduced San Bernardino County Director of Public Works, Noel Castillo, who presented an overview of the Joshua Tree Septic to Sewer Project. Castillo stated the project is in early planning, with no approved construction and no requirement for property owners to connect at this time. The County is conducting studies, environmental review, and community outreach to evaluate options for a future sewer system. Funding currently supports planning only, including technical analysis, site evaluation, and design. Construction funding has not yet been identified. Castillo noted the project aims to address long-term groundwater quality concerns. The presentation concluded with Board questions and answers, followed by public comments.

President Doolittle provided verbal remarks regarding the septic to sewer discussion, as reflected in the attached document.

The meeting paused for a break at 11:17 a.m. and reconvened at 11:34 a.m.

B. CHROMIUM-6 TREATMENT PILOT TESTING

PRESENTED BY: GENERAL MANAGER, SARAH JOHNSON

RECOMMENDED ACTION: AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH PHIBRO-TECH INC. FOR PILOT TESTING OF ION EXCHANGE TREATMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$300,000.

General Manager Sarah Johnson and Interim Director of Operations Ray Kolisz presented on Chromium-6 Treatment Pilot Testing. Kolisz explained that the District is evaluating a strong-base ion exchange regeneration process to remove Chromium-6. A proposal has been received from Phibro-Tech to conduct pilot testing at a cost of \$60,000 per well. The District plans to begin by testing in a phased approach for all wells. The pilot testing will verify the effectiveness of the treatment process, evaluate the performance of the resin, and analyze the resulting waste stream generated during regeneration. Understanding the characteristics of this waste stream is critical, as it will require proper handling and disposal. The study will also help determine how much water can be treated before regeneration is needed. Johnson noted that pilot testing and all required technical reports must be completed by December 31, 2026, in accordance with the District's compliance plan.

Director Fick made a motion on the condition that the project proceed gradually for the first three months and authorize the General Manager to enter into an agreement with Phibro-Tech Inc. for

pilot testing of Ion Exchange Treatment in the amount not to exceed \$300,000, and seconded by Director Floen, approved by the following vote:

1st/ 2nd Fick/Floen
Ayes: Doolittle, Floen, Fick
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Short, Jarlsberg

C. BELMONT PIPELINE REPLACEMENT BID DOCUMENTS AND CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT

PRESENTED BY: GENERAL MANAGER, SARAH JOHNSON

RECOMMENDED ACTION: AUTHORIZE GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH WEST COAST CIVIL, INC. (WCC) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$104,415 FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES TO PREPARE BID-READY DOCUMENTS AND CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT FOR THE BELMONT PIPELINE PROJECT.

General Manager Sarah Johnson presented the Belmont Pipeline Replacement Bid Documents and Construction Support item, noting the District's shift from in-house pipeline construction to an outsourced approach to improve efficiency and allow staff to focus on core operations. Johnson introduced Kyle McCarty of West Coast Civil, Inc., who provided an overview of the project. McCarty explained that prior plans for the Belmont area are being updated to advance high-priority pipeline segments to construction. In coordination with Interim Director of Operations, Ray Kolisz, the most critical improvements were identified, including leak repairs, replacement of undersized mains, and system looping to improve reliability. McCarty noted that West Coast Civil will prepare bid-ready plans and specifications, assist with permitting, and provide construction support services, including responding to contractor inquiries, reviewing submittals, and assisting with field issues. The project will move key infrastructure improvements from planning into construction, with remaining segments to be addressed in future capital improvement projects.

Director Floen made a motion to authorize the General Manager to execute an agreement with West Coast Civil, Inc. (WCC) in the amount of \$104,415 for engineering services to prepare bid-ready documents and construction support for the Belmont Pipeline Project, and seconded by Director Fick, approved by the following vote:

1st/ 2nd Floen/Fick
Ayes: Doolittle, Floen, Fick
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Short, Jarlsberg

D. RISK & RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT AND UPDATED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

PRESENTED BY: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION, DAVID SHOOK

RECOMMENDED ACTION: AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH JACOBS ENGINEERING GROUP, INC. TO COMPLETE AND CERTIFY THE RISK & RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOP AN UPDATED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN.

