



101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300  
 San Rafael, CA 94903  
 Tel.: 415-472-1734  
 Fax: 415-499-7715  
 www.LGVSD.org

**MANAGEMENT TEAM**  
 General Manager, Curtis Paxton  
 Plant Operations, Mel Liebmann  
 Collections/Safety/Maintenance, Greg Pease  
 Engineering, Michael P. Cortez  
 Administrative Services, Dale McDonald

**DISTRICT BOARD**  
 Megan Clark  
 Nicholas Lavrov  
 Craig K. Murray  
 Gary E. Robards  
 Crystal J. Yezman

The Mission of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District is to protect public health and our environment, providing effective wastewater collection, treatment, and resource recovery.

## BOARD MEETING AGENDA

**JANUARY 16, 2025**

**MATERIALS RELATED TO ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 101 LUCAS VALLEY ROAD, SUITE 300, SAN RAFAEL, OR ON THE DISTRICT WEBSITE [WWW.LGVSD.ORG](http://WWW.LGVSD.ORG)**

Estimated Time

**OPEN SESSION:**

4:00 PM

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT**

This portion of the meeting is reserved for people desiring to address the Board on matters not on the agenda and within the jurisdiction of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District. Presentations are generally limited to three minutes. All matters requiring a response will be referred to staff for reply in writing and/or placed on a future meeting agenda. Please contact the General Manager before the meeting.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

4:05 PM

**2. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL—ANTICIPATED LITIGATION – Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to subdivision (b) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 - One potential case.**

**OPEN SESSION:**

4:20 PM

**3. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

These items are considered routine and will be enacted, approved or adopted by one motion unless a request for removal for discussion or explanation is received from the staff or the Board.

- A. Approve the Board Minutes for December 19, 2024
- B. Receive and Ratify the Check Warrant List
- C. Approve Clark attending CASA Winter Conference January 29-31 in Palm Springs
- D. Approve Yezman attending CASA Winter Conference January 29-31 in Palm Springs
- E. Approve Final Winter Newsletter
- F. Approve Resolution 2025-2325 Designating Bank Signers
- G. Approve December Board Compensation

Possible expenditure of funds: Yes, Item B through E and G.

Staff recommendation: Adopt Consent Calendar – Items A through G.

- 4:30 PM**     **4. INFORMATION ITEMS:**
  - STAFF/CONSULTANT REPORTS:
    - 1. General Manager’s Report – verbal
    - 2. Annual Budget Development Timeline for FY 2025-2026 – written
  
- 4:45 PM**     **5. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:**
  - 1. CLARK
    - a. NBWA Board Committee, Operations Control Centers Ad Hoc Committee, Fleet Management Ad Hoc Committee, FutureSense Ad Hoc Committee, Energy Ad Hoc Committee, CASA Workforce Committee, Other Reports
  
  - 2. LAVROV
    - a. TBD
  
  - 3. MURRAY
    - a. Marin LAFCo, Flood Zone 6, Biosolids Ad Hoc Committee, CASA Energy Committee, Development Ad Hoc Committee, San Francisco Bay Trail Ad Hoc Committee, Energy Ad Hoc Committee, Other Reports
  
  - 4. ROBARDS
    - a. Gallinas Watershed Council/Miller Creek, NBWRA, Engineering Ad Hoc Committee re: STPURWE, McInnis Marsh Ad Hoc Committee, Development Ad Hoc Committee, FutureSense Ad Hoc Committee, Other Reports
  
  - 5. YEZMAN
    - a. Flood Zone 7, CSRMA, Ad Hoc Engineering Committee re: STPURWE, Marin Special Districts, Biosolids Ad Hoc Committee, Other Reports
  
- 5:05 PM**     **6. BOARD REQUESTS:**
  - A. Board Meeting Attendance Requests – Verbal
  - B. Board Agenda Item Requests – Verbal
  
- 5:10 PM**     **7. VARIOUS INDUSTRY RELATED ARTICLES**
  
- 5:20 PM**     **8. ADJOURNMENT**

**FUTURE BOARD MEETING DATES: JANUARY 23 AND FEBRUARY 6, 2025**

AGENDA APPROVED:	Crystal J. Yezman, Vice President	Patrick Richardson, Legal Counsel
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**CERTIFICATION:** I, Teresa Lerch, Board Secretary of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, hereby declare under penalty of perjury that on or before January 13, 2025 4:00 p.m., I posted the Agenda for the Board Meeting of said Board to be held on January 16, 2025 at the District Office, located at 101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA.

DATED: January 9, 2025



Teresa L. Lerch  
Board Secretary

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The Board of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District meets regularly on the first and third Thursday of each month. The District may also schedule additional special meetings for the purpose of completing unfinished business and/or study sessions. Regular meetings are held at the District Office, 101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12132), if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Board Secretary at the District at (415) 472-1734 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. **Notification prior to the meeting will enable the District to make reasonable disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, to help ensure accessibility to this meeting.**

## AGENDA ITEM 1

**1/16/2025**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address the Board on matters not on the agenda and within the jurisdiction of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District. Presentations are generally limited to three minutes. All matters requiring a response will be referred to staff for reply in writing and/or placed on a future meeting agenda. Please contact the General Manager before the meeting.**



AGENDA ITEM 2

**1/16/2025**

**CLOSED SESSION**

- Separate Item to be distributed at Board Meeting
- Separate Item to be distributed prior to Board Meeting
- Verbal Report
- Presentation

**MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2024**

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF OF THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT MET IN OPEN SESSION AT 4:02 PM AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 101 LUCAS VALLEY ROAD, SUITE 300 CONFERENCE ROOM, SAN RAFAEL, CA. 94903. PRESIDENT MURRAY OPENED THE MEETING EXPRESSING THE DISTRICT'S CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF JOSEPH GARBARINO, PRESIDENT OF MARIN SANITARY SERVICE.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Megan Clark, Craig Murray, Gary Robards and Crystal Yezman

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Curtis Paxton, General Manager; Teresa Lerch, Board Secretary; Dale McDonald, District Treasurer;

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Patrick Richardson, District Counsel; Nicholas Lavrov; Justin Wilcock, Patty Garbarino and Jason Raleigh from Marin Sanitary Service; Jim Howison from R3 Consulting; Paul Kaymark from Nigro and Nigro;

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** President Murray announced that the agenda had been posted as evidenced by the certification on file in accordance with the law.

**1. PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**ACTION:** Per District Counsel: Pursuant to Gov. Code § 54954.2(b)(2) the Board voted unanimously to add a Closed Session item pursuant to Gov. Code § 54956.9(d)(2) [significant exposure to litigation] and (e)(5) [a statement was made threatening litigation by a person outside an open public meeting]; and found that there was a need to take immediate action and that the need for action came to the attention of the District subsequent to the agenda being posted 72 hours before this regular meeting pursuant to Gov. Code § 54954.2(a)(1).

**2. SWEARING IN OF BOARD MEMBERS**

Nicholas Lavrov was officially sworn in for his two-year term.  
Craig Murray and Gary Robards were officially sworn in for their four-year terms.

**3. PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCE NO. 196 AMENDING TITLE 4, CHAPTER 1 – REGULATING SOLID WASTE, RECYCLABLE AND ORGANIC MATERIALS, AND THE COLLECITON, REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL THEREOF INCLUDING THE GARBAGE AND REFUSE RATE ADJUSTMENT FOR 2025**

Jim Howison from R3 Consulting, Patty Garbarino, Justin Wilcock, and Jason Rawley from Marin Sanitary Service were available to answer questions from the Board or the public.

**OPENED PUBLIC HEARING** – President Murray opened the public hearing at 4:12 p.m. No members of the public were in attendance.

**CLOSED PUBLIC HEARING** – President Murray closed the public hearing at 4:13 p.m.

**ACTION:**

Board approved (M/S Clark/Robards (5-0-0-0)) the adoption of Ordinance No 196, An Ordinance Amending Title 4, Chapter 1 of the District Ordinance Code as presented, adjusting the garbage and refuse rate by 3.63% to be effective January 1, 2025, and directing its publication.

- AYES: Clark, Lavrov, Murray, Robards and Yezman.
- NOES: None.
- ABSENT: None.
- ABSTAIN: None.

Staff requested moving the Audit Report item and Annual Comprehensive Financial Report up in the agenda. Board unanimously agreed.

**4. INFORMATION ITEMS:**

**STAFF / CONSULTANT REPORTS:**

- 1. Audit Report 2023-24 and Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) – Paul Caymark from Nigro and Nigro presented the audit report and answered questions from the Board.

**5. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

These items are considered routine and will be enacted, approved, or adopted by one motion unless a request for removal for discussion or explanation is received from the staff or the Board.

- A. Approve the Board Minutes for December 5, 2024
- B. Receive and Ratify the Check Warrant List
- C. Approve Board Compensation for November 2024

Item B was pulled and discussed.

**ACTION:**

Board approved (M/S Robards/Clark 5-0-0-0) the Consent Calendar items A through C.

- AYES: Clark, Lavrov, Murray, Robards and Yezman
- NOES: None.
- ABSENT: None.
- ABSTAIN: None.

**6. INFORMATION ITEMS CONTINUED:**

**STAFF / CONSULTANT REPORTS:**

- 2. General Manager’s Report – Paxton reported.

**7. ORDINANCE NO. 197 MODIFICATION TO THE SEWER LATERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Board reviewed Ordinance 197 Amending Title 2, Chapter 8 of the LGSD Ordinance code increasing the maximum amount of the Contractual Assessment Principal allowed per property from \$10,000 to \$15,000 and clarifying criteria for participation in the Private Sewer Lateral Assistance Program.

**ACTION:**

Board approved (M/S Yezman/Robards (5-0-0-0)) adopting Ordinance 197 Amending Title 2, Chapter 8 of the LGSD Ordinance code increasing the maximum amount of the Contractual Assessment Principal allowed per property from \$10,000 to \$15,000 and clarifying criteria for participation in the Private Sewer Lateral Assistance Program.

- AYES: Clark, Lavrov, Murray, Robards and Yezman
- NOES: None.
- ABSENT: None.
- ABSTAIN: None.

**8. BOARD ELECTIONS**

Board discussed electing a President and Vice President.

**ACTION:**

Board nominated and approved (M/S Murray/Clark 5-0-0-0) Gary Robards to serve as President for 2025.

- AYES: Clark, Lavrov, Murray, Robards and Yezman.
- NOES: None.
- ABSENT: None.
- ABSTAIN: None.

**ACTION:**

Board nominated and approved (M/S Murray/Clark 5-0-0-0) Crystal Yezman to serve as Vice-President for 2025.

- AYES: Clark, Lavrov, Murray, Robards and Yezman.
- NOES: None.
- ABSENT: None.
- ABSTAIN: None.

**9. BOARD REPORTS**

1. CLARK
  - a. NBWA Board Committee – no report
  - b. Operation Control Centers Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - c. Fleet Management Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - d. FutureSense Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - e. Energy Committee Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - f. CASA Workforce Committee – no report
  - g. Other Reports – none
2. LAVROV
  - a. no reports
3. MURRAY
  - a. Marin LAFCO –verbal report
  - b. Flood Zone 6 – no report
  - c. CASA Energy Committee – no report
  - d. Biosolids Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - e. Development Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - f. SF Bay Trail Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - g. Energy Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - h. Other Reports- none
4. ROBARDS
  - a. Gallinas Watershed Council/Miller Creek – no report
  - b. NBWRA – verbal report
  - c. STPURWE Engineering Ad Hoc Committee –no report
  - d. McInnis Marsh Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - e. Development Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - f. FutureSense Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - g. Other Reports – none
5. YEZMAN
  - a. Flood Zone 7– no report
  - b. CSRMA – no report
  - c. Marin Special District Association – no report
  - d. STPURWE Engineering Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - e. Biosolids Ad Hoc Committee – no report
  - f. Other Reports– no report

**10. BOARD REQUESTS:**

- A. Board Meeting Attendance Requests – Lavrov would like to attend the 2025 WaterReuse California Annual Conference in San Diego, September 7-9
- B. Board Agenda Item Requests –none.

**11. VARIOUS INDUSTRY ARTICLES**

Discussion ensued.

**11. CLOSED SESSIONS:**

**ACTION:**

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT ADJOURNED TO CLOSED SESSION ON DECEMBER 19, 2024 AT 5:18 P.M. AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 101 LUCAS VALLEY ROAD, SUITE 300, CONFERENCE ROOM, SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA.

Lerch left the meeting at 5:18 pm.

**CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION** – Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to subdivision (b) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 – One potential case.

**CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO LITIGATION** –pursuant to Gov. Code § 54956.9(d)(2) [significant exposure to litigation] and (e)(5) [a statement was made threatening litigation by a person outside an open public meeting]; Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to subdivision (b) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 – One potential case.

**ACTION:**

The Board of Directors of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District reconvened the Regular Session on December 19, 2024 at 5:48 p.m.

**REPORT ON CLOSED SESSIONS:**

President Murray reported that there was nothing to report.

**12. ADJOURNMENT:**

**ACTION:**

The board approved (Yezman/Clark 5-0-0-0) the adjournment of the meeting 5:49 p.m.

- AYES: Clark, Lavrov, Murray, Robards and Yezman.
- NOES: None.
- ABSENT: Yezman.
- ABSTAIN: None.

