

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
BIG BEAR MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
HELD ON THURSDAY, April 16, 2026**

**1. OPEN SESSION**

President Bradford opened the regularly scheduled Board meeting at 1:00 PM at the Big Bear Municipal Water District located at 40524 Lakeview Drive, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315 on Thursday April 2, 2026.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Craig Brewster, Director  
Steve Ludecke, Vice President  
Tom Bradford, President  
Mark Lee, Director  
Craig Peterson, Director

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Tom Bradford, President

**3. PUBLIC FORUM**

Daniel Gulbransen, resident of Big Bear Lake, expressed concerns about the City's agenda, including what he stated are high legal fees, a recent building-related issue at on April 8, and efforts toward voluntary compliance with laws and codes, which he described as excessive. He raised concerns about the Brown Act, alleging it is being used by the City to limit public attendance, and he encouraged the Board to stay informed on City Council actions.

**4. REPORTS**

- A. General Manager Jared Cheek reported that the lake level is currently down 6 feet 8 inches and said that conditions remain on track given that runoff has concluded and inflows have ceased. He reported 203 launches at the East Ramp compared to 215 at the same time last year, with lake activity consisting primarily of fishing and pleasure boating, and only one wakeboarder observed last week. Staff completed 19 decontaminations and recently identified the first mussel-infested boat of the season; the newly purchased vessel will be quarantined for 30 days. The Board expressed appreciation that the issue was detected, and Mr. Cheek commended staff for their diligence.

Mr. Cheek also reported that District staff participated in an EMS emergency response coordination at the hospital. Recruitment for seasonal staff is ongoing, with interviews continuing and offers being extended, and staffing levels are expected to be full soon. He also met with the Big Bear Solar Observatory staff regarding planned improvements on the peninsula they lease from the District. Additionally, staff attended a Utility Coordination Meeting with the City of Big Bear Lake to align on upcoming projects for the season.

- B. Vice President Ludecke reported that the Administrative Committee met and discussed Business Item 6B, which will be discussed later on the agenda.

## 5. CONSENT CALENDAR

### PUBLIC FORUM

Dan Gulbransen, resident of Big Bear Lake, asked whether pulling an item from the consent calendar would move it to the business agenda. He also asked whether public comment could be made twice in that situation.

- A. Minutes of a Regular Meeting on April 16, 2026.
- B. Warrant List dated 04/10/2026 in the amount of \$42,969.64.

Discussion: No comments were made.

With a motion made by Vice President Ludecke and seconded by Director Brewster, the consent calendar was approved unanimously:

AYES: Bradford, Brewster, Ludecke, Lee, Peterson

NO: -

ABSTAIN: -

## 6. BUSINESS

### A. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF DSOD APPLICATION FOR BEAR VALLEY DAM DOWNSTREAM CONCRETE REPAIR

#### PUBLIC FORUM

Daniel Gulbransen, resident of Big Bear Lake, expressed support for the dam repairs, stating that Big Bear Lake is an important part of the community.

#### DISCUSSION

- a. General Manager Jared Cheek provided background on the dam repair project, describing it as a long time legacy project for the District which started years ago. He explained that GEI, the District's consulting engineer, has completed 90% design plans, and the next step is to submit them to the Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) for review and approval. Staff has reviewed the plans and agrees, and once DSOD approval is obtained, the project may proceed to next steps. He noted that the cost for DSOD's plan review is approximately \$80,000 and that DSOD is the sole regulatory authority for this approval.

In response to a question from President Bradford, Mr. Cheek explained that the repairs primarily address spalling observed on the backside of the dam, with conditions varying by location on the Dam. Due to variable project costs at this stage, staff is also recommending a 10% contingency on the application fees.

With a motion made by Vice President Ludecke and seconded by Director Brewster, the motion to approve the DSOD application with 10% contingency was approved:

AYES: Bradford, Brewster, Ludecke, Lee, Peterson

NO: -

ABSTAIN: -

**B. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF JOINT EXERCISE OF POWERS AGREEMENT CREATING THE SANTA ANA WATERSHED HYDRO ALLIANCE (SAWHA)**

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Dan questioned why SCE would no longer need the lines/power plants. It was clarified that the lines/power plants cannot simply be abandoned, as restoration of the land is required, which can be very costly.