Director of Administration David Shook presented the Risk & Resilience Assessment (RRA) and Updated Emergency Response Plan (ERP), recommending Jacobs to complete the work. The RRA is

due June 30, 2026, and the ERP by December 31, 2026. Shook noted Jacobs' prior work for the District and their ability to provide a thorough, site-specific assessment with workshops and a cybersecurity review, ensuring a comprehensive and actionable plan. Shook emphasized that this work supports emergency preparedness, regulatory compliance, and future training needs.

Director Floen made a motion to authorize the General Manager to negotiate and enter into an agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc. to complete and certify the Risk & Resilience Assessment, and develop an updated Emergency Response Plan, and seconded by President Doolittle, approved by the following vote:

1st/ 2nd Floen/Doolittle
Ayes: Doolittle, Floen, Fick
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Short, Jarlsberg

E. REVISIONS TO COLLECTION POLICY

PRESENTED BY: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION, DAVID SHOOK

RECOMMENDED ACTION: APPROVE RESOLUTION 26-1083

Director of Administration David Shook presented proposed revisions to the District's Collections Policy. Shook explained that the updates align the policy with Senate Bill 3, which expanded customer protections under the Water Shutoff Protection Act, and that he worked with Legal Counsel Jeff Hoskinson to review and update the policy. The proposed resolution includes simplified changes to ensure compliance while maintaining clear procedures for account management and restoration of service.

Director Fick made a motion to approve Resolution 26-1083, and seconded by Director Floen, approved by the following vote:

1st/ 2nd Fick/Floen
Ayes: Doolittle, Floen, Fick
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Short, Jarlsberg

8. DIRECTOR REPORTS/COMMENTS

President Doolittle

- Doolittle thanked Kyle McCarty of West Coast Civil for his involvement with the RFP.
- Doolittle thanked General Manager Sarah Johnson for arranging the County's presentation at today's meeting and with the community. Doolittle noted that the sewer discussion was productive and expressed appreciation to the community members who attended.

Vice President Short

- Absent

Director Floen

- Floen complimented President Doolittle on the orderly handling of the sewer discussion agenda item and public comments.

Director Jarlsberg

- Absent

Director Fick

- Fick indicated that he wanted to inquire about the origins of the sewer project with the County and how it was initiated.

9. MANAGER'S REPORT

General Manager Report

Johnson reported on the following:

- Johnson expressed appreciation to Director of Finance Anne Roman for her continued dedication to the District and thanked her for joining the meeting via Zoom while on vacation.
- Johnson shared that significant progress has been made on the Chromium-6 initiatives over the past year, noting the effort has been substantial and remains ongoing. Johnson indicated that additional updates will be provided as the project advances, including future presentations on pilot testing. In the meantime, discussion on this topic may be more limited in the next few months, aside from budget-related considerations.
- Johnson reported that the annual EAR report has been submitted to the State and expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts in completing it.
- Johnson announced that the District tours have been scheduled for April 20th & 21st.
- Johnson announced that she will appear on the Z1077 "Up Close" radio program on Friday, April 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

Management Staff Report

- Director of Administration David Shook reported that an ordinance related to SB 394, addressing hydrant use and water theft, will be brought before the Board at a future meeting.

10. AGENDA ITEMS REQUESTED BY THE BOARD

- Doolittle – Special meeting for board retreat before budget workshops.
- Doolittle - Discussion on social media & advice from legal counsel.
- Short – None
- Floen – None
- Jarlsberg – Absent
- Short – Absent
- Fick – None

11. ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Director Floen, seconded by Director Fick, and approved by the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:47p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SJ', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Johnson, General Manager & Board Secretary

Questions Regarding the Joshua Tree Septic-to-Sewer Phase I Project

Submitted by: Board President Stacy Doolittle

Sent to San Bernardino County Special Districts Department, March 2026

The Joshua Basin Water District Board appreciates the opportunity to better understand the scope and objectives of the Phase I planning effort for the Joshua Tree Septic-to-Sewer project.

Because this effort is described as a pre-construction planning phase, the Board would appreciate clarification on the following items.

1. Project Phase and Scope of Phase I

Information shared by Congressman Jay Obernolte's office in 2025 indicated that the Phase I grant focuses on pre-construction activities including project scoping, district formation, planning, and design. The awarded funding provided covers only a portion of that work.