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2025 at 4:00 pm at the District office.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teresa Lerch, Board Secretary

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Crystal J. Yezman, Vice-President

*Agenda Item 3B*  
*Date: January 16, 2025*

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Check Register - Warrant List  
Check Issue Dates: 12/13/2024 - 12/31/2024

Page: 1  
Jan 06, 2025 08:57AM

Report Criteria:

Report type: GL detail  
Check Detail.Input date = 12/31/2024

GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount	
<b>ADP Inc</b>							
<b>20241220</b>							
12/24	12/20/2024	677729737	Payroll processing fees Comprehensive Services Bundle ezLabor an	10-400-5303	71.80	71.80	M
<b>202412201</b>							
12/24	12/20/2024	677728275	Payroll processing fees Comprehensive Services Bundle - Oct 24	10-400-5303	2,098.55	2,098.55	M
Total ADP Inc:						2,170.35	
<b>Applied Industrial Technologies</b>							
<b>21475</b>							
12/24	12/31/2024	7031138309	Two Sprockets for Bio-Wheels per attached Drawing No. SP10250.1	10-600-5319	7,397.07	7,397.07	
Total Applied Industrial Technologies:						7,397.07	
<b>Aqua Engineering Inc</b>							
<b>21476</b>							
12/24	12/31/2024	29240	Standby Generator at Treatment Plant Project Phase 023 - services t	10-600-8516	2,437.50	2,437.50	
Total Aqua Engineering Inc:						2,437.50	
<b>ArcSine Engineering</b>							
<b>21477</b>							
12/24	12/31/2024	15983	SCADA Server Improvement - Server Upgrade Plant	10-400-7701	5,910.00	5,910.00	
12/24	12/31/2024	15983	SCADA Engineering Support Recycled Water	60-620-5345	2,616.00	2,616.00	
12/24	12/31/2024	15983	SCADA Engineering Support Pump Stations	10-500-5345	2,616.00	2,616.00	
12/24	12/31/2024	15983	SCADA Cyber Security Recycled Water	60-620-5345	2,718.40	2,718.40	
12/24	12/31/2024	15983	SCADA Cybersecurity Pump Stations	10-500-5345	2,718.40	2,718.40	
12/24	12/31/2024	15983	SCADA Engineering Support Plant	10-600-5345	2,616.00	2,616.00	
12/24	12/31/2024	15983	SCADA On-call support for Pump Station, Plant & Recycled Water	10-600-5345	2,718.40	2,718.40	
Total ArcSine Engineering:						21,913.20	
<b>Asaro, Anthony</b>							
<b>30000927</b>							
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-480-5243	325.00	325.00	
Total Asaro, Anthony:						325.00	
<b>Beecher Engineering, Inc.</b>							
<b>21478</b>							
12/24	12/31/2024	1224-48	Electrical Engineering Services for Primary Effluent Pump Station Pu	10-600-8520	1,610.00	1,610.00	
12/24	12/31/2024	1224-51	Professional Electrical Engineering Services - Sludge Pump Design -	10-420-7901	12,420.00	12,420.00	
Total Beecher Engineering, Inc.:						14,030.00	
<b>Buchholz Bob</b>							
<b>21479</b>							
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-460-5243	325.00	325.00	
Total Buchholz Bob:						325.00	
<b>Buck's Saw Service Inc</b>							

M = Manual Check, V = Void Check

GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount
<b>30000928</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	119411	Rapid Saw Chain Loops and Guide	10-480-5312	114.98	114.98
Total Buck's Saw Service Inc:						114.98
<b>Caltest Analytical Laboratory</b>						
<b>30000929</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	725249	Outside Lab Testing FY 24-25	10-560-5329	4,800.83	4,800.83
Total Caltest Analytical Laboratory:						4,800.83
<b>Cal-West Rentals</b>						
<b>21480</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	424274	Concrete Vibrator, 4' Electric	10-460-5312	72.80	72.80
12/24	12/31/2024	423526	Rammer Compactor 190 LBS	10-500-5312	420.40	420.40
12/24	12/31/2024	174831	Excavator Rental	10-500-5312	1,870.00	1,870.00
Total Cal-West Rentals:						2,363.20
<b>Campbell, Christopher</b>						
<b>30000930</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-600-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Campbell, Christopher:						325.00
<b>CAPPO</b>						
<b>21481</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	25.26 MEMBE	2025.2026 CAPPO Membership Renewal	10-400-5461	290.00	290.00
Total CAPPO:						290.00
<b>Cardenas, Manuel</b>						
<b>30000931</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-460-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Cardenas, Manuel:						325.00
<b>Cintas Corporation</b>						
<b>21482</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	4215449474	Laundry Service for week of 12.23.2024	10-460-5334	416.28	416.28
12/24	12/31/2024	4215449474	Laundry Service for week of 12.23.2024	10-600-5334	416.28	416.28
12/24	12/31/2024	4215449474	Safewasher Mobile Service	10-480-5339	257.17	257.17
Total Cintas Corporation:						1,089.73
<b>Cintas Corporation 2</b>						
<b>21483</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	5244903212	First Aid Kit Refill	10-460-5243	123.53	123.53
Total Cintas Corporation 2:						123.53
<b>Clark, Abraham</b>						
<b>30000932</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-600-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Clark, Abraham:						325.00

M = Manual Check, V = Void Check

GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount
<b>Comet Building Maintenance</b>						
<b>21484</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	176029	Janitorial Services - Dec 24	10-400-5333	2,120.00	2,120.00
Total Comet Building Maintenance:						2,120.00
<b>Cook, Glenn</b>						
<b>30000933</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-600-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Cook, Glenn:						325.00
<b>Cortez, Michael</b>						
<b>30000934</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-420-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Cortez, Michael:						325.00
<b>CPS HR Consulting</b>						
<b>30000935</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	0015230	Human Resources Consulting Services	10-400-5331	1,378.75	1,378.75
Total CPS HR Consulting:						1,378.75
<b>Direct Dental Administrators LLC</b>						
<b>20241226</b>						
12/24	12/26/2024	D20241227-28	Dental Payment - Admin	10-420-5117	154.40	154.40 M
12/24	12/26/2024	D20241227-28	Dental Payment - Lab	10-560-5117	394.31	394.31 M
12/24	12/26/2024	D20241227-28	Dental Payment - Maintenance	10-480-5117	421.62	421.62 M
12/24	12/26/2024	D20241227-28	Dental Payment - Admin	10-400-5117	1,188.60	1,188.60 M
Total Direct Dental Administrators LLC:						2,158.93
<b>Downing Heating Inc</b>						
<b>30000936</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	A-12780	Preventative Maintenance 4th Qtr	10-600-5311	2,110.44	2,110.44
Total Downing Heating Inc:						2,110.44
<b>Environmental Business Specialists LLC</b>						
<b>21485</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	41174	Concentrated nitrifier blend	10-600-5283	3,852.96	3,852.96
Total Environmental Business Specialists LLC:						3,852.96
<b>EOA Inc</b>						
<b>30000937</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	LG35-1124	Technical support for NPDES Permits	60-620-5341	1,695.45	1,695.45
12/24	12/31/2024	LG35-1124	Technical support for NPDES Permits	10-600-5341	9,607.55	9,607.55
Total EOA Inc:						11,303.00
<b>Fernandes Robert</b>						
<b>21486</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-460-5243	325.00	325.00

M = Manual Check, V = Void Check



GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount
Total Fernandes Robert:						325.00
<b>Franklin, William</b>						
<b>30000938</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-460-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Franklin, William:						325.00
<b>Gill, Chris</b>						
<b>30000939</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-460-5243	325.00	325.00
12/24	12/31/2024	CWEA MEMBE	CWEA Membership Reimbursement	10-460-5461	259.00	259.00
Total Gill, Chris:						584.00
<b>Golshani, Sahar</b>						
<b>30000940</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-560-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Golshani, Sahar:						325.00
<b>Gondoli, Russell</b>						
<b>30000941</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-480-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Gondoli, Russell:						325.00
<b>Grainger</b>						
<b>30000942</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	9344850822	Mesh Strainer	10-600-5311	109.05	109.05
12/24	12/31/2024	9346175699	Tube Adapters	10-600-5315	62.71	62.71
12/24	12/31/2024	9350120805	Band Saw Blades	10-480-5312	142.99	142.99
12/24	12/31/2024	9350855574	Various Tools	10-480-5222	4,378.29	4,378.29
Total Grainger:						4,693.04
<b>Inskeep, Stephen</b>						
<b>30000943</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-600-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Inskeep, Stephen:						325.00
<b>Jackson's Hardware Inc</b>						
<b>21487</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	169425	Misc. Supplies	10-460-5317	341.05	341.05
12/24	12/31/2024	169724	Misc. Supplies	10-480-5317	790.94	790.94
Total Jackson's Hardware Inc:						1,131.99
<b>Kennedy Jenks Consulting Inc</b>						
<b>30000944</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	176756	Integrated Wastewater Master Plan - Amendment 2, Phase 3 - Nov 2	10-420-7101	4,123.60	4,123.60
Total Kennedy Jenks Consulting Inc:						4,123.60

M = Manual Check, V = Void Check

GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount
<b>Linscott Engineering Contractors Inc</b>						
<b>21488</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	4399	Bio-Wheel 4100 Gear Drive Motor and Chain Replacement	10-480-5339	9,485.00	9,485.00
12/24	12/31/2024	4400	North Side Secondary Clarifier Water Leak Investigation and Repair	10-600-5312	3,112.48	3,112.48
Total Linscott Engineering Contractors Inc:						12,597.48
<b>Loveless, Ralph</b>						
<b>30000945</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-480-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Loveless, Ralph:						325.00
<b>Maleki, Ghazaleh</b>						
<b>30000946</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-560-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Maleki, Ghazaleh:						325.00
<b>Marin Ace</b>						
<b>21489</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	78576	Misc. Supplies	10-460-5312	37.34	37.34
12/24	12/31/2024	78585	Pine Stud	10-460-5311	8.84	8.84
12/24	12/31/2024	78586	Contractor Bag 45G 20PK	10-460-5317	18.67	18.67
Total Marin Ace:						64.85
<b>Moore, Don</b>						
<b>30000947</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-600-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Moore, Don:						325.00
<b>Noll &amp; Tam Architects</b>						
<b>21490</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	0061205	Multipurpose Laboratory Building - Nov 24	10-420-7107	71,310.75	71,310.75
Total Noll & Tam Architects:						71,310.75
<b>Orion Protection Services Group Inc</b>						
<b>30000948</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	14117	Nightly Patrol- Smith Ranch Jan 25	10-600-5337	379.94	379.94
Total Orion Protection Services Group Inc:						379.94
<b>Pacific Gas &amp; Electric - 0580531718-6</b>						
<b>21491</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	10-24-2024 TO	Electricity @ Plant	10-600-5425	50,406.80	50,406.80
Total Pacific Gas & Electric - 0580531718-6:						50,406.80
<b>Pankow, Brendan</b>						
<b>21492</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-480-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Pankow, Brendan:						325.00

GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount
<b>Pease, Greg</b>						
<b>30000949</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-460-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Pease, Greg:						325.00
<b>Proforma</b>						
<b>21493</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	B939002891A	Carhartt ANSI 107 Class 3 hooded Sweatshirt - Brite Lime - Quantity	10-460-5337	1,007.39	1,007.39
Total Proforma:						1,007.39
<b>Regional Government Services</b>						
<b>30000950</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	17800	Financial Management Services for Nov 24	10-400-5342	4,917.75	4,917.75
Total Regional Government Services:						4,917.75
<b>Reintech LLC</b>						
<b>21494</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	30037	Rc10 Satellite 12 MO SUB	10-600-5461	350.00	350.00
12/24	12/31/2024	30037	Rc10 Cellular 12 MO SUB	10-600-5461	250.00	250.00
Total Reintech LLC:						600.00
<b>RelaDyne</b>						
<b>30000951</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	1177895 600	Unleaded- Plant	10-600-5233	147.07	147.07
12/24	12/31/2024	1177895-IN 46	Diesel- Collections	10-460-5231	871.13	871.13
12/24	12/31/2024	1177895-IN 46	Unleaded- Collections	10-460-5233	753.09	753.09
Total RelaDyne:						1,771.29
<b>Rogers, Norman</b>						
<b>30000952</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-600-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Rogers, Norman:						325.00
<b>SKC-West Inc</b>						
<b>21495</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	63225	Gas Monitoring Equipment	10-600-5222	2,905.57	2,905.57
Total SKC-West Inc:						2,905.57
<b>Staples</b>						
<b>21496</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	6020269417	Office Paper	10-400-5221	53.01	53.01
Total Staples:						53.01
<b>Stroupe Petroleum</b>						
<b>21497</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	I45552	Gas Pump Fix	10-480-5315	645.45	645.45
Total Stroupe Petroleum:						645.45

GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount
<b>Tapia, Rogelio</b>						
<b>30000953</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-460-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Tapia, Rogelio:						325.00
<b>Terryberry</b>						
<b>30000954</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	S30732	Employee Recognition- P Amatori	10-400-5229	175.07	175.07
12/24	12/31/2024	1-142940	Employee Recognition- G Pease	10-400-5229	205.30	205.30
Total Terryberry:						380.37
<b>Thatcher Company of California Inc.</b>						
<b>30000955</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	202425010695	Sodium Bisulfite	10-600-5282	6,801.66	6,801.66
Total Thatcher Company of California Inc.:						6,801.66
<b>Tipping Structural Engineers</b>						
<b>21498</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	42299	Primary Effluent Pump Station Beam Stiffening Design	10-600-8520	1,575.00	1,575.00
Total Tipping Structural Engineers:						1,575.00
<b>Univar USA Inc.</b>						
<b>30000956</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	52646735	Sodium Hypochlorite	10-600-5281	17,072.54	17,072.54
Total Univar USA Inc.:						17,072.54
<b>USA BlueBook</b>						
<b>21499</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	INV00571952	Tube Assembly	10-600-5315	125.59	125.59
12/24	12/31/2024	INV00572916	Ten Ball Valves	10-600-5315	705.99	705.99
Total USA BlueBook:						831.58
<b>Water Components &amp; Building Supply</b>						
<b>21500</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	30653741	20' Pipe	10-600-5315	19.93	19.93
12/24	12/31/2024	30654132	20' Pipe	10-600-5315	19.93	19.93
12/24	12/31/2024	30654193	Misc. Supplies	10-600-5317	414.37	414.37
12/24	12/31/2024	30654231	Flange	10-480-5312	182.49	182.49
12/24	12/31/2024	30654502	Visqueen 6mil Black 40'X100'	10-500-5317	238.42	238.42
Total Water Components & Building Supply:						875.14
<b>Waters Jeffrey</b>						
<b>30000957</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	2025 BOOT AL	2025 Boot Allowance	10-600-5243	325.00	325.00
Total Waters Jeffrey:						325.00
<b>WECO Industries</b>						
<b>30000958</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	0054710-IN	Exhaust parts	10-460-5317	834.55	834.55

M = Manual Check, V = Void Check

GL Period	Check Issue Date	Invoice Number	Description	Invoice GL Account	Invoice Amount	Amount
Total WECO Industries:						834.55
<b>WEX Health Inc.</b>						
<b>20241213</b>						
12/24	12/13/2024	12.8.24 FSA	FSA Reimbursement 12.8.24	10-000-2130	766.98	766.98 M
<b>20241217</b>						
12/24	12/17/2024	12.14.24 FSA	FSA Reimbursement 12.14.24	10-000-2130	35.00	35.00 M
<b>202412131</b>						
12/24	12/13/2024	12.9.24 FSA	FSA Reimbursement 12.9.24	10-000-2130	70.53	70.53 M
<b>202412202</b>						
12/24	12/20/2024	12.19.2024 FS	FSA Reimbursement 12.19.24	10-000-2130	222.98	222.98 M
<b>202412261</b>						
12/24	12/26/2024	0002064383-IN	FSA Administration - Nov 24	10-000-2130	50.00	50.00 M
Total WEX Health Inc.:						1,145.49
<b>WRA INC</b>						
<b>21501</b>						
12/24	12/31/2024	26227-3-55376	Lower Miller Creek Rock Weir and Vane Repair Permitting - Nov 24	10-580-7902	7,058.00	7,058.00
Total WRA INC:						7,058.00
Grand Totals:						279,921.71

Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Manager:  \_\_\_\_\_  
 Finance Manager:  \_\_\_\_\_

M = Manual Check, V = Void Check

AGENDA: 36  
DATE: January 16, 2025



## BOARD MEMBER CONFERENCE/ MEETING/WEBINAR ATTENDANCE REQUEST

Date: 12-19-24 Name: MEGAN CLARK

I would like to attend the WINTER CONF. Meeting  
of C.A.S.A.

To be held on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of JAN. from 8:00  a.m./ p.m. to  
31<sup>st</sup> day of JAN. from 8:00  a.m./ p.m.

Location of meeting: PALM SPRINGS, CA.

Actual meeting date(s): 29<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> 2025

Meeting Type:  (In person)  Webinar  Conference

Purpose of Meeting: INFO

Meeting relevance to District: INFO

BOARD SECRETARY CONFERENCE  
Board Members to register for Webinars and Meetings

Request assistance from Board Secretary to register for Conference only:  YES  NO

WITH TOUR!

Board Directors to make their own Hotel Reservations and book their own transportation including airfare, taxi and/or shuttles.

Frequency of Meeting: ONCE

Estimated Costs of Travel (if applicable): \$ 1,000

Date submitted to Board Secretary: 12-19-24

Board approval obtained on Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit this form to the Board Secretary no later than 1 week prior to the Board Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 3D  
DATE January 15, 2025



## BOARD MEMBER CONFERENCE/ MEETING/WEBINAR ATTENDANCE REQUEST

Date: 12/21/24 Name: Crystal Yezman

I would like to attend the Winter Conference Meeting  
of CASA

To be held on the 29th day of January from 7am a.m. / p.m. to  
31st day of January from 10:45am a.m. / p.m.

Location of meeting: Palm Springs, CA

Actual meeting date(s): Jan 28-Jan31, 2025

Meeting Type: (In person/Webinar/Conference) Conference

Purpose of Meeting: Education and Networking

Meeting relevance to District: Association of Sanitation Agencies

Board Members to register for Webinars and Meetings  
Request assistance from Board Secretary to register for Conference only: YES NO

**Board Directors to make their own Hotel Reservations and book their own transportation including airfare, taxi and/or shuttles.**

Frequency of Meeting: Annual

Estimated Costs of Travel (if applicable): \$2,000 + Registration Fee

Date submitted to Board Secretary: 12/21/2024

Board approval obtained on Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit this form to the Board Secretary no later than 1 week prior to the Board Meeting.**




Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ 3E \_\_\_\_\_

GM Review \_\_\_\_\_ CP \_\_\_\_\_

# Agenda Summary Report

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**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Dale McDonald, Administrative Services Manager   
 (415) 526-1519 [dmcdonald@lqvsd.org](mailto:dmcdonald@lqvsd.org)  
**Meeting Date:** January 16, 2025  
**Re:** Approve Winter 2025 Heron Newsletter  
**Item Type:** Consent  X  Action \_\_\_\_\_ Information \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ .  
**Standard Contract:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (See attached) Not Applicable  X  .

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## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board approve the publication of the Winter 2025 Heron Newsletter.

## BACKGROUND

The District produces a newsletter approximately every six (6) months to update customers regarding subjects of interest about the District. Each newsletter typically has one main topic and three to four smaller articles. A primary theme throughout the newsletter is the critical need to continue investing in capital improvements to maintain and protect the District’s infrastructure to meet the District’s goals of providing reliable service while protecting the environment.

The Board reviewed the newsletter on December 5, 2024 and provided suggestions, which have been incorporated into the final version attached. The newsletter will be mailed in late January.

## PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

On October 17, 2024, the Board discussed potential newsletter topics and gave staff direction to develop the newsletter. The following topics were chosen:

- Board of Directors Election Results
- Wastewater Surveillance for COVID-19 and Other Pathogens
- Engineering Department Spotlight
- Pollution Prevention FOG (Fats Oil and Grease), Flushable Wipes, No Drugs Down the Drain
- New Hires in 2024

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

N/A

## FISCAL IMPACT

The newsletter is budgeted in the 2024-25 Budget as part of the District’s public outreach.



# THE HERON

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Winter 2025

## Nicholas Lavrov Elected to District Board of Directors



The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District welcomes Nicholas Lavrov, who was elected to the Board of Directors

in November and sworn in on December 19. As a Board member, Mr. Lavrov helps represent the District's community and ratepayers in the critical areas of water management, environmental protection, and sustainable operations. He will serve the remaining two years of this seat's four-year term (the partial term is due to the resignation of former Director Ronald Ford earlier this year). Incumbents Craig Murray and Gary Robards ran unopposed in this election and will continue to serve as directors for a new four-year term.

Mr. Lavrov has worked for over 25 years in the public sector. Among other roles, his experience includes seven years as senior park ranger involved in overseeing the permit management program for Golden Gate National Recreation Area lands in Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties. He's also worked with the San Francisco Water Department on water inspection and water conservation programs, and managed 270,000 acres of U.S. parklands and resources for the Bureau of Land

## Do You Know What Items Should NOT Go Down YOUR Drain?

### **NO** fats, oil, grease, wipes, or prescription drugs!

Your help is needed to avoid creating a sewer overflow, and to protect our environment! Did you know that some typical household substances should not go down the drain, because they can cause a sewer overflow or other problems? Here's an overview of how you can help with pollution prevention, and do your part to keep such materials from getting into the system in the first place.

#### Prevent FOG

Many of us may enjoy a nice, foggy Sunday morning — but there's a different kind of FOG that is not so enjoyable for drains and sewers. **FOG** stands for "Fats, Oil, and Grease" and those are all things that should **not** be put down the drain. They can pollute our waterways and easily build up in drains and the sewer lines, causing restrictions and overflows in your home or further down the line. And, they cause problems at the treatment plant. FOG includes substances like cooking oil, lard,

butter/margarine, shortening, bacon grease, some sauces and salad dressings, cheese, and meat fat trimmings.



Here are some tips for preventing FOG from entering the sewer system:

- Never pour fats, oil, or grease down the drain.
- Use a paper towel to wipe cooled oil and grease from cooking pans before washing — put the paper towel in your green organics cart.

*Continued on page 3...*



### Easy Sign-Up for District Information

Get the District information you want via email! Just click on the QR code at left to subscribe to timely emails including news and updates, links to our newsletters, and agendas for our Board of Directors' meetings. And don't worry — we'll never sell or give your email to any third party.

# Department Spotlight: Engineering

The District's Engineering Department (Team) is pivotal in ensuring environmental compliance, upgrading critical infrastructure, and advancing sustainability initiatives. The Team is responsible for managing the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), overseeing essential projects that modernize facilities and enhance wastewater management, safeguarding the environment, and benefitting the community.



District's Wastewater Treatment Plant — upgrade completed June 2023.

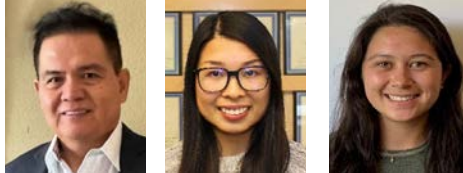
A recent highlight for the department was the completion of a ~\$70 million **upgrade to LGVSD's wastewater treatment plant**. This major improvement increases treatment efficiency and capacity and supports regulatory compliance, addressing the high standards required for safe and effective wastewater processing.

The Team is also preparing for upgrades to the **wastewater collection system**, to rehabilitate sewer mains and modernize the largest pump station in the District — the Duckett Pump Station. Built in the 1960s, this station will soon undergo upgrades to its electrical systems and conveyance infrastructure, including critical pipelines that run under a freeway and a creek.

A unique aspect of LGVSD's operation is its **reclamation area**, where treated water is stored during certain times of the year when discharge to the Bay is restricted by their regulatory permit.

The Team plays a vital role in developing projects for proper operation and maintenance of the infrastructure supporting these holding ponds, ensuring they function properly throughout the year.

## The Engineering Department Team



Mike Cortez,  
District  
Engineer

Irene Huang,  
Associate  
Engineer

Patty Quinn,  
Civil  
Engineering  
Technician

The department includes the District Engineer, an Associate Engineer, and a Civil Engineering Technician.

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The Team manages an impressive workload of 47 CIP projects totaling ~\$18 million for fiscal year 2024-2025.

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Of these, 44 are currently active, with a mix of large-scale upgrades and smaller initiatives. Additionally, the department is reviewing more than 40 private land development and building renovations, ensuring the projects integrate seamlessly into the LGVSD sewer system.

The department Team issues requests for proposals, manages consultant bids and work, and oversees project construction, ensuring each project meets LGVSD's sustainability standards and regulatory requirements. The Team continuously strengthens LGVSD's infrastructure to support long-term community needs and environmental stewardship, and thoughtfully incorporates sustainable design elements into every project. Careful planning and dedication make the Team a driving force in the District's commitment to reliable, compliant, and sustainable wastewater management.

# District's Role in COVID-19 Detection

## Wastewater-based epidemiology

When the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread, researchers drew on their existing knowledge of detecting viruses and pathogens in wastewater to start looking for and identifying the presence of the virus. That capability opened a new frontier in tracking the virus as it spread through human populations, by identifying its presence in the sewage systems. This *wastewater-based epidemiology* allowed for early detection of the disease, giving health authorities vital information to identify "hot spots" and work to reduce localized outbreaks.

In early 2020, the District was approached by researchers from UC Berkeley, Stanford, and other institutions to support COVID-19 detection efforts in wastewater. The District quickly joined the effort, providing samples and contributing to the nationwide push to curb the pandemic. This work, completed at no additional cost to ratepayers, underscored LGVSD's commitment to leveraging wastewater science for the public good—from local residents to the wider population.



## State Recognition of District's Efforts

In the fall of 2021, LGVSD's contributions were formally recognized by the California State Water Resources Control Board in a resolution honoring wastewater treatment utilities for efforts in helping to better track the virus. This recognition highlighted the District and other agencies as early trendsetters in



- You can also pour cooled grease from pans into compostable containers, and place them in your green organics cart.



### No Wipes in the Toilet

Please remember that disposable wipes of any kind, even those advertised as "flushable," should never be flushed down the drain. These wipes, or anything other than toilet paper (including personal wipes, baby wipes, paper towels, feminine hygiene products, and other paper products — and, kitty litter!) can cause obstructions in the sewer collection system — and some of them must be physically removed at the wastewater treatment plant. Flushing wipes may also damage the plumbing system in your own home, potentially resulting in significant repairs and homeowner costs.

When it comes to your toilets, just keep in mind that the only things to be flushed are the **Three Ps** — **P**ee, **P**oop, and (toilet) **P**aper!

### Don't Put Meds Down the Drain

Flushing your unused prescription pills down the toilet can cause water quality issues because wastewater treatment plants are typically not equipped to remove pharmaceuticals from the wastewater. Those medications could affect the environment and endanger public health. Instead, you can safely dispose of your unused pharmaceuticals by dropping them off at an authorized site (see list at right).

Check [GetSmartAboutDrugs.gov](http://GetSmartAboutDrugs.gov) for drop-off locations during each fall's annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

Everyone can help prevent FOG, wipes/paper products, and prescription drugs from entering our drains and sewers, by taking these easy steps. This helps to keep the system running smooth and prevent environmental impacts and overflows — at home, at the treatment plant, and in the collection system. Thank you for doing your part!



## Pharmaceutical Drop-Off Locations\*

Be sure to call your preferred location first to confirm they continue to accept drug drop-off.

### Your local CVS or Rite Aid Store

#### San Rafael Police Department

1400 Fifth Ave.  
San Rafael  
(415) 485-3000

#### Kaiser San Rafael (Los Gamos) Pharmacy

1650 Los Gamos Drive,  
Floor 2, Room 2600  
San Rafael  
(415) 444-2000

#### Marin County Sheriff's Office

1600 Los Gamos Drive,  
Suite 205  
San Rafael  
(415) 473-6043

#### Kaiser San Rafael

99 Montecillo Road  
San Rafael  
(415) 444-2980

#### County of Marin Probation Department

3501 Civic Center Drive,  
Room 266  
San Rafael  
(415) 473-6310

#### Kaiser San Rafael Downtown

1033 3rd Street, First Floor  
San Rafael  
(415) 482-6900

For the most updated list, visit [med-project.org/locations/marin-county](http://med-project.org/locations/marin-county).

\*Location sources:

- County of Marin Department of Health and Human Services
- Marin County Environmental Health Services
- Med-Project, Medication Education & Disposal



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**Board of Directors**

Megan Clark  
Nicholas Lavrov  
Craig K. Murray  
Gary Robards  
Crystal J. Yezman

**Board Meetings are**

held at 4:00 PM on  
the first and third  
Thursday of each month  
at the District offices.

**District Administration:** Curtis Paxton, General Manager

The District received the following awards and certificates:

- Recycled Water Agency of the Year 2023 (Small Category) from the California WaterReuse Association
- District Transparency Certificate of Excellence by the Special District Leadership Foundation for 2022-2025 in recognition of its outstanding efforts to promote transparency and good governance.
- Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2023 from Government Finance Officers Association.

Printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks.

*"Nicholas Lavrov" continued from page 1*

Management in the Bay Area/northern California. Currently, he serves as Environmental Protection Specialist at the Federal Emergency Management Agency in Oakland, helping the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, and territories located in the U.S. Pacific Islands to rebuild after disasters.

Mr. Lavrov holds a bachelor's degree in economics from UC Berkeley, and is working on a master's degree in Natural Resource Management from the University of Idaho. He is a State-certified Water Distribution Operator-Grade 2, and has been trained in several FEMA programs including the National Incident Management System, Emergency Preparedness, Incident Command, and Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience.

Mr. Lavrov notes his long-time commitment to the community served by the District, saying, *"I'm excited to join the LGVSD Board of Directors and bring my wide experience in water and wastewater, clean power, and protecting the environment to*

*"Covid -19" continued from page 2*

implementing wastewater-based epidemiology well before formal State and Federal programs were developed. The Water Board expressed "profound appreciation" for LGVSD's voluntary efforts and investments, underscoring the importance of wastewater monitoring for informing public health responses and safeguarding California's communities.

Today, with the "new normal" of COVID and its variants, the District continues to work with its state and local partners to gather information about the virus's presence in wastewater. Through this work we are making important contributions to the knowledge base toward a better understanding of COVID and its variants.

*the service of the District."* He looks forward to working with the other Board members and staff to address key initiatives including:

- upgrading aging infrastructure
- increasing use of recycled water
- expanding the low-income

## District Welcomes New Team Members

Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District is excited to welcome Angela Beran as the new Grant Management and Procurement Specialist, a position added in 2024 to meet the growing needs of the District. We are also pleased to announce the hiring of Brendan Pankow as Electrical Instrumentation Technician, and Russell Gondoli as Skilled Maintenance Worker, filling existing positions that recently became vacant. Welcome to the team!



*When done reading this newsletter, please put it in your blue recycling bin with other recyclable paper items.*

program for the disadvantaged in the community

Please join us in welcoming Director Lavrov in his new role, helping guide our District toward a sustainable future.




Item Number \_\_\_\_\_ 3F \_\_\_\_\_

GM Review \_\_\_\_\_ CP \_\_\_\_\_

# Agenda Summary Report

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**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Dale McDonald, Administrative Services Manager   
(415) 526-1519 [dmcdonald@lqvsd.org](mailto:dmcdonald@lqvsd.org)  
**Meeting Date:** January 16, 2025  
**Re:** Resolution authorizing signing authority for the Bank of Marin bank accounts

**Item Type:** Consent  X  Action \_\_\_\_\_ Information \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ .  
**Standard Contract:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (See attached) Not Applicable  X  .

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## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Board to approve Resolution 2025-2345 to add new authorized member to the list of authorized signers for the Bank of Marin bank accounts and to update the signers list to show appointed President and Vice President positions on the Board.

## BACKGROUND

The Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District operating bank accounts held at the Bank of Marin requires a formal resolution by the governing body to authorize representatives on the District’s behalf to establish new accounts, modify existing accounts, and to make deposits or withdrawals into the bank accounts. In addition, Board members are authorized to sign checks in place of the General Manager or the Administrative Services Manager as needed. Signature cards of authorized signers are required to be filed with the Bank of Marin.

Board Member Nicholas Lavrov, elected to the Board in November and seated on December 19, 2024, will be added to the authorized signers list. Concurrently, this resolution will notify Bank of Marin of newly appointed President Gary Robards and Vice President Crystal Yezman.

## PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

On April 4, 2024, the Board adopted Resolution No. 2024-2325 authorizing signers for Bank of Marin accounts.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

N/A

## FISCAL IMPACT

None.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-2345**

**A RESOLUTION OF LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT  
AUTHORIZING SIGNING AUTHORITY FOR THE BANK OF MARIN OPERATING  
ACCOUNT #03323300 AND ASSOCIATED ACCOUNTS #03510138, #03509510,  
#03508959, #03319258, #03511060, #03513652, #03513983, #03716073, #03715679**

**LAS GALLINAS VALLEY SANITARY DISTRICT  
101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300  
San Rafael, California 94903  
Tel: 415-472-1734**

**WHEREAS**, a general operating checking account was established with the Bank of Marin in 2007; and

**WHEREAS**, additional associated accounts were established to conduct District business; and

**WHEREAS**, Board Financial Policy F-90-70 requires that signing authority is to be granted by resolution for checks drawn from the Operating bank account, and that checks will be signed by two authorized signatories, and

**WHEREAS**, the General Manager and Administrative Services Manager, who serves as the District Treasurer, are authorized as the primary signers may occasionally be unavailable to sign, any available Board member may sign in place of the General Manager or the Administrative Services Manager, or two Board members may sign in place of the General Manager and the Administrative Services Manager, and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District does hereby find that the authorized signers have changed due to a new board member being elected, and new President and Vice President being appointed.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Directors of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District authorize the following persons or combination of persons listed as signers on the signature card are authorized to endorse, on the behalf of the District, any checks or other items payable to the organization or its order, to deposit such checks and other items into the account(s), with or without such endorsement and to direct withdrawals from the account(s) by check drawing on the account(s) or otherwise, including withdrawals payable to anyone who is an authorized signer until they are removed from their elected or assigned position:

GARY E. ROBARDS  
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CRYSTAL J. YEZMAN  
VICE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

CRAIG. K. MURRAY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEGAN CLARK  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

NICHOLAS LAVROV  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CURTIS PAXTON  
GENERAL MANAGER

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

DALE MCDONALD  
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Administrative Services Manager shall file with the Bank of Marin any required signature cards, consumer information forms, and/or submittals along with a copy of this executed resolution; all of the authorized signatures appearing for authorized signers on the signature card referenced by this resolution are those of the persons authorized to withdraw funds in accordance with this resolutions until such authority is revoked by giving written notice to the Bank of Marin signed by authorized officers of this organization, and, these resolutions are still in force and are unmodified.

\* \* \* \* \*

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly passed and adopted by the Sanitary Board of the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, Marin County, California, at a meeting thereof held on the 16<sup>TH</sup> Day of January, 2025, that the following persons or combination of persons listed as signers are authorized to endorse, on the behalf of this of the district, any checks or other items payable to the organization or its order, to deposit such checks and other items into the account, with or without such endorsement and to direct withdrawals from the account by check drawing on the account or otherwise, including withdrawals payable to anyone who is an authorized signer, by the following vote of the members thereof:

AYES, and in favor thereof Members:

NOES, Members:

ABSENT, Members:

ABSTAIN, Members:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teresa Lerch, Board Secretary  
Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

(seal)

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Crystal J. Yezman, Vice-President  
Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District

Agenda Item 36  
Date January 16, 2025

Directors' Meeting Attendance Recap

<u>Name</u>	<u>Total Meetings</u>
Megan Clark	3
Nicholas Lavrov	1
Craig Murray	3
Gary Robards	3
Crystal Yezman	2
Barry Nitzberg	<u>1</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>13</u></u>

Meeting Date: 1/16/2025  
Paydate: 1/24/2025





101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903

Office: 415.472.1734 Fax: 415.499.7715

**BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE FORM**

Director's Name: MEGAN CLARK Month: DECEMBER 2024

Board Members shall be compensated for up to the legal limit of six (6) meetings per month and one (1) per day. Board members are limited to four (4) conferences or seminars per year. For multi-day conferences, compensation shall be at a maximum of one (1) meeting per day.

REGULAR and SPECIAL MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
5 <sup>th</sup>	REG.	X	
19 <sup>th</sup>	REG.	X	
<b>TOTAL</b>		2	

OTHER MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
6 <sup>th</sup>	NBWA	X	
<b>TOTAL</b>		1	

**Total Meetings for which I am Requesting Payment:**  
**Max of six (6) per Health & Safety Code §4733** 3

I hereby certify that the meetings as set forth above are true and correct and are for the purpose of conducting official business for the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District.

Megan Clark  
 Director Signature

1-7-25  
 Date

[Signature]  
 Administrative Services Manager Approved

1/8/25  
 Date

[Signature]  
 Board Secretary Received

1-7-25  
 Date



101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903

Office: 415.472.1734 Fax: 415.499.7715

**BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE FORM**

Director's Name: NICHOLAS LAVROV Month: DECEMBER 2024

Board Members shall be compensated for up to the legal limit of six (6) meetings per month and one (1) per day. Board members are limited to four (4) conferences or seminars per year. For multi-day conferences, compensation shall be at a maximum of one (1) meeting per day.

REGULAR and SPECIAL MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
12/19/2024	REGULAR BOARD MEETING	X	
<b>TOTAL</b>		1	

OTHER MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Total Meetings for which I am Requesting Payment:**  
**Max of six (6) per Health & Safety Code §4733**

I hereby certify that the meetings as set forth above are true and correct and are for the purpose of conducting official business for the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Administrative Services Manager Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Board Secretary Received

\_\_\_\_\_  
 12/19/2024  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 1/8/25  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 12/19/24  
 Date



101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903

Office: 415.472.1734 Fax: 415.499.7715

**BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE FORM**

Director's Name: MURRAY, Craig K. Month: December 2024

Board Members shall be compensated for up to the legal limit of six (6) meeting per month and one (1) per day. Board members are limited to four (4) conferences or seminars per year. For multi-day conferences, compensation shall be at a maximum of one (1) meeting per day.

REGULAR and SPECIAL MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
12/5/24	Board Meeting	X	
12/19/24	Board Meeting	X	
<b>TOTAL</b>		2/2	

OTHER MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
12/4/24	Chevron Decision Webinar – EPA Regulatory Review & Changes	X	
<del>12/12/24</del>	<del>CASA Air-Quality, Climate-Change &amp; Energy-(ACE)-Workgroup-Meeting</del>	<del>X</del>	
12/5/24	International City Managers Association (ICMA): Drive Impact with Scenario Planning in Local Government		X
12/5/24	BCDC Board Meeting – Vote on Shoreline Adaptation Plan, SLR Guidelines Adoption		X
12/11/24	International Right of Way Association – Tijuana Roadway, Baja CA, Mexico: A Cross-Board Study, IRWA International Relations Committee		X
12/11/24	International Right of Way Association – Annual Holiday Luncheon		X
12/12/24	District Annual Holiday Luncheon		X
12/12/24	Marin LAFCo Regular Commission Meeting		X
12/1,29/24	Merrydale Road/Las Gallinas Creek Headwater Litter & Debris Removal c/o City of San Rafael: 12/1 0.5 hrs; 12/29 1.5 hrs		XX
<b>TOTAL</b>		1/9	

Total Meetings for which I am Requesting Payment: Max of six (6) per Health & Safety Code §4733	<b>3/11</b>
--	-------------

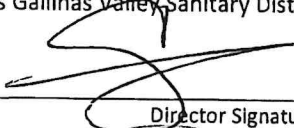


101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903

Office: 415.472.1734 Fax: 415.499.7715

### BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE FORM


I hereby certify that the meetings as set forth above are true and correct and are for the purpose of conducting official business for the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature


Craig K. Murray

December 19, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
11/8/25

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrative Services Manager Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
12/19/24

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary Received



**BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE FORM**

GARY ROBBINS Nov Dec 2021

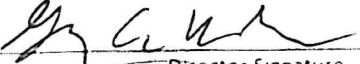
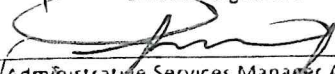
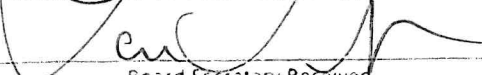
Board members shall be compensated for their time at the following rates: Board members shall be compensated for their time at the following rates: Board members shall be at

Date	Description of meeting	CHARGING DISTRICT	
		Yes	No
12/5	BOARD MEETING	X	
12/11	BOARD MEETING	X	
TOTAL		2	

Date	OTHER MEETINGS Description of meeting	CHARGING DISTRICT	
		Yes	No
12/12	HOLIDAY LUNCHEON		X
12/16	NBWRA Meeting	X	
TOTAL		1	3

Total Meetings for which I am Requesting Payment: 3  
 Max of six (6) per Health & Safety Code §4733

I hereby certify that the meetings as set forth above are true and correct and are for the purpose of conducting official business for the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District.

  
 Director Signature 11/1/2025  
Date  
  
 Administrative Services Manager Approved 1/8/25  
Date  
  
 Board Secretary Received 1/6/25  
Date



101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903

Office: 415.472.1734 Fax: 415.499.7715

**BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE FORM**

Director's Name: Crystal YeZman Month: December 2024

Board Members shall be compensated for up to the legal limit of six (6) meetings per month and one (1) per day. Board members are limited to four (4) conferences or seminars per year. For multi-day conferences, compensation shall be at a maximum of one (1) meeting per day.

REGULAR and SPECIAL MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
<b>TOTAL</b>			

OTHER MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
12/5	Regular Board Mtg.	X	
12/19	Regular Board Mtg.	X	
<b>TOTAL</b>		2	

<b>Total Meetings for which I am Requesting Payment: Max of six (6) per Health &amp; Safety Code §4733</b>	2
--	---

I hereby certify that the meetings as set forth above are true and correct and are for the purpose of conducting official business for the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrative Services Manager Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary Received

12/19/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

1/8/25  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

12/19/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



101 Lucas Valley Road, Suite 300, San Rafael, CA 94903

Office: 415.472.1734 Fax: 415.499.7715

**BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE FORM**

Director's Name: Barry Nitzberg Month: December

Board Members shall be compensated for up to the legal limit of six (6) meetings per month and one (1) per day. Board members are limited to four (4) conferences or seminars per year. For multi-day conferences, compensation shall be at a maximum of one (1) meeting per day.

REGULAR and SPECIAL MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
12/5/24	Board Meeting	✓	
<b>TOTAL</b>			

OTHER MEETINGS		CHARGING DISTRICT	
Date	Description of meeting	Yes	No
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Total Meetings for which I am Requesting Payment:** 1  
**Max of six (6) per Health & Safety Code §4733**

I hereby certify that the meetings as set forth above are true and correct and are for the purpose of conducting official business for the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District.

Barry Nitzberg  
 Director Signature  
[Signature]  
 Administrative Services Manager Approved  
[Signature]  
 Board Secretary Received

12/5/24  
 Date  
1/8/25  
 Date  
12/5/24  
 Date

**1/16/2025**

**General Manager Report**

- Separate Item to be distributed at Board Meeting
- Separate Item to be distributed prior to Board Meeting
- Verbal Report
- Presentation






Item Number 4.2

GM Review CP

# Agenda Summary Report

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To: Board of Directors  
From: Dale McDonald, Administrative Services Manager   
(415) 526-1519 [dmcdonald@lqvsd.org](mailto:dmcdonald@lqvsd.org)  
Meeting Date: January 16, 2025  
Re: Annual Budget Development Timeline for FY 2025-2026  
Item Type: Consent \_\_\_\_\_ Action \_\_\_\_\_ Information X Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Standard Contract: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (See attached) Not Applicable X .

---

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Board to receive the annual budget development and adoption timeline.

## BACKGROUND:

Attached is the tentative budget calendar for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year (FY). This calendar indicates that the budget will be brought to the Board for approval no later than June 26, 2025.

Board Policy F-40 provides guidance on the budget process. It is the responsibility of the General Manager and Administrative Services Manager to prepare the budget.

The budget will factor in additional revenue from the Sewer Service Charge (SSC) rate increase that will be effective July 1, 2025. There is no need to send out Prop 218 Notices as the SSC rate increase is planned to remain at or below the 10% threshold established by Ordinance 192 adopted on June 30, 2023 providing for SSC rate increases through June 30, 2027.

The second regularly scheduled Board meeting in June lands on the Juneteenth National Independence Day holiday, June 19. Staff recommends to cancel that meeting and schedule a Special Board Meeting for the budget hearing and adoption on the following Thursday, June 26, 2025.

A Public Hearing on the budget is therefore recommended to be scheduled for June 26, 2025. Adoption of the budget will occur before the next fiscal year begins on July 1, 2025.

## PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION:

None

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

N/A

## FISCAL IMPACT:

None



## Budget Calendar and Timeline for the Adoption of the 2025-2026 Budget

Date	Task
January 23, 2025	Budget Kickoff Meeting / CIP Discussion with Managers
February 20, 2025	Mid Year Budget Review FY 2024-2025 and Forecast EOY w/ Board
February 27, 2025	Preliminary Budget developed with Managers (O&M and CIP)
March 5, 2025	Preliminary Budget for FY 2025-2026 Finalized by GM
March 20, 2025	Preliminary Budget Presented at Regular Board Meeting
Early April	Prepare Preliminary Non-Residential Commercial Sewer Rate Calculations <sup>(1)</sup>
May 1, 2025	Prepare Proposed Budget w/ Employee Costs CPI Data
May 15, 2025	Review Proposed Budget w/ Board, confirm Rate Increase for use in final budget
May 15, 2025	Board Meeting with Resolution Fixing Time and Place for Budget Hearing
May 22, 2025	Publication of Legal ad No. 1 for Budget Public Hearing
June 5, 2025	Publication of Legal ad No. 2 for Budget Public Hearing
June 26, 2025	Budget Hearing and Adoption along with SSC Resolutions at Special Board Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Resolutions Certifying Legal Notice Has Been Given</li> <li>* Public Hearing for the Budget</li> <li>* Resolution Confirming the Annual Sewer Service Charge and Supplemental Charges</li> <li>* Resolution Fixing and Approving the Budget</li> <li>* Resolution Providing for the Collection of Sewer Service Charges on the Tax Roll</li> <li>* Resolution Determining the Appropriation of Tax Proceeds</li> <li>* Adopt Pay Scale of Wages effective July 1, 2025</li> </ul>

(1) LGVSD to request water data from MMWD after April 1 to capture February-March MMWD billing period data.

1/16/2025

## **BOARD MEMBER REPORTS**

### **CLARK**

**NBWA Board Committee, CASA Workforce Committee, Operations Control Centers Ad Hoc Committee, Fleet Management Ad Hoc Committee, FutureSense Ad Hoc Committee, Energy Ad Hoc Committee, Other Reports**

### **LAVROV**

**TBD**

### **MURRAY**

**Marin LAFCO, Flood Zone 6, Biosolids Ad Hoc Committee, CASA Energy Committee, Development Ad Hoc Committee, SF Trail Ad Hoc Committee, Energy Ad Hoc Committee, Other Reports**

### **ROBARDS**

**Gallinas Watershed Council/Miller Creek, NBWRA, Engineering Ad Hoc Committee re: STPURWE, McInnis Marsh Ad Hoc Committee, Development Ad Hoc Committee, FutureSense Ad Hoc Committee, Other Reports**

### **YEZMAN**

**Flood Zone 7, CSRMA, Ad Hoc Engineering Sub-Committee re: STPURWE, Marin Special Districts Association, Biosolids Ad Hoc Committee, Other Reports**



## BOARD MEMBER CONFERENCE/ MEETING/WEBINAR ATTENDANCE REQUEST

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to attend the \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting  
of \_\_\_\_\_

To be held on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m. to  
\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. / p.m.

Location of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Actual meeting date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Type: (In person/Webinar/Conference) \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting relevance to District: \_\_\_\_\_

Board Members to register for Webinars and Meetings

YES NO

Request assistance from Board Secretary to register for Conference only:

**Board Directors to make their own Hotel Reservations and book their own transportation including airfare, taxi and/or shuttles.**

Frequency of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Costs of Travel (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Board Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

Board approval obtained on Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit this form to the Board Secretary no later than 1 week prior to the Board Meeting.**

**1/16/2025**

**BOARD AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS**

**Agenda Item 6B**

- Separate Item to be distributed at Board Meeting
- Separate Item to be distributed prior to Board Meeting
- Verbal Report
- Presentation

EDITORIAL

## With care, mall housing plan can meet needs

Over its 60 years as one of Marin's busiest shopping hubs, the Northgate mall has gone through a number of significant transformations.

There have been expansions, transformation from an open-air mall to one that's covered and the addition of stores along its exteriors.

Businesses have come and gone. The 2018 closure of Sears, one of the mall's longtime anchor stores, signaled another transformation. It certainly signaled the ongoing struggles of brick-and-mortar stores in the face of the growth of online shopping.

The shopping center's owners advanced plans to turn the Sears spot into a Costco, only to withdraw its blueprints after stiff neighborhood opposition to plans to add a gas station.

City Hall pushed for housing, maybe not as many units as the owners want to see, but an opportunity to meet a community need.

The San Rafael City Council has given a green light to mall owners Merlone Geier Partners' plans to transform the shopping center into a "town square" with 1,422 residences, the largest residential development seen in Marin in years.

Located next to the freeway and close to transit makes the shopping center a natural for a large development.

Traffic experts, commissioned by the city, estimate that the change of commercial space to residential, will reduce traffic. The flow of traffic to and from a busy shopping center is greater than from residential development, they say.

The council's approval includes a condition that the city will evaluate traffic conditions after completion of the first phase — 864 units — to determine if other traffic improvements are needed.

The development should also help the city meet its state-imposed ambitious housing quota of adding 3,220 new housing units by 2031.

Many neighbors question the size of the development, which will be built in phases.

But others see the development as meeting a community need and offering an opportunity for converting the struggling center into a vibrant live/work place that will continue to provide commercial space as well as room for community gatherings.

Having more than the planned 143 units designated as "affordable" would have been a stronger response to the local need for workforce housing. Just as the construction of the shopping center brought change when it opened in 1965, the plan is a new chapter in the property's role as an economic hub.

In voting to approve the plan, Councilmember Maika Llorens said, "It's the vision of being able to live and work, and being able to gather in one place, which I think can really bring vibrancy and new energy to Northgate."

Councilmember Rachel Kertz, whose district includes Northgate and the surrounding neighborhoods, said, "Instead of fearing change, I choose to meet it with curiosity and excitement and commitment to building something remarkable together."

Council members, including Mayor Kate Colin, said the plan shapes the mall to meet the needs and demands of the future. Many neighbors are more fearful than impressed. They are wary of change, particularly the addition of more



DAN WALTERS

# Will pro-housing governor's return fix Marin resistance?

Gavin Newsom has just two years remaining of his governorship. As it winds down, he is stepping up efforts to build a national profile toward what many pundits assume will be a 2028 presidential campaign. That apparently includes writing his autobiography.

As he prepares for whatever follows his 16 years in Sacramento as lieutenant governor and governor, Newsom is also abandoning the state capital in another sense: moving himself and his family back to Marin County. He has purchased a \$9 million home in the affluent town of Kentfield.

He bought it from Daniel Pritzker, a billionaire heir to the Pritzker hotel fortune. There's an ironic twist to that transaction. Daniel Pritzker is a cousin of Illinois Gov. Jay Pritzker, another wealthy heir and a potential rival to Newsom in the 2028 presidential sweepstakes.

However, the more interesting aspect of Newsom's return to Marin County is its stubborn resistance to his efforts, as governor, to compel communities to plan for millions of new housing units, particularly those for low- and moderate-income families.

Slow or no population growth is a long-standing credo in Marin and has been largely successful. Since 2000, it has gained only 7,000 residents, thanks to well-organized opposition and a conscious effort to minimize expansion of water, sewer and other services.

The state's Department of Housing and Community Development, armed with new enforcement powers, has been leaning on wealthy communities to accept housing quotas, threatening lawsuits and intercession if they resist. Currently, under state and regional directives, Marin is supposed to be planning for 14,210 new housing units countywide, including 3,569 in unincorporated areas such as Kentfield.

County officials have developed a so-called "housing element" that would, in essence, override community planning agencies hostile to large housing projects. It's needed, county officials say, to satisfy state housing watchdogs and avoid penalties for non-compliance.

However, opponents of the plan persuaded a local judge last spring to agree to remove the override language, creating a dilemma for county officials. The judge set an upcoming deadline to comply with the order, and county officials — caught between state pressure and local sentiment — are trying to get an extension.

“This is really about trying to thread the needle to satisfy both sides as much as we can,” County Supervisor Dennis Rodoni said during a stormy hearing on the issue.

An even more explicit example of Marin County’s stubborn resistance is occurring in Fairfax, another insular community a few miles from Newsom’s new home. A developer is proposing a six-story, 243-unit apartment project in downtown Fairfax, on the site of a partially vacant office park, with 41 units set aside for low-income families.

But the developer is getting heat from town officials, even though the town’s housing element identifies the site’s potential for hundreds of new units. Town officials have declared the project application was incomplete — which the developer denies — and the issue could become fodder for state intervention or lawsuits.

So, one might wonder, as Newsom reconnects with Marin County, will his presence affect its perpetual battles over housing?

While Newsom’s administration has cracked down on other affluent communities that resist quotas — it’s been especially aggressive with conservative Huntington Beach — liberal Marin County has historically received the kid gloves treatment.

A decade ago, Newsom’s predecessor, Jerry Brown, signed legislation to give Marin partial relief on housing quotas by treating it as suburban rather than urban, and later signed an extension of the special treatment to 2028, which was buried in a budget trailer bill and received little public attention.

Marin officials characterized the exemption as a way to provide more time for the county to do the right thing. But as the current clashes indicate, strong opposition to the state’s 14,210-unit housing quota has not abated.

*Dan Walters has been a journalist for nearly 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. His commentary comes via [CalMatters.org](https://calmatters.org), a public interest journalism venture committed to explaining how California’s state Capitol works and why it matters. For more, go to [calmatters.org/commentary](https://calmatters.org/commentary).*



## Nicasio Reservoir project a key water supply option

Cost analysis puts \$5 million plan above other proposals



Water flows over the spillway at the Nicasio Reservoir. The Nicasio project would modify the reservoir's spillway gates to add 3,000 acre-feet of water storage. ALAN DEP – MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL, FILE





The Soulajule Reservoir in northwest Marin County. One supply option looks at pumping water from Russian River to Soulajule Reservoir. SHERRY LAVARS — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL, FILE

**BY ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ**

[ARODRIGUEZ@MARINIJ.COM](mailto:ARODRIGUEZ@MARINIJ.COM)

Reshaping the Nicasio Reservoir is the most efficient way to add to the water supply in Marin, county water managers said.

A new cost analysis presented to the Marin Municipal Water District board this month showed that the \$5 million project would provide significant supply gains for a relatively low cost when compared to other proposals under consideration — many of them tagged with estimates exceeding hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Nicasio project would modify the reservoir’s spillway gates to add 3,000 acre-feet of water storage. In drought conditions, it is anticipated to still produce 750 acre-feet of water a year. An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons.

In a dry year, the cost per acre foot of water produced by the project would be around \$1,093. By comparison, in a normal year the cost for drinking water purchased from Sonoma Water is around \$1,600 an acre-foot.

“This is a really difficult project from a water supply perspective to make unattractive,” Paul Sellier, water resources manager said at a meeting on Dec. 10. “So even if the cost doubled on this project, this would still be sort of ranked as a very, very favorable project.”

Other projects that stood out in the analysis included potential pipelines from Petaluma or Cotati to Marin reservoirs. Two options look at pumping water from Russian River to Soulajule Reservoir, while the other looks at building a pipeline system from water tanks in Cotati to a pipeline from Soulajule to Nicasio.

The projects range from about \$168 million to \$372 million to construct with supply gains from 3,800 acre-feet up to more than 8,000 acre-feet of water. What’s most appealing about the proposals is the cost per acre foot during drought conditions, which would be in the ballpark of \$6,000, Sellier said.

The discussion was an update on the district's water supply roadmap. The plan seeks to add another 12,000 to 20,000 acre-feet of annual supply by 2035.

Sellier's presentation included updates on some short-term projects in the works, but the conversation largely centered around the latest cost estimates for all longer-term water supply proposals that are on the table.

That list includes more than a dozen potential projects, such as storage expansion, the creation of a desalination plant and new recycled water infrastructure.

A growing chorus of Marin ranchers are building on a protest against expansion of the Soulajule Reservoir, which they say would upend their livelihood.

As discussed to date, multigenerational homes and ranches could be threatened by the footprint of a bigger dam, requiring the agency to acquire land, likely by eminent domain.

Carol Dolcini, a rancher in the affected Hicks Valley community of West Marin, said there are projects other than Soulajule that "will achieve Marin's water supply targets without destroying valuable agricultural land, and without placing undue financial pressure on Marin ratepayers."

Expanding Soulajule would cost \$484 million. That estimate includes allowances for engineering, environmental mitigation, land acquisition and construction, according to the Marin Municipal Water District.

"Our hope tonight is that we will all come to agree that have reached the end of the road for the Soulajule expansion option," Dolcini said at the meeting. "It's time to fine-tune the portfolio to include options that are both feasible and affordable."

Expansion of Kent dam is expected to cost \$519 million, while the creation of a new reservoir in an area called "upper" Nicasio, near the existing Nicasio reservoir, would cost \$687 million.

Staff estimated the dam expansion projects would cost upwards of \$7,300 per acre-foot of water, assuming drought conditions.

Desalination projects would be much more expensive, ranging from \$352 million to \$520 million in capital alone, with total annual costs expected to range from \$27 million to \$51 million. Assuming a four-year drought, it would cost \$10,000 to \$16,000 to produce an acre-foot of water through a desalination plant.

The analysis also looked at a range of recycled water options, with a potential project at Peacock Gap standing out as a viable contender. The project would cost about \$28 million, but annual operations and maintenance would remain under \$1 million.

"We need to remember that cost is but one criteria at which we look at projects," Sellier said. "It's a very important criteria, but it is just one criteria."

Board members Ranjiv Khush and Jed Smith agreed that the Sonoma to Marin pipeline options look appealing.

Smith said the dam expansion and desalination projects appear too costly, and there is low hanging fruit with the Nicasio spillway project and potentially with the pipelines.

"I want to encourage this board to be a lot more direct," Smith said. "We need to guide the staff to make some decisions. I see us in an emergency right now. We need to start taking things off the table and we need to focus our efforts and increase our water supply as soon as possible."

Ben Horenstein, general manager of the Marin Municipal Water District, said staff received good feedback to help narrow its focus for the next few presentations aimed on building consensus on a preferred project.

In the coming months, staff expects to provide analyses exploring the social and environmental impacts of each proposal, as well as the risks and the estimated drought performance of each project.



HIRED IN 2021

## Marin County public works director resigns

BY RICHARD HALSTEAD

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Marin County's public works director has resigned after a tenure of less than four years.

Rosemarie Gaglione's exit was not announced by the county. County Executive Derek Johnson confirmed that she resigned effective Dec. 2.

"Ms. Gaglione made the difficult decision to leave county employment after four years to spend more time with her family and continue to serve the public and explore new career opportunities," Johnson said. "The county wishes the best for Ms. Gaglione in her next career steps."

Gaglione did not respond to requests for comment.

Johnson said Chris Blunk, the assistant public works director, will lead the department "until such time as a national recruitment effort is undertaken and a successor is identified."

Gaglione, who was hired in February 2021, was Marin County's only female public works director. She was paid \$277,877 a year plus benefits to run the department, which has about 255 employees and an annual budget of nearly \$83 million.

Before coming to Marin, Gaglione was the director of public works for Oxnard for about two years and for Goleta for nearly four years.

The county is planning to conduct an organizational and operational assessment of the Department of Public Works as part of a larger review of county government. In October, county supervisors, at Johnson's recommendation, allocated \$500,000 to hire a consultant for the review.

The assessment will initially focus on the Department of Public Works, the Marin County Community Development Agency and the Marin Housing Authority. Johnson said at the time that having county purchasing, hazardous waste response and search-and-rescue operations overseen by the public works department, as Marin County does, is unusual.

Johnson declined to comment on whether the plans for the assessment influenced Gaglione's decision to resign. County supervisors either didn't respond to requests for comment or declined to comment.

Johnson was hired in February. The prior fall, the county changed its county administrator position to county executive, giving the boss increased authority to evaluate the performance of department heads.

When Johnson proposed the assessment, Gaglione pledged her support.

"I'm very excited about this," she told supervisors during their Oct. 15 meeting. "I think the attitude adjustments are being made. We all want to work together. We want to break down those silos, but we need that external view. So I support this and am looking forward to it."

At that same meeting, supervisors authorized spending up to \$250,000 for a consultant to provide training and support for some of the newer engineers in the public works office. The staff report on the expenditure said that coupled with an increased workload, "the division also experienced a period of high employee turnover in recent years."

"These factors have led to the delay in delivering some projects," the report said.

"A couple of years ago, we were really short quite a number of engineers," Gaglione said in October. "I don't think there were four or five in engineering when I got here. It was a problem. There are a lot of projects that were delayed because of a shortage of engineers."

Gaglione said that since then, however, a number of engineers had been hired.

"We probably have 20 now, and we still have a few positions to fill," she said. "We're in a much better place."

About 13.5% of the department's positions are vacant.

SAN RAFAEL

## Joe Garbarino Jr., business pioneer in recycling, dies

BY CAMERON MACDONALD

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Joe Garbarino Jr., a pioneering figure in California's recycling industry, died Dec. 19. He was 91.

The San Rafael resident died from complications of T-cell lymphoma, his daughter Patty Garbarino said.

"He was a legend, an icon," she said.

Mr. Garbarino was an owner of Marin Sanitary Service. The company established the first countywide curbside recycling program in the country in 1979. Mr. Garbarino was inducted into the National Waste & Recycling Association's hall of fame in 2014.

"His mantra was always, 'An item should never be made that cannot be reused or recycled,'" said his daughter, president of Marin Sanitary Service.

Assemblymember Damon Connolly called his friend a pillar of the community.

"His tireless work ethic and commitment to both the environment and the well-being of those around him will never be forgotten," said Connolly, a San Rafael resident. "Joe's influence has not only shaped Marin County, but has made a lasting difference in our world."

San Rafael Mayor Kate Colin said Mr. Garbarino set a standard for environmental stewardship and also improved the quality of life for San Rafael residents.

"He will be missed by me personally and the many mayors, council members and city staff who had the good fortune to work with him," she said.

Mr. Garbarino was born Feb. 14, 1933, in San Francisco, where he grew up in the North Beach neighborhood. Patty Garbarino said her father's waste reduction ethic came from his family's roots in Genoa, Italy. She said there was little farmland in Genoa and wasting anything was "practically a sin."

During the 1920s, Mr. Garbarino's father and uncle started the Scavengers Protective Association to collect garbage in San Francisco.

Mr. Garbarino joined Marin Sanitary Service in 1955. In the 1960s, he started working with local conservationists on recycling services.

"As we came out of World War II and into the '50s and '60s, we became a far more wasteful society with single-use items, disposable items and the like," Patty Garbarino said. "That was not my father at all and the way he was brought up, and his disdain for anything being wasted."

Kip Lipper, an environmental adviser at state Sen. Mike McGuire's office, said Mr. Garbarino's waste management was revolutionary.

"In an era of massive garbage dumps and throwaway everything, Joe showed that literally everything is recyclable or reusable," Lipper said. "His recycling ethic was revolutionary at the time back in the '80s when no one else was doing it."

Mark Murray, executive director of the nonprofit Californians Against Waste, said Mr. Garbarino was an educator and a visionary.

"Joe was a smart and sophisticated businessman, and a passionate advocate for 'real recycling,'" Murray said. "Over his long career, he has inspired generations of solid waste professionals as well as environmental advocates. I'm indebted to his expertise and example."

Mr. Garbarino was also well known for his large museum collection of antique military vehicles in San Rafael. He had veterans drive in local Independence Day parades and gatherings for Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Patty Garbarino said her father owned up to 100 vehicles collected from across the United States and Europe.

She said his dedication to supporting the military started when he was a child during World War II. He had a custom of taking his red wagon to San Francisco's Embarcadero area and offering his father's wine to troops being deployed to the Pacific theater.

"Reliving his childhood and seeing all of that effort being deployed into the Pacific — it was his dream to honor those vets," she said.

Lou Shehi, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel who flew in the Vietnam War, recalled walking with Mr. Garbarino through his military museum and talking about World War II as well as Marin veterans.

"I will remember with great joy just having that much time alone with such a wonderful guy," he said.

Bill McNicholas, a retired Navy captain and a Vietnam veteran, said his fondest memory of Mr. Garbarino was joining him and Normandy veteran Phil Economon on a three-hour tour of his vehicle museum.

He said Economon was honored to ride one of Mr. Garbarino's World War II vehicles at an Independence Day parade in Corte Madera.

"I have met Joe many times, and each time, he has never said no to a request for vet support," McNicholas said. "I just loved the guy. How could you not? In his presence, as a veteran, he made me feel like the most important person in the world."

A special recognition was given to Mr. Garbarino at the Marin County Veterans Day ceremony this year.

"I just don't think he ever got enough thank yous for what he did," said Sean Stephens, the county's veterans service officer.

He said he did not know that Mr. Garbarino was ill at the time and he was glad that the honoree was able to see a large crowd thank him.

"I thought he was a bigger-than-life character. I was always honored to greet him whenever he came to any of the functions," Stephens said. "I will miss him."

Mike Ghilotti, president of the construction company Ghilotti Brothers Inc., was a longtime business neighbor of Marin Sanitary Service in San Rafael. He said it was fitting that another group of Italians moved next door to his company office on Jacoby Street during the 1960s.

Ghilotti said Mr. Garbarino always worked to minimize the impact of the smell, dust and debris from his recycling center upon the Ghilotti Brothers business.

"With Joe's passing we have lost one of the last remaining icons of the old guard of Marin, but the values and principles that he stood for will continue to shape our incredible county for years to come," Ghilotti said. "God bless Joe."

Mr. Garbarino's family plans to have a private burial service for him. Patty Garbarino said a memorial mass will be scheduled.

Mr. Garbarino's survivors include a large extended family. Marin Sanitary Service said Patty Garbarino and her cousin, Dave Garbarino, vice president of operations, will continue to lead the company.



## Garbarino, Marin set tone on recycling

In the 1970s, after already helping build Marin's largest garbage-collection firm, Joe Garbarino Jr. saw a need for change.

The "throwaway society" our nation had become was on a fast pace of filling landfills and wasting resources that could be reused.

Mr. Garbarino saw a need to turn the trash business toward recycling and the pioneering advances he launched for his Marin customers blazed a trail of changes in the industry and a public awareness that reuse, recycling and recovery are wiser choices for our environment and future.

Mr. Garbarino, a longtime San Rafael resident and community leader, died on Dec. 19. He was 91 and had built a long legacy as a tireless pioneer who changed long held business practices of an industry and attitudes and practices of consumers.

Recycling wasn't new in the 1970s. There were a few recycling centers around Marin, but Mr. Garbarino took it curbside, making it a lot easier for his customers to practice recycling and for him, as a business, to generate the volumes needed for it to make sense. He changed the minds of industry doubters, including those for whom diverting trash from their landfills wasn't good for their bottom line.

Mr. Garbarino, a burly man who got his start collecting trash for his family's firm — Marin Sanitary Service — never rested on his laurels, although his initiatives and innovations established templates for recycling and waste management across the state.

What most people saw as trash, Mr. Garbarino saw as an opportunity to recycle or reuse. Over the years, his Marin Recycling Center in San Rafael has been a center for innovation. Mr. Garbarino was a strong businessman, always focusing on coming up with ways — and industrial efficiencies — to reduce the stream of trash headed for landfills.

At the same time, he strived to increase consumer awareness of the challenges his industry faced, whether it was changing international markets for recyclables or wasteful packaging of products.

He turned recycling into a local public ethic. He changed the waste stream that had been a three-step process: Consumers filled their trash cans, the garbage man collected the trash and it all wound up in the landfill. Today, consumers sort their trash, separating garbage and recyclables and the garbage company picks it up and sorts it again, finding more that can be recycled and focusing on reducing the trash stream into landfills.

Mr. Garbarino's success and his Marin customers' participation created a model that has been copied across the state and beyond.

Mr. Garbarino had a vision of the need to change and took the initiative and business risk to build a successful enterprise that proved to other communities that it could be done; that recycling was good for the economy and the environment.

A state entrepreneurial grant helped him build the Marin Recycling Center facility that helped curbside recycling grow.

Mr. Garbarino treasured his Italian heritage and celebrated the liberties and opportunities his family found in the United States. Part of that celebration was his collection of antique military vehicles, as many as 100, that he generously made available for local Independence Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day parades and events.

He was honored at last year's Marin County Veterans Day ceremony held at the Marin Center.

Mr. Garbarino's heartfelt championing of recycling will be missed. He was an industry icon and a community leader. The vision, hard work and initiatives he advanced built an awareness and momentum that's vital to our environment and a legacy of a man who made a difference.

## Senate OKs full public sector retiree benefits



Sherrod Brown, of Ohio, a lead co-sponsor of the bill, said, “We have spent decades working to pass this legislation, and tonight is a victory for all the public servants who will finally get the Social Security they have earned.” ALEX BRANDON — THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, FILE

**BY MAYA C. MILLER**

**THE NEW YORK TIMES**

**WASHINGTON >>** The Senate passed bipartisan legislation early Saturday that would give full Social Security benefits to a group of public sector retirees who currently receive them at a reduced level, sending the bill to President Joe Biden.

The vote to clear the measure was a lopsided 76-20, reflecting the broad popularity of an effort to allow approximately more than 2.8 million public pension recipients — some of them teachers, firefighters and police officers — to collect Social Security benefits at the same level as other beneficiaries.

The House passed the bill by a wide margin of 327-75 last month after a bipartisan group of lawmakers forced it to the floor, and President-elect Donald Trump recently threw his support behind it.

The rapid and resounding approval of the measure, which would cost nearly \$196 billion over a decade, was notable at a time when Congress is in a protracted dispute over spending and debt, with Republicans promising huge cuts and members of both parties routinely lamenting the ballooning of the nation’s debt.

The bill eliminates two provisions set up decades ago to shore up Social Security’s solvency. Projections show the Social Security fund will run out of money in 2038 and, if no action is taken before then, beneficiaries would see a 27% cut in



benefits. Passage of the measure speeds up that timeline by six months.

Twenty-seven Republicans joined Democrats in support.

The two provisions were designed to prevent what is known as “double dipping” on retirement benefits by certain public employees and their relatives.

It primarily affects two groups. One is public employees who receive pensions that are exempt from Social Security payroll taxes, but who also worked at least 10 years in jobs that required them to pay into the system. Such workers appear in the Social Security system as though they earned far less over their lifetimes than they actually did, and since the program pays out a higher proportion of low earners’ incomes as benefits, they receive a larger retirement benefit than they otherwise would. Another is people who receive public pensions but also become eligible for Social Security survivor benefits upon the death of a spouse or family member.

Under the current law, both groups face a reduction in their benefits. The legislation on its way to enactment would allow them to receive the full amount.

“We have spent decades working to pass this legislation, and tonight is a victory for all the public servants who will finally get the Social Security they have earned,” said Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, who was a lead co-sponsor of the bill. The bill marked Brown’s final legislative achievement, after he lost a brutal and expensive reelection bid last month.

“Tonight, Congress ensured that police officers, firefighters, teachers and public servants across Ohio will be able to retire with the Social Security they spent their lives paying into,” he said.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, a lead sponsor of the measure, framed the issue as a “long overdue” matter of fairness affecting teachers, firefighters and police officers as well as some federal employees who were hired before 1984, when the federal pension system was brought under the Social Security system.

In a floor speech Wednesday, Collins cited one of her constituents, a retired female schoolteacher who had to return to work at age 72 after her husband’s death to make financial ends meet. The woman’s husband was a Navy veteran who paid into Social Security for 40 years, but since she received a public pension from the school system, her surviving spousal benefits through Social Security were reduced by two-thirds.

“This is an unfair, inequitable penalty,” Collins said. Public sector workers who are currently being penalized, she said, “have earned these benefits.”

Public sector retirees and their allies on Capitol Hill in both parties have pressed for the measure for decades. It has sailed through Congress over the last several weeks, bypassing the usual committee process after proponents in the House collected 218 signatures on a so-called “discharge petition” to force it to the floor. Senate leaders also skipped committee consideration.

But it faced vocal pushback in the Senate from fiscal conservatives. Several senators, mostly Republicans, warned that the bill could set off a chain reaction of unintended consequences by eliminating the two provisions.

“We all agree the status quo is unfair, and it penalizes millions of hardworking Americans,” said Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, an independent who railed against the federal debt. “But we also have an obligation to honor our promises to ensure that Social Security is going to be there for the people who have paid into it and have earned it, and also those generations who come after.”

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., argued that a bill affecting the financial integrity of Social Security was too important to rush through at the end of the year without debate. The nearly \$200 billion setback for the trust fund, he argued, would only make it more difficult to fix the longer-term issue of Social Security’s solvency.

“There’s so much riding on us getting this right and having the courage to fix Social Security over the next few years,” he said.

Other Republicans said the legislation righted a wrong that should have been addressed a long time ago.

“I’m just glad we’re finally getting it done,” said Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla., a close ally of Trump’s. “It should have been resolved years ago.”

Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said he had pushed the issue for 30 years in Congress and has repeatedly heard lawmakers promise, "We'll fix it next year."

"They never have," Kennedy said in an interview Wednesday. "People are entitled to receive every penny that they earn, and the way the law works now, they're not."

## Democrats give Huffman key role

Marin lawmaker ready to fight Trump



Rep. Jared Huffman's position on the House Committee on Natural Resources is part of a changing of the guard for Democrats. ALAN DEP — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL, FILE

**BY RICHARD HALSTEAD**

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In his new position as ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources, Rep. Jared Huffman expects to clash early and often with the incoming Trump administration.

Huffman, a Marin County resident, was elected to the position this week after challenging Rep. Raúl Grijalva, a Democrat from Arizona. Grijalva had led the committee's Democrats for 10 years.

"This is a big development," said David McCuan, a political science professor at Sonoma State University. "It's a big development for him personally and a big development for his North Coast district. This makes Jared hugely influential."

Huffman, 60, is one of three Democrats who recently ousted more senior members of their party from positions of leadership. The changing of the guard has led some to speculate that the party is embarking on a youth movement in response to their election losses in November.

"There clearly is a longer-running generational change happening within the California Democratic Caucus and the party nationally," McCuan said. "Democrats have faced a problem of aging leadership since 2016."

Grijalva, 76, was frequently absent from votes during much of 2024 because of cancer treatments.

“It became pretty untenable to head into the next Congress with everything that we knew was coming at us,” Huffman said. “I felt I had to put myself forward. Unfortunately, I was unable to work out an arrangement with Mr. Grijalva, so I had to challenge him.”

Grijalva, who was the second House Democrat to call on President Joe Biden to drop out of the presidential race, announced on Dec. 2 that he would not seek to retain his committee leadership role.

“After much thought, I have decided that it is the right moment to pass the torch,” he said in a statement.

Soon after, Rep. Melanie Stansbury, a Democrat from New Mexico, jumped into the race. Stansbury is 45.

“Grijalva was obviously pretty unhappy that he had been challenged and had to withdraw,” Huffman said, “so he encouraged her to run and endorsed her.”

On Monday, Huffman won a Democratic Steering and Policy Committee vote by 44 to 17. At that point, Stansbury dropped out, removing the necessity for a confirming vote by the full Democratic caucus.

In an interview with NBC News on Sunday, President-elect Donald Trump said his intent during his second term is to “drill, baby, drill” — referring to his support for the nation’s oil and gas industry.

Trump asserted during his campaign that increased use of cheaper fossil fuels would allow him to tame inflation and bring down prices.

Huffman said he is “ready for this fight.”

“I know exactly what’s coming, and I feel like if we are effective in pushing back, we should be able to bring the American people along with us,” he said.

Huffman said he expects the Trump administration to try to roll back royalties paid on the sale of oil and gas produced on federal lands; to eliminate incentives for electric vehicles, battery manufacturing and offshore wind energy projects funded by the Inflation Reduction Act; and “dramatically weaken our bedrock environmental laws so all the polluters and developers that donated to Trump’s campaign will have an easier path to pollute and to profit.”

Huffman concedes that the notion that more oil and gas production will make the nation’s economy stronger may have “superficial appeal” to some people, but said it is a false promise.

“We are awash in fossil fuel right now with record levels of production and exports,” Huffman said. “That hasn’t translated into lower prices at the pump for consumers, and we haven’t even talked about what it’s doing to the climate — the fact that climate disasters are rising in their level of destruction and the cost to taxpayers.”

Other younger Democrats who have recently moved up in the party’s pecking order include: Rep. Jamie Raskin, 61, of Maryland, who replaced Rep. Jerrold Nadler, 77, of New York as the top Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee; and Rep. Angie Craig, 52, of Minnesota, who was elected as the ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee, defeating Rep. Jim Costa, 72, of California and Rep. David Scott, 79, of Georgia.

However, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, 35, of New York lost her bid to become the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the 84-year-old former House speaker, opposed her. The post went to Gerry Connolly, 74, of Virginia, who announced in November that he has throat cancer.

“It’s not like our Democratic caucus wants to throw out every senior member and anoint every young member,” Huffman said. “It’s going to be case by case.”

A number of Democratic leaders in the House are in their 70s and 80s, including Maxine Waters, 86, of California, who will be the ranking Democrat on the Financial Services Committee, and Rose DeLauro, 81, of Connecticut, who will lead the Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee.

Asked what, if anything, Democrats did wrong during the last election, Huffman said Biden “never should have run for reelection.”

“When he decided to run for reelection, it made it very hard to reach a lot of voters who were frustrated with things that they blamed Biden for,” Huffman said.

“I think some people around Biden shielded and protected him for too long and by the time it burst open on national TV at that debate, it was alarming.” he said. “I think you could fairly criticize the Biden team for not being honest and transparent about some of that for the full year preceding the debate.”

McCuan said Democrats remain divided over what changes to make to reverse their fortunes.

“They’re still somewhat in a shell-shocked pickle,” he said. “It’s unclear what the direction is. You see this even within California, where leaders want to be the center of the Trump resistance, but they also want to find places where they can work with the Trump administration.”



## Supervisors allocate \$6.25M for 125 affordable dwellings

Plan calls for four, three-story apartment buildings



Marinwood Market stands next to the empty lot where housing is planned at Marinwood Plaza shopping center in San Rafael. The market will be retained as part of the project. SHERRY LAVARS — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

The only hurdle that developers of these properties could face, beyond basic safety and environmental regulations, is a requirement to comply with objective building standards contained within the county's "form-based" code.

Waivers from even this requirement are available under state density bonus law, if developers meet requirements to price a specified percentage of the homes to be affordable.

The developer of Marinwood Plaza was granted a number of waivers from the "form-based" code.

"Marinwood Plaza was the first such project approved under that new process," Jones told planning commissioners. "We have more in the pipeline."

The project calls for four, three-story residential apartment buildings, one of which will contain a 1,040-square-foot ground-floor commercial space. The buildings will range from 21,150 square feet to 30,790 square feet and cover 108,640 square feet. The buildings will reach a maximum height of 40 feet above grade.

Fourteen of the dwellings will be priced to be affordable to households earning 30% of Marin's area median income, or AMI. That translates to individuals earning no more than \$41,150 and four-person households with incomes no greater than \$52,900.

Forty-nine of the residences will be priced to be affordable to households earning 50% of Marin's AMI. That equates to individuals earning no more than \$68,550 and four-person households with incomes no greater than \$97,900.

Sixty-one will be priced to be affordable to households earning 70% of Marin AMI. That means individuals earning no more than \$109,700 and four-person households with incomes no greater than \$156,650.

The other residence is for a manager.

The project will add 124 on-site parking spaces while sharing 63 of the market's parking spaces.

Marin supervisors received dozens of form letters expressing support for the project. Many of them shared the format of a letter submitted by Jennifer Silva, chair of the Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative. Silva highlighted the affordability of the dwellings, the environmental benefit of building on an infill site and its importance for "racial justice."

Linda Hellman, a member of the Marin Organizing Committee and a 30-year resident of Marinwood, told supervisors: "Development of this property has been considered for more than 15 years, and we finally have the opportunity to make this a reality. It will provide 125 units of desperately needed affordable housing."

A previous bid to develop 82 dwellings at the site in the early 2010s fizzled out amid stiff community opposition. Bridge Housing proposed 72 low-income apartments and 10 market-rate apartments.

Rollie Katz, executive director of the Marin Association of Public Employees, said the public reacted to the proposal like "it was the end of eastern Marin as we knew it."

"Property values were going to drop. Schools were going to be overcrowded," Katz said. "We need to build projects like this."

Some Marinwood residents remain skeptical.

"How moral is it to put housing on top of an environmentally contaminated site?" asked Stephen Nestel, a longtime opponent of building housing there.

Pollution at Marinwood Plaza — polycarboxylate ethers released into the soil under one of the buildings — was discovered in 2007, and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board has been overseeing investigations and remedial actions there since 2008.

Jillian Zeiger, a county planner, assured supervisors that "the regional water board will make sure their requirements for cleanup are satisfied before any housing development occurs on site."

Jacqueline Fitzhugh, who has two children at Mary E. Silveira Elementary School, said her "primary concern is the schools."

"The Miller Creek School District is facing funding challenges and recently made many cuts," Fitzhugh said.

Zeiger, in an email, said, "If you take the average student generation rate, approximately 27 new students would be added to the TK-8 district and 11 high school students in the high school district."

Fitzhugh, however, noted that San Rafael recently approved a proposal to redevelop Northgate mall with 1,422 residences, including 143 "affordable" apartments and for-sale homes.

"Between these two new projects and the large increase in students in our district, we're not prepared for this," Fitzhugh said. "Our school district ranks second to last in funding per student. This is going to dilute resources to an already strained school system and district."

Jon Campo said, "I don't think anybody's opposed to housing at that site. They're just not really happy with 100% affordable housing. I thought we moved away from the model of 100% affordable developments in the '60s after they were shown in so many instances to be a flawed development model."

The supervisors expressed their unanimous support for the project.

"This is exactly the kind of housing we need," Supervisor Katie Rice said. "I'm sorry it took putting the site in the housing element and having to rely on ministerial review to get a green light."



# Birders on lookout







# Water utility improves workplace safety plan

Upgrades are also made to emergency response

BY ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ

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The Marin Municipal Water District has taken action to improve workplace safety and disaster response.

Over the past year, the district reviewed and updated nine out of 20 programs related to the issues, said Brett Pedisich, its safety and emergency response manager.

“With each refined written safety program, staff must be educated on the changes,” Pedisich said at district board meeting on Dec. 17. “This means revising the training curriculum to align with each updated safety program.”

To that end, officials are immersed in training curricula overhaul to reflect the changes made to district policies and procedures, said Pedisich, a former ranger at the district.

Pedisich’s job includes ensuring that safety protocols are modernized, accounting for updates in Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards, as well as preparing for potential threats such as the recent tsunami warning that alarmed coastal communities.

In June, the district hired Harris and Lee Environmental Sciences to perform an audit of its safety programs. The assessment prompted updates to the district’s protocols for workplace violence prevention; COVID-19 protection; hazardous waste management planning; emergency action and fire prevention; chemical hygiene and hazard communication; hearing conservation; and respiratory protection.

A workplace safety committee has been engaged through the process to prioritize the updates. Much of the work on the emergency response programs is ongoing, Pedisich said.

“The emergency response program is designed to ensure that the district is equipped to respond effectively to emergencies and disasters,” Pedisich said. “Its primary purpose is to minimize the impact of unforeseen events, safeguard lives, protect property and facilitate quick recovery.”

Pedisich said that over the past year the district revised its incident command system organizational chart to reflect staff functions and district needs in the event of a major crisis.

The district has also partnered with the Marin County Office of Emergency Management, which is under the purview of the Marin County Fire Department, to conduct regular meetings and trainings.

An upcoming meeting will focus on the recent tsunami warning that was issued after a 7.0 earthquake off the Humboldt County coast rattled the Northern Coast and the Bay Area. The meeting will focus on what a response in Marin County would look like, he said.

“In the spirit of emergency preparedness, we plan to coordinate two response drills in 2025,” Pedisich said.

One drill would unfold at the San Geronimo treatment plant where officials will stage a response to a hazardous chemical spill. Another drill would mimic the activation of an emergency operations center, where staff will assume their disaster response roles.

Staff are also exploring the use of satellite internet for communications in remote facilities and ranger operations, as well as working to create defensible space to protect district property from wildfire.

The district has an application for grant funding with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to support the seismic retrofit of the San Geronimo treatment plant clarifiers, Pedisich said.

Board member Larry Russell said the tsunami warning “caught us a little off guard.”

ASSEMBLY

## **Marin lawmaker Connolly named chair of committee**

Assemblymember Damon Connolly of San Rafael has been appointed chair of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials.

“I look forward to collaborating with fellow committee members to address statewide challenges, ensure accountability and drive positive progress,” said Connolly, a Democrat who represents the 12th District.

Connolly, who is in his second term, was a member of the committee during the prior legislative session. The committee focuses on issues such as regulations for drinking water, hazardous waste and pesticides.

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas appointed Connolly to the position on Dec. 27.

Connolly's district includes Marin County and part of Sonoma County.

# Elections, housing, water dominated 2024 in Marin



Signs are posted outside Fairfax Coffee Roasters urging ouster of incumbent council members on election night in Fairfax on Nov. 5. Marin voters weighed in on dozens of contests and a number of ballot measures. SHERRY LAVARS — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL





Rain falls on visitors at Vista Point near the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge on Feb. 20. Water officials examined the best ways to increase the supply ahead of the next drought. ALAN DEP — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

In a year filled with national election news, Marin County had an ample supply of important stories on the local front. The topics included contentious elections; conflicts over rent control, housing and homelessness; and the persistent problems of water supply, climate upheaval and traffic congestion.

A look at top stories for 2024:

### **Politics**

Marin County voters weighed in on dozens of contests in March and November, electing a new county supervisor, booting incumbents on the Fairfax Town Council and affirming or rejecting a number of ballot measures.

San Anselmo Councilmember Brian Colbert claimed the Ross Valley seat on the Board of Supervisors in the runoff election with Kentfield resident Heather McPhail Sridharan. Colbert, the first Black resident elected supervisor in Marin, ran for Katie Rice's seat after she declined to seek reelection.

In Fairfax, division over rent control, development and other issues spurred former Town Council members Frank Egger and Mike Ghiringhelli to run for seats again. They won, forcing incumbents Bruce Ackerman and Chance Cutrano out of office, while incumbent Barbara Coler narrowly retained her seat. The other two incumbents, Stephanie Hellman and Lisel Blash, would have been on the ballot, too, if an earlier recall petition had succeeded. Meanwhile, voters rejected Measure J, an \$18 million bond measure for road repairs.

In the Tamalpais Union High School District, residents voted last month to approve Measure B, a \$289 million bond to pay for repairs and maintenance projects, after rejecting a \$517 million measure in the spring.

In San Rafael, voters narrowly approved Measure P, a parcel tax to support the construction of a new library and community center. In Novato, voters passed Measure M, a three-quarter-cent sales tax expected to raise about \$10.3 million annually as the city addresses its chronic deficits.

Also, with Donald Trump's victory in the presidential race, Marin officials, educators, nonprofits and immigrant advocates began to gird for potential policy shifts and funding cuts promised during the campaign.

### **Rent control**

Voters in Larkspur, San Anselmo and Fairfax rejected four ballot measures in November that would have enacted tougher rent-control laws in their communities.

In Larkspur, voters weighed in on Measure K, which would have made the rent-control ordinance voters narrowly upheld in March stricter while also adding tenant protections. Fairfax residents voted on Measure I, which would have repealed the rent-control and renter protections that the Town Council approved in 2022.

In San Anselmo, voters were asked to make the call on two related rent-control measures. Measure N would have enacted a rent-control ordinance approved by the Town Council by a 3-2 vote in April, and Measure O would have penalized landlords of properties with three or more dwellings who terminate a tenancy due to no fault of the tenant.

### **Flood control**

In March, San Anselmo residents voted to withdraw the town from Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District 9. The measure was brought on by a faction of residents who said millions of dollars in stormwater drainage fees collected by the district since 2007 have largely been wasted, and that a district plan to remove an old bridge in downtown San Anselmo to reduce flood risk is misguided. Opponents to the move said removing the bridge is a key component of a plan to reduce flooding risk for about 500 Ross Valley homes.

Despite San Anselmo dropping out of the taxing district, residents in Ross, Larkspur and Fairfax did not see an increase in their storm drainage fee this year. The controversial removal of the bridge known as Building Bridge 2 was supposed to be done over the summer, but was postponed to 2025 because of Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements and local permitting requirements.

### **Water supply**

After rain returned in a big way last year, the trend continued into 2024 with the Marin Municipal Water District and the North Marin Water District receiving above-average rainfall counts.

The Marin Municipal Water District recorded 62 inches of rain from July 2023 through June, or about 120% of the average of 52 inches. The North Marin Water District recorded 34.5 inches of rain at Stafford Lake, its reservoir in Novato, exceeding its average of 27.3 inches.

Since 2023, the district has been examining the best ways to increase water supply ahead of the next drought. A recent analysis showed that a project to modify Nicasio Reservoir's spillway gates to add 3,000 acre-feet of water storage would be the most efficient way to boost supply. The \$5 million project is anticipated to produce 750 acre-feet of water annually in dry conditions. An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons. Other potential projects include enlarged reservoirs, a desalination plant, new pipelines to connect to the Russian River and other improvements to the water supply system.

### **Public safety**

After years of work on a lifesaving barrier on the Golden Gate Bridge, officials celebrated the completion of the \$224 million project this year.

"This deterrent is not just a physical barrier, it is a symbol of our collective effort to prevent the loss of life and the lifelong heartache that follows," said Kymberlyrenee Gamboa, whose 18-year-old son Kyle Gamboa died after jumping off the bridge in 2013. "This deterrent shows we care, that we all care about human beings, that we all care about life."

Also this year, e-bike safety was enhanced by new school rules and legislation. The development came amid public health reports that injuries are rising for youths — especially those younger than 16 — riding e-bikes that travel more than 20 miles per hour.

Assemblymember Damon Connolly, a Democrat from San Rafael, introduced Assembly Bill 1778, which aimed to prohibit riders under 16 from operating Class 2 electric bikes and require riders to wear a helmet. The legislation proposed the rules as a pilot program for Marin County.



## **Housing**

This month, the San Rafael City Council approved a proposal to redevelop the Northgate mall with 1,422 residences around shops and restaurants, capping more than three years of planning and contentious hearings. Detractors objected to the size of the complex and the influx of new residents they said could create traffic and safety issues in the neighborhood. Supporters praised the project for creating needed housing.

In Marin City, opponents are resisting a large apartment project at 825 Drake Ave. A group called Save Our City filed a lawsuit last year to void a 3-2 decision by the Board of Supervisors to approve issuing up to \$40 million in bonds to underwrite. In November, Marin County Superior Court judge nullified approvals for the tax-exempt bond funds.

Meanwhile, the county continued to grapple with homelessness. Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered state agencies this summer to remove homeless encampments, clearing the path for Marin municipalities to begin enforcing new camping rules that had been blocked by the courts.

Supported by a \$5.9 million grant, San Rafael opened an authorized camping area with 50 tents at Mahon Creek Path in October. The program offers social services and potential access to housing.

Marin County is using an \$8.67 million state grant to support a project to create housing for about 60 Latino service and agricultural workers in Bolinas. A \$3.72 million grant is supporting an effort to find housing for a large group of vehicle inhabitants along Binford Road in unincorporated Novato.

## **Land use**

After nearly 30 years of wrangling among the landowners and preservationists, the Marin County Open Space District closed escrow this year on its \$42.1 million purchase of the Martha Co. property in Tiburon, a 110-acre ridgetop tract with panoramic views. The property is being annexed into the 122-acre Old Saint Hilary's property, a popular hiking destination.

In western Marin, the National Park Service approved a plan to remove a tule elk enclosure fence at Point Reyes National Seashore. But the agency only removed 850 feet of the 2-mile fence before being stalled by a federal lawsuit from the California Cattlemen's Association, which has asked the court for an injunction.

Parks officials and supporters said removing the barrier would enable the elk to access additional habitat, increase the species' population resilience during drought and promote a more natural population cycle. The California Cattlemen's Association lawsuit asserts that giving the elk freedom to roam will devastate ranching operations.

## **Child care, schools**

After two years of controversy, Ross Valley School District trustees agreed to sell the property that houses the Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center at Deer Park in Fairfax. The nonprofit Seiderman Legacy Children's Fund closed escrow on the \$2 million deal in May and offered the children's center a long-term lease there.

The saga began in 2022 after the district deemed the property and determined it needed about \$8 million worth of work to bring it up to local and state code. Staff recommended the district evict the center because of the liability concerns, prompting a community outcry.

In Mill Valley, environmental issues put plans for a new \$130 million Mill Valley Middle School on hold. The delay is for more studies at the campus at 425 Sycamore Ave., which used to be a burn dump. The district's plan is to demolish the school and rebuild it at the same site.

More than 200 parents signed an online petition calling for the district to rethink both the middle school site and the site of temporary classrooms during construction. The petition calls the project site dangerous because of its position on the former dump. A draft environmental impact report, which had been scheduled to be finished in October, won't be released until February.

COUNTY

## New leader selected for Marin parks post

Department veteran appointed as director

BY ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ

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An 11-year veteran of the Marin County parks department has been selected as its new director.

Chris Chamberlain succeeds Max Korten, who left Marin in October to be deputy general manager of the East Bay Regional Park District. Chamberlain became interim director after Korten departed.

"I was pretty bummed to hear he was taking a job in the East Bay," said Chamberlain, 50, of Petaluma. "He and I were a great team. We worked well together. I learned a lot and I enjoyed our time."

"It was the right move for him, certainly, and it created this opportunity for me, which I'm excited to take on," Chamberlain said.

Chamberlain's starting annual salary, not including benefits, will be \$231,608. By comparison, Korten's last annual salary was \$243,235 after eight years in the post.

Chamberlain, who grew up in Orange County, has a bachelor's degree in parks and natural resource management from Chico State University. Chamberlain said he began his career as a Marin County park ranger in 1998 after an internship program. He advanced to supervising park ranger before leaving for positions with the Greater Vallejo Recreation District and the city of Richmond.

Chamberlain returned to Marin County in 2014 as superintendent of parks and open space, and was promoted to assistant director in 2016.

"Marin County is a beautiful place geographically, positioned on the bay and the coast and attached to the Golden Gate Bridge, which was a big draw," Chamberlain said of his return to Marin. Also, his wife was raised in Petaluma.

"Marin was one of those agencies that was really desirable," Chamberlain said. "The rest is history."

County Executive Derek Johnson announced the appointment on Dec. 23 after a 10-week national search that drew 67 applicants. Some candidates advanced to various stages of interviews before the top two candidates reached the final round, including interviews with the county Board of Supervisors.

During his tenure, Chamberlain has worked to enhance fire fuel risk reduction, eliminate fees at regional parks, expand community grants, enhance sea-level rise resilience and protect natural resources, county officials said.

"Chris Chamberlain's deep understanding of Marin County's unique landscapes, combined with his visionary leadership and commitment to sustainability, make him the ideal choice to lead our Parks and Open Space Department," Johnson said. "His extensive experience in managing natural resources and fostering community partnerships ensures that Marin's parks and open spaces will continue to thrive, providing equitable access and environmental stewardship for generations to come."

Chamberlain has been instrumental in successful project implementation and ongoing community engagement, which county officials said resulted in the 2022 renewal of county parks Measure A, a quarter-cent sales tax that nets about \$14 million annually.

County officials said 2024 has been one of the busiest years for the parks staff. The year included the completion of the Roy's Redwoods restoration and the initiation of a Bolinas wetlands restoration and sea-level rise resilience project. The department also repaired and reopened the pier at McNears Beach Park and helped preserve the Martha Co. property on the Tiburon Peninsula.

## Millions to get expanded Social Security benefits

BY FATIMA HUSSEIN

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON >> President Joe Biden on Sunday signed into law a measure that boosts Social Security payments for current and former public employees, affecting nearly 3 million people who receive pensions from their time as teachers, firefighters, police officers and in other public service jobs.

Advocates say the Social Security Fairness Act rights a decades-old disparity, though it will also put strain on Social Security Trust Funds, which face a looming insolvency crisis.

The bill rescinds two provisions — the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset — that limit Social Security benefits for recipients if they get retirement payments from other sources, including public retirement programs from a state or local government.

“The bill I’m signing today is about a simple proposition: Americans who have worked hard all their life to earn an honest living should be able to retire with economic security and dignity — that’s the entire purpose of the Social Security system,” Biden said during a signing ceremony in the White House East Room.

“This is a big deal,” he said.

Biden was joined by labor leaders, retirement advocates, and Democratic and Republican lawmakers including the legislation’s primary sponsors, Maine Republican Sen. Susan Collins and exiting Ohio Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown, who received a standing ovation from ceremony attendees.

The Congressional Research Service estimated that in December 2023, there were 745,679 people, about 1% of all Social Security beneficiaries, who had their benefits reduced by the Government Pension Offset. About 2.1 million people, or about 3% of all beneficiaries, were affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated in September that eliminating the Windfall Elimination Provision would boost monthly payments to the affected beneficiaries by an average of \$360 by December 2025. Ending the Government Pension Offset would increase monthly benefits in December 2025 by an average of \$700 for 380,000 recipients getting benefits based on living spouses, according to the CBO. The increase would be an average of \$1,190 for 390,000 or surviving spouses getting a widow or widower benefit.

Those amounts would increase over time with Social Security’s regular cost-of-living adjustments.

The change is to payments from January 2024 and beyond, meaning the Social Security Administration would owe back-dated payments. The measure as passed by Congress says the Social Security commissioner “shall adjust primary insurance amounts to the extent necessary to take into account” changes in the law. It’s not immediately clear how this will happen or whether people affected will have to take any action.

Edward Kelly, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, said firefighters across the country are “excited to see the change — we’ve righted a 40-year wrong.” Kelly said the policy was “far more egregious for surviving spouses of firefighters who paid their own quotas into Social Security but were victimized by the government pension system.”

The IAFF has roughly 320,000 members, which does not include hundreds of thousands of retirees who will benefit from the change.

“Now firefighters who get paid very little can now afford to actually retire,” Kelly said.

Brown, who as an Ohio senator pushed for the proposal for years, lost his reelection bid in November. Lee Saunders, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees labor union, thanked Brown for his advocacy.

“Over two million public service workers will finally be able to access the Social Security benefits they spent their careers paying into,” Saunders said in a statement. “Many will finally be able to enjoy retirement after a lifetime of service.”

National Education Association President Becky Pringle said the law is “a historic victory that will improve the lives of educators, first responders, postal workers and others who dedicate their lives to public service in their communities.”

And while some Republicans such as Collins supported the legislation, others, including Sens. John Thune of South Dakota, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, voted against it. “We caved to the pressure of the moment instead of doing this on a sustainable basis,” Tillis told The Associated Press last month.

Still, Republican supporters of the bill said there was a rare opportunity to address what they described as an unfair section of federal law that hurts public service retirees.

The future of Social Security has become a top political issue and was a major point of contention in the 2024 election. About 72.5 million people, including retirees, disabled people and children, receive Social Security benefits.

The policy changes from the new law will heap more administrative work on the Social Security Administration, which is already at its lowest staffing level in decades. The agency, currently under a hiring freeze, has a staff of about 56,645 — the lowest level in over 50 years even as it serves more people than ever.

The annual Social Security and Medicare trustees report released last May said the program’s trust fund will be unable to pay full benefits beginning in 2035. The new law will hasten the program’s insolvency date by about half a year.

Along with ratifying the Social Security Fairness Act, earlier in his presidency Biden signed the Butch Lewis Act into law, which saved the retirement pensions of two million union workers.

*Associated Press writer Stephen Groves contributed to this report.*



WEST MARIN

## 'Red Rock Spring cult'

Site draws 'raw water' devotees who don't want tap



Samantha Reich fills 5-gallon jugs with water for her household in September at Red Rock Spring near Stinson Beach. The spring attracts so many people that the wait for water can exceed half an hour. PHOTOS BY JILL SCHWEBER — THE NEW YORK TIMES





Justina Buong fills her kettle with water at Red Rock Spring to make a latte. No public agency tests the water.

**BY SOUMYA KARLAMANGLA**

**NEW YORK TIMES**

Highway 1 along the coast of Marin County offers some of California's most magnificent vistas, with the deep blue Pacific Ocean glittering through veils of fog. But for a handful of travelers, the views aren't the prize.

At one blink-and-you'll-miss-it pullout is a natural spring that draws people from across the Bay Area, some of whom drive hours through traffic to get there. Many of them reject water from any other source and drink only what they say is "liquid gold" that gushes from the copper pipes of Red Rock Spring.

"To me, it feels more alive," said Samantha Reich, who collected 50 gallons in water-cooler jugs that she strapped into her sedan with seat belts on a recent morning.

Reich, 27, is among a small number of spring water aficionados who believe untreated water, or "raw water," contains enriching minerals that are removed from tap water during the purification process.

Many of the spring's die-hard fans are part of the so-called health freedom movement, which opposes government public health interventions, including vaccine mandates, pasteurized milk and fluoridated water. They now have a powerful ally in Robert Kennedy Jr., who espouses many of the same views, including opposition to fluoridated water, and who is President-elect Donald Trump's pick to lead the Health and Human Services Department. (Kennedy has yet to say whether he advocates drinking raw water.)

The trend, however, alarms health experts, who say that spring water devotees are taking unnecessary risks. The country's robust water treatment system, they emphasize, eliminates potentially deadly bacteria and parasites, and removes toxins that can cause cancer or harm children's brain development.



Nonetheless, untreated water enthusiasts across the nation study crowdsourced spring maps and leave online comments as if they are reviewing the latest restaurants. At Red Rock Spring near Stinson Beach, the wait can be as long as 40 minutes, but the patrons are said to be friendly and the views spectacular, according to Google reviews.

“Vibrations for the soul,” one visitor wrote. “Pure water pure magic,” wrote another.

In South Carolina, vendors sell fresh watermelon, oranges and pecans behind a rural church near Blackville where people flock to collect water from two spigots in the ground. On any given day, you’ll see spring water believers crouching to fill giant bottles at the headwaters of the Sacramento River in the northern reaches of California. In rural Oklahoma, people drive hours to draw from a natural well along the highway thought to contain healing liquid.

In the past few years, Red Rock Spring, one of the rare Bay Area locations among hundreds nationwide on [FindaSpring.org](https://findspring.org), has grown more popular than ever. Longtime devotees wake at 4:30 a.m. to drive there and back before work to avoid the throngs who arrive during the day.

Acolytes in the self-proclaimed “Red Rock Spring cult” have planted squash, tomatoes and other vegetables nearby, and built an altar where people leave tokens of gratitude on the rust-colored mountainside: a stack of nickels, a dried flower crown, fresh figs, a marijuana joint.

Ryan Gonzalez, 44, says that he has been drinking the “miraculous water” from Red Rock Spring for a decade, and that it has made his dreams more vivid and made him feel more resilient against illness. A few years ago, he tried to switch to bottled spring water but ultimately returned to his favorite spot, he said.

“There’s nothing like Red Rock Spring,” said Gonzalez, who has to drive an hour each way from his home in San Francisco to retrieve the water.

Gonzalez, who owns a “botanical barbershop” in San Francisco that uses plant-based grooming products, said he and his family drank only raw milk, avoided processed foods and stuck to water collected from local natural springs.

But he warned against assuming too much about his political views. He voted for Kamala Harris in the presidential race and feared that Kennedy, despite being aligned on some health matters, would push extreme anti-vaccine views. Gonzalez said he personally believed that vaccines offered more benefit than harm.

“It’s really hard to be a centrist anymore and everything is so polarizing,” he said. “People jump to conclusions very quickly.”

And not everyone who sips from the spring is motivated by a belief in raw water. On a recent morning, a UPS driver pulled over in his brown truck to replenish his reusable water bottle, a daily ritual he began after he noticed the crowds at the Highway 1 pullout along his delivery route. Several construction workers and campers also showed up to fill their bottles.

Randy Dahlgren, a professor at the University of California, Davis, who studies watersheds, said that compared with other natural water sources, springs tended to be safer to drink from since they originated deep in the ground and the water was naturally filtered through layers of soil that could remove microbial pathogens. Fresh spring water can contain calcium, magnesium and other beneficial nutrients, and might not contain microplastics or “forever chemicals” as some tap water does, he said.

But raw water can also be tainted with pesticides from nearby farms, contain arsenic that naturally occurs in soil, and harbor bacteria such as E. coli and salmonella that can make people extremely sick. In 2022, 19 people in Montana became ill, including one who was hospitalized, after drinking from what they thought was a spring but was actually creek drainage.

No public agency tests the water from Red Rock Spring. In fact, public agencies had trouble explaining who owned the land from which the spring originated, and its copper pipes. The highway itself is owned by the state’s transportation agency, Caltrans. But county parcel maps show that the parking lot where the spring flows from is split between Mount Tamalpais State Park and Golden Gate National Recreation Area, though neither said it was responsible for the site.

And the only way to know if the water is safe would be to regularly test it for the more than 90 contaminants that tap water is monitored for, experts said. Any single test wouldn’t be sufficient because a rainstorm could shift the flows and introduce sewage runoff from nearby farms or campgrounds.

“The idea that ‘just because something is natural is automatically good for you’ is inherently flawed,” said Daniel McCurry, a water quality expert at the University of Southern California. “There’s all kinds of stuff that’s perfectly natural that can

make you very sick.”

McCurry said he drank from the tap everywhere he went in America, and that a simple, off-the-shelf water filter could remove most of what might worry people, such as trace amounts of pharmaceuticals or lead from old pipes.

And Dahlgren wondered why spring enthusiasts were “killing the environment” by driving miles for a sip when safe, high-quality water was available from the tap, especially in the Bay Area.

More broadly, water experts said that shunning tap water undermined trust in the public water system, which could have dangerous consequences.

But Red Rock Spring followers remain devout.

Gonzalez sometimes worries what he and his family would do if something were to happen to Red Rock Spring, he said. His family avoids fluoridated water, and the spring water has become one of the most fundamental parts of his life; his younger daughter has grown up on it, and coffee tastes good to him only if brewed with water from Red Rock Spring.

“When we go on vacation,” he said, “it’s one of the things I miss the most.”

## Sausalito aims to streamline sewage services

BY KRISSY WAITE

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Sausalito is moving closer to transferring its sewage collection to the Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District.

The City Council voted unanimously Dec. 17 to authorize a memorandum of understanding between the two entities, the first step to an official transfer. The district would maintain and manage the city's 21 miles of sewage collection facilities.

The move would consolidate billing and could increase savings for residents.

"First and foremost I think everyone can agree that the safe and sanitary disposal of sewage is essential for public health, protecting water quality, environmental health and supporting economic activity," said Chris Zapata, the city manager. "Without sewage you don't have a civilized society."

The memorandum of understanding is a nonbinding agreement that details what actions are needed to move forward, like public outreach requirements and making a transfer schedule, Zapata said. It also outlines how the district will repair or replace several sewage lines over the next 10 years — a project resulting from the city's collection system condition assessment — and how to address sewage system debt like the city's \$5 million bond.

Councilmember Jill Hoffman asked who would accept the responsibility of paying the bonds. Zapata said that could be a sticking point and the city needs to do some work to best understand the bond contract and process.

The city has been meeting with the Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District for a year to discuss transferring the city's sewer collection system to the district to manage. The City Council directed staff to do a feasibility study on the idea in 2020.

Sausalito's sewage system discharges into the district's interceptor pipelines, which go into a wastewater treatment plant just south of the city. Residents get two bills: one from the city for collecting the sewage, and one from the district for moving and treating it.

"What that means is we have two district government agencies, two different oversight boards. We have two different workforces, two different billings, two different rate reviews. We have different communications that we do differently than the district does from us," Zapata said. "All of that is complicated, and to unwind this and make it simpler is one of the objectives of this exercise."

Much of Sausalito's collection equipment is more than 50 years old, according to a staff report. The collection system is mostly on the hillsides and uses a gravity flow system to move waste, except for some low-lying areas that use four pump stations the district operates.

Zapata said staff will go back to the City Council in February after talking with the district. He said he understands there is a history surrounding other utility transfers, specifically with fire districts and departments, but said the sewage transfer is "a totally different thing."

"Because of the caution that we all feel based on previous metamorphosis of agencies here in Sausalito, the community is going to want a much more in-depth description of what's going to happen and how we're going to be impacted by that, and that's going to happen before this actually goes into effect," Hoffman said.