**DISCUSSION**

- a. General Manager Jared Cheek provided background on the project, noting that discussions to form a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) have been ongoing for several years. He explained that the participating agencies include Big Bear Municipal Water District (BBMWD), Crafton Water Company (CWC), Bear Valley Mutual Water Company (BVMWC), and San Bernardino Valley Mutual Water District (SBVMWD) and that this item represents the agreement establishing the Water Users Hydro Alliance to formally bind the agencies together.

Leo Ferrando, Assistant Chief Engineer for San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, provided a presentation on the location of the hydropower facilities and the purpose of the proposed Joint Powers Authority (JPA), which is to own and oversee hydropower operations through the Santa Ana Watershed Hydro Authority. He noted that revisions to the original agreement included clarification language and updates to dispute resolution provisions. He also explained that the East End administration building would be purchased independently by SBVMWD to house staff and materials rather than the JPA. Next steps include forming the JPA and completing capital repairs over the coming years.

Board members asked questions regarding infrastructure, governance, costs, and benefits. Vice President Ludecke confirmed that SAR 1 connects to the high line and emphasized the importance of its repair; Mr. Ferrando noted that this project is prioritized early in the agreement. Discussion also included the need for Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approval and the transfer of title for the facilities from Southern California Edison (SCE) to SBVMWD. President Bradford raised questions regarding the District's role in hydropower, including anticipated costs, duration, and revenue potential; Mr. Cheek noted that variables remain and definitive figures are not yet available. Counsel clarified that while the District may withdraw from the JPA with proper notice, terms would need to be negotiated.

Additional discussion about governance and financial considerations went on. The JPA would consist of four member agencies, with voting structured to require SBVMWD plus one additional agency for approval. Questions were raised regarding financial obligations if the District does not support a decision. Directors emphasized the importance of participation to ensure representation, particularly regarding key infrastructure such as SAR 1 and water delivery connections. Staff noted potential operational benefits tied to water release policies and long-term system efficiencies, while also acknowledging water losses accounted for in the annual Watermaster reporting.

Mr. Ferrando explained that Southern California Edison is seeking to divest the facilities, and that the JPA's focus would include both water and power management. Power generated would likely be sold to third parties seeking "clean energy", with details to be determined by the JPA board. An initial funding amount of approximately \$30 million from SCE would support acquisition and startup, and future revenues and budget decisions would be governed by the JPA. Staff expressed support for participation from a regional collaboration standpoint, and that many operational details will be determined by the future JPA board. Discussion also included arbitration provisions, with a preference to resolve issues collaboratively.

Vice President Ludecke asked if this was the final agreement, and Mr. Cheek responded that while this agreement was the then current draft available at the time of agendaing, it will still be presented to other agencies' boards for approval with minor changes. If there are any changes it would be brought back for approval again.

With a motion made by Vice President Ludecke and seconded by Director Brewster, the motion to approve as written in the agenda was approved:

AYES: Bradford, Brewster, Ludecke, Lee, Peterson

NO:

ABSTAIN: -

## **7. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR**

N/A

## **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

General Manager Jared Cheek announced that he and Vice President Ludecke will be participating in the State Water Tour with San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District from the 22nd through the 24th of next week.

## **9. DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

President Bradford shared that he frequently launches at the East Launch Ramp on most days and said he appreciates that the ramp is open and seasonal staff have been very helpful, especially when he launches alone.

**10. CLOSED SESSION**

Counsel reported that the Board of Directors met to discuss the following closed session item and direction was given.

- A. Conference with Legal Counsel –Initiation of litigation pursuant to § 54956.9(c) – One case.

**11. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:57 PM.

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:**

Date: 05/7/2026  
Location: 40524 Lakeview Drive  
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315  
Time: 1:00 PM



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Elsa Donoho, Office Manager  
Secretary to the Board of  
Big Bear Municipal Water District



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