1. Could you please clarify which specific tasks are identified for completion within the next two years?
 2. What will be the deliverables from those specific tasks and will they be shared with JBWD?
 3. What If any feasibility studies, technical memoranda, or engineering analyses already exist and could they be shared with the Board and staff of Joshua Basin Water District?
 4. Assuming future funding, what is the anticipated timeline for completion of Phase I planning activities?
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2. Governance and Agency Roles (Exploratory)

6. Which County departments or agencies are currently responsible for administering the Phase I effort?

7. As part of Phase I, will the County evaluate whether existing agencies in the Morongo Basin could potentially provide wastewater service if infrastructure were developed?
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3. Environmental and Regulatory Drivers

9. What specific regulatory or environmental concerns, if any, prompted the pursuit of this planning effort?
 10. Are there current documented groundwater monitoring results or nitrate trends in the basin that are influencing wastewater planning discussions?
 11. Have any regulatory agencies, such as the California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Colorado River Basin Region, or the State Water Resources Control Board identified this aquifer as requiring wastewater management planning?
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4. Study Area Boundaries

12. Would you please share what data sources or planning criteria were used to determine the current study area boundaries for the Phase I planning effort?
13. What technical criteria were used to determine the Phase I study area boundaries, and how much of the included land is currently developed versus vacant? What is the proportion and number of residential single family, multiple family and commercial properties/parcels within the anticipated boundary?
14. Earlier maps circulated publicly reflected boundaries within the unincorporated Joshua Tree community between Terrace Drive, Verbena Road, Sunny Vista Drive, and Desert Air Road. What factors led to the subsequent expansion of the study area to Alta Loma Road?
14. During Phase I, will there be an opportunity for community and agency input regarding study area boundaries?
15. As a dense residential cluster of Joshua Tree, the Friendly Hills area contributes a large amount of effluent, yet it is not included within these boundaries. What are the reasons for that?
16. Given that the proposed study area includes a large undeveloped area on the west side of Joshua Tree, will the infrastructure be designed to serve future development, and how will costs be allocated between current residents and future parcels?

17. Why is infrastructure being planned for largely undeveloped areas? What population projections support the expectation of significant growth when local indicators suggest the opposite? For example, elementary schools are being closed due to declining enrollment, and projections by the Morongo Unified School District's consultant indicate further enrollment declines over the next five years.

5. Infrastructure Concepts

15. As part of Phase I, will potential wastewater treatment and conveyance alternatives be evaluated?
16. Will the study examine regional alternatives, including whether wastewater might ultimately be conveyed to infrastructure serving Yucca Valley, California?
17. If regional options are evaluated, will the results of those analyses be made available publicly?
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6. Budget and Funding Context

18. Public information has referenced the \$5 million funding request to Congressman Obernolte's office related to septic-to-sewer planning in the area. Please share the complete Community Project Funding request and associated budget documentation that were submitted.
19. Noting that only a portion of the requested funds were fulfilled, will Phase I include preliminary cost estimates for potential infrastructure alternatives?
20. Will Phase I identify potential future funding sources that might be pursued if a project advances beyond planning?
21. Are there plans/expectations for San Bernardino County to allocate funds to Special Districts for this project?
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7. Consultants and Public Engagement

21. Who will engage engineering or planning consultants to assist with Phase I tasks?
22. Will Phase I include community outreach or public engagement activities?
23. If community surveys or polling are conducted, will the results and underlying data be publicly available?

8. Community Considerations

24. Will Phase I include analysis of potential financial impacts on residents, particularly disadvantaged households?
25. Ultimately, who will residents be required to pay? Will costs be added to property tax bills, or will there be a separate monthly bill issued by a County agency or a newly created special district, if one is established?
26. How will the County ensure transparent communication and coordination with Joshua Basin Water District Board of Directors and members of the community during this planning process?

9. Lessons from Comparable Projects

26. Are there recent septic-to-sewer planning efforts in San Bernardino County that informed the design of this Phase I effort?
27. What lessons have been learned from past sanitation or sewer infrastructure projects in San Bernardino County that could inform this planning process? For example, the history of the Crestline Sanitation District, where community dissatisfaction ultimately led residents to vote to reclaim governance authority, may provide relevant insights for this project.

Board Member Remarks Entered Into The Public Record

Joshua Basin Water District Board Meeting

April 1, 2026

Stacy Doolittle, President

I would like these remarks entered into the public record.

Thank you to the presenters for being here and for your presentation.

Keeping that in mind, I want to express some hesitation about continuing to provide detailed questions in advance without a comparable level of transparency. Going forward, it would be helpful if advance questions are met with clear, substantive information from the County as part of that same process.

There have already been instances— such as limited information available to the District regarding the County’s original funding request for this project to Congressman Obernolte —where communication gaps have raised concerns about transparency. That makes it all the more important that we proceed carefully and ensure we are fully informed and aligned internally before advancing this discussion.

I understand that Land Use Services has recently met with members of the community and committed to improving notification and local engagement. With that in mind, I think it would be helpful to understand how Special Districts and the County plan to ensure a similar level of openness and information-sharing with JBWD and its customers.

The turnout today reflects outreach by individual Board members after noticing that the agenda referenced “incorporation of feedback from the JBWD Board and community stakeholders.” That level of engagement deserves a process that is equally transparent and inclusive.

More broadly, I want to address the pace at which this project is being advanced, especially given that it is being framed as an environmental initiative. At this point, the need for advancing this project at such a pace has not been clearly demonstrated. Environmental data likely referenced dates to 2005 and 2015. In the intervening years, the District has implemented groundwater recharge efforts aimed at stabilizing aquifer levels and addressing subsidence. While not undertaken specifically for nitrate mitigation, such recharge may have the secondary effect of diluting existing nitrate concentrations. I would welcome any technical data that supports the need to initiate this effort on an accelerated timeline, particularly in the absence of a clearly defined role for the District.

At this time, I do not see a clearly demonstrated basis to accelerate this process. Planning decisions should be grounded in current data and actual conditions— not forward assumptions.

That should be our priority. If there is technical data supporting the need to move forward immediately, it should be shared clearly and promptly. Otherwise, the District should be given the opportunity to evaluate how best to serve its community, including whether and how sewer service fits into that strategy.

I encourage community members to stay engaged and to ask our County leadership to ensure this project is not fast-tracked without a clear, data-supported basis.

Lastly, I believe it is important for the community to engage with other special district communities in unincorporated areas to better understand their experiences.

In my own research, I looked into the experience in Crestline, where residents ultimately pursued a ballot measure to return control of sanitation services—including sewer—back to the community. That effort received overwhelming voter support –89% .

Public reporting and community accounts at the time raised concerns related to system maintenance, rate increases, and the level of local engagement. There were also questions raised by stakeholders regarding how resources and staffing were allocated across districts.

I share this not to draw direct comparisons, but to highlight the importance of transparency, accountability, and local involvement when considering long-term infrastructure decisions of this scale.

Agenda Page 13 Questions:

- Is the Phase 1 outlined here solely the responsibility of the Special Districts Division, or are other County entities involved? Who are they and which tasks do they own? When will be given a full project plan?
- Where is JBWD's role reflected in these bullets despite feedback from today?
- How are "community stakeholders" being defined, and how were they expected to participate at this stage? What effort is Special Districts making to ensure stakeholder engagement at this stage?
- Who authored this content, and who can speak directly to it today?

Specific follow-ups:

- Please provide the original study assumptions, including service area boundaries, infrastructure concepts, and governance options.
- What is the timeline for JBWD receiving both the original materials and any refinements?
- Regarding cost estimates: what were the initial figures, and how have they evolved? Are the cost estimates phased?






2. .JBWD MINUTES SPECIAL MEETING 04.01.26

Final Audit Report

2026-04-21

Created:	2026-04-20
By:	LISA THOMPSON (lthompson@jbwd.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAmDtIKXEuurryKAzZc_ZTCrpFTQXAI3c6

"2. .JBWD MINUTES SPECIAL MEETING 04.01.26" History

-  Document created by LISA THOMPSON (lthompson@jbwd.com)
2026-04-20 - 11:08:00 PM GMT
-  Document emailed to Sarah Johnson (sjohnson@jbwd.com) for signature
2026-04-20 - 11:08:19 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by Sarah Johnson (sjohnson@jbwd.com)
2026-04-21 - 0:27:25 AM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Sarah Johnson (sjohnson@jbwd.com)
Signature Date: 2026-04-21 - 0:27:37 AM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2026-04-21 - 0:27:37 AM GMT