

ITEM 7A

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission Meeting Minutes June 12, 2025



The audio file for this committee can be found at: <http://www.cvag.org/audio.htm>

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Gary Gardner, City of Desert Hot Springs Mayor Pro Tem, at 10:31 a.m. in the CVAG Conference Room, Suite 104, in Palm Desert.
- 2. ROLL CALL** – Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez
Mayor Steven Hernandez
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner, *Chair*
Director Alex Cardenas*
Mayor Pro Tem Elaine Holmes
Mayor Linda Evans
Director Amber Duff
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee
Councilmember Michael O'Keefe
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Mayor Jan Harnik
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Councilmember Ben Guitron*

Agency

City of Cathedral City
City of Coachella
City of Desert Hot Springs
Imperial Irrigation District
City of Indio
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Rancho Mirage
Riverside County – District 1
Riverside County – District 2
Riverside County – District 3
Riverside County – District 4
Riverside County – District 5

Members Not Present

Director Anthony Bianco
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed
Mayor Ron deHarte

Coachella Valley Water District
City of Indian Wells
City of Palm Springs

**arrived at Item 6*

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Holmes led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS (IF ANY)

Chair Gardner announced item 8D has been pulled from today's agenda.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

6. COMMISSION CHAIR / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Executive Director Tom Kirk and Director of Conservation Kathleen Brundige provided an update on the Burrowing Owl census in partnership with Imperial Irrigation District.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approve the minutes of the April 10, 2025, meeting

B. Authorize the Executive Director to execute a contract with Dokken Engineering to conduct the Interstate 10 Wildlife Crossing Improvement Feasibility Study at a cost not to exceed \$187,070 through February 28, 2026

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR HARNIK TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Director Anthony Bianco	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Amber Duff	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee	Aye
Mayor Ron deHarte	Absent
Councilmember Michael O'Keefe	Aye
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Ben Guitron	Aye

7.1 ITEMS HELD OVER FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

None

8. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A. Acquisition of one parcel in the Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area

Diana Rosas, Associate Director of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, presented the staff report.

Brief member discussion ensued with Ms. Rosas answering a question regarding the status of a previous acquisition in the area.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY SUPERVISOR PEREZ TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-04 FOR ACQUISITION OF ONE PARCEL CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY 3.16+/- ACRES IN THE UPPER MISSION CREEK/BIG MORONGO CANYON CONSERVATION AREA AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$75,000, PLUS CLOSING AND TRANSACTION-RELATED COSTS NOT TO EXCEED \$3,500; AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY CONTRACTS AND TAKE SUCH OTHER ACTIONS