

**MINUTES OF
THE SALINAS VALLEY SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 19, 2026**
117 Fourth Street, Gonzales, CA 93926

CALL TO ORDER

President Silva called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Technical issues occurred when calling the meeting to order, and the meeting was temporarily cancelled, during which time staff worked on resolving the problem. During this time, the Board agreed to proceed with Agenda Item No. 9, Recycling Recognition, it required no form of action. Santa Lucia Elementary School was recognized for implementation of a comprehensive food waste recycling program. The Board commended the students and administrative staff for their hard work and dedication.

At 6:35 p.m. the technical issues were resolved, and President Silva called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Board Directors

County of Monterey	Christopher M. Lopez
County of Monterey	Glenn Church, <i>Vice President</i>
City of Salinas	Gloria De La Rosa, <i>Alternate Vice President</i>
City of Salinas	Jose Luis Barajas
City of Salinas	Aurelio Salazar (Alt)
City of Gonzales	Elizabeth Silva, <i>President</i>
City of Soledad	Evarista Bañuelos
City of Greenfield	Belen Garcia
City of King	Robert Cullen

Absent

City of Salinas	Dennis Donohue
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Staff Member Present

Cesar Zuñiga, General Manager/CAO
Ray Hendricks, Finance and Administration Manager
Brian Kennedy, Engineering and Compliance Manager
Mandy Brooks, Resource Recovery Manager
Janna Faulk, Resource Recovery Supervisor
Roy C. Santos, General Legal Counsel (Virtually)
Rosie Ramirez, Administrative Assistant
Erika J. Trujillo, Clerk of the Board

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

(6:41) Clerk of the Board Trujillo announced the availability of translation services via Zoom and in person. No members of the public requested the service.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA (6:42)

Staff Comments: None

Board Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Motion: Director Bañuelos made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Director De La Rosa seconded the motion.

Votes:	Motion carried 9,0
Ayes:	Bañuelos, Barajas, Cullen, Church, De La Rosa, Garcia, Lopez, Salazar (Alt), Silva
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Donohue

GENERAL MANAGER/CAO COMMENTS

(6:42) Interim General Manager/CAO Zuñiga commented on the following items.

- The status of the negotiations with Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) for the sale of the Sun Street property.
- The Jonson Canyon Landfill tour attended by Director Barajas and Bañuelos.
- The award presented to Patrick Mathews on February 4, 2026 by the American Public Works Association Monterey Bay Chapter as Person of the Year in recognition of his 43 years of public service.

DEPARTMENT MANAGER COMMENTS

(6:43) Engineering and Compliance Manager Kennedy provided an update on the status of the North Monterey County Recycling and Transfer Station and outlined the next steps needed to continue progress on the project.

Resource Recovery Manager Brooks commented on the upcoming composting event taking place at the Sun Street Garden on Saturday February 28. She also commented on the art mural unveiling event for the SB1383 “Sort with Heart” campaign, scheduled for March 10.

GENERAL LEGAL COUNSEL COMMENTS

(6:45) General Legal Counsel Santos informed the Board he was feeling under the weather, which is why he was unable to attend the meeting in person.

BOARD DIRECTOR COMMENTS

(6:45) Director Bañuelos shared updates on upcoming events in the City of Soledad.

Director Garcia commented on community events in the City of Greenfield and noted City Council recognition for the Youth Council and Bike Repair Program.

Alternate Director Salazar commented on his attendance in place of Director Donohue and mentioned his potential future appointment to the Board.

Director Barajas commented on the AT&T laptop donation event, a rental assistance workshop in Salinas, and reported that the Central Coast Community Energy Board authorized a 20% reduction on the production side. He also mentioned additional community events and fundraisers.

Director Lopez commented on a school field trip to the landfill and suggested supporting SB 1383 efforts by partnering with Atlas to donate compost to school gardens.

Director Cullen welcomed Director Salazar emphasizing the importance of touring the facilities and noted the swearing-in of the new City Manager for the City of King.

Vice President Church shared his upcoming participation in Read Across America Week.

Alternate Vice President De La Rosa requested educational materials for an upcoming community event.

President Silva commented on an article about the Gonzales Youth Council featuring interviews with its original members and noted their upcoming events. She also mentioned the new electronic billboard at the south end of Gonzales and thanked those involved in the project.

CLOSED SESSION

(6:58) President Silva invited public comment related to item A.

- A.** Pursuant to **Government Code Section 54957** to confer with General Counsel Roy C. Santos concerning appointment of public agency employee: General Manager.

PUBLIC COMMENT

(6:58) None

ADJOURNED

(6:59) President Silva adjourned the meeting to closed session.

RECONVENE

(7:05) President Silva reconvened the meeting into open session. General Counsel Santos reported that no actions were taken during the closed session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

(7:06) None

CONSENT AGENDA (7:07)

1. Minutes of the January 22, 2026, Meeting.
2. December 2025 Claims and Financial Report.
3. Receive Member and Interagency Activities Report for January 2025.
4. Receive the Tonnage and Diversion Report for the Quarter Ended December 31, 2025.
5. Resolution No. 2026-05 Awarding the Contract for Construction Quality Assurance for the Johnon Canyon Landfill Module VIII construction project (CIP 9527) to Geosyntec Consultants in the Amount of \$369,658.

Public Comment: None

Board Discussion: None

Motion: Director Lopez made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Alternate Vice President De La Rosa seconded the motion.

Votes: Motion carried 9,0

Ayes: Bañuelos, Barajas, Cullen, Church, De La Rosa, Garcia, Lopez, Salazar (Alt), Silva

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Donohue

PUBLIC HEARING

6. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-06 APPROVING THE DISPOSAL AND SERVICE FEES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026

(7:06) Finance and Administrative Manager Hendricks presented the rates and adjustments necessary to balance the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 and impacts to the customers. The rate adjustments included increases to Solid Waste, Organics, and Transportation Surcharge rates and will fully fund ongoing programs and support two new positions: Equipment Maintenance Worker and Diversion Systems Maintenance Worker.

Public Hearing: The Public Hearing was opened for public comment at 7:11 p.m. No public comment was received. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:12 p.m.

Board Discussion The Board discussed the presentation.

Motion: Director Lopez made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-06. Director Barajas seconded the motion.

Votes: Motion carried 9,0

Ayes: Bañuelos, Barajas, Cullen, Church, De La Rosa, Garcia, Lopez, Salazar (Alt), Silva

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Donohue

CONSIDERATION

7. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-07 APPROVING THE OPERATING BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-27, AND A REVISED PERSONNEL ALLOCATION EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026

(7:14) Finance and Administration Manager presented the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27 of \$25,830,000. The projected revenues are projected from tonnage and rate increases to Solid Waste, Organics, Transportation Surcharge, and the AB 939 fees. The budget was explained along with the expenditure increases included, insurance premium increases, payroll, and a request for two new positions: an additional Diversion Systems Maintenance Worker and a new Equipment Maintenance Worker. The five-year projections were reviewed with a status quo budget.

- Public Comment:** None
- Board Discussion:** The Board discussed the report.
- Motion:** Director Barajas made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-07. Alternate Director Bañuelos seconded the motion.
- Votes:** Motion carried 9,0
- Ayes:** Bañuelos, Barajas, Cullen, Church, De La Rosa, Garcia, Lopez, Salazar (Alt), Silva
- Noes:** None
- Abstain:** None
- Absent:** Donohue

8. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-08 APPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SALINAS VALLEY SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY AND CESAR ZUÑIGA FOR THE SERVICES AS GENERAL MANAGER AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND REVISED SALARY SCHEDULE EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 19, 2026

(7:23) General Legal Counsel Santos

- Public Comment:** None
- Board Discussion:** The Board discussed the report.
- Motion:** Director Lopez made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2026-08. Vice President De La Rosa seconded the motion.
- Votes:** Motion carried 9,0
- Ayes:** Bañuelos, Barajas, Cullen, Church, De La Rosa, Garcia, Lopez, Salazar (Alt), Silva
- Noes:** None
- Abstain:** None
- Absent:** Donohue

PRESENTATION

9. RECYCLING RECOGNITION

(7:29) This item was discussed during the time of the technical issues.

- Public Comment:** None
- Board Discussion:** The Board thanked the awardees for all their hard work.
- Motion:** None; Informational Only

10. CHANGES TO SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAG LAWS IN CALIFORNIA

(7:29) Resources Recovery Supervisor Faulk explained the newest updates to the California bag laws aimed to reduce plastic pollution and improve recyclability by regulating the types of bags stores may provide and under what conditions. Starting 2025, stores may offer only recycled paper or compostable pre-checkout bags, and starting 2026, most stores may provide only recycled paper carryout bags at checkout for at least \$0.10. By 2028, these bags must be

curbside recyclable and contain at least 50% recycled content. Certain bags are exempt, and enforcement is handled by local jurisdictions and the state.

Public Comment: None

Board Discussion: The Board discussed the report.

Motion: None; Informational Only

11. BUILDING BETTER SYSTEMS: SOLID WASTE TECHNICIANS DRIVING MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS & OTHER PROJECT

(7:44) Engineering and Compliance Manager Kennedy reported on 2025 projects completed by Solid Waste Technicians Mike Silva, Fabian Orejel, and Oscar Garcia, including landfill closure work, gas system installations, and solar and infrastructure upgrades. He noted that in 2026 their work will focus on flare relocation and construction of Johnson Canyon Module VIII.

Public Comment: None

Board Discussion: The Board discussed the report commending staff for their hard work.

Motion: None; Informational Only

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (8:02)

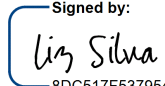
12. AGENDA ITEMS – VIEW AHEAD SCHEDULE

General Manager/CAO Zuñiga reviewed the view ahead.

ADJOURNED

(8:04) Director Bañuelos made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Barajas seconded the motion. President Silva adjourned the meeting.

Attest: 
Erika J. Trujillo, Clerk of the Board

APPROVED: 
Elizabeth Silva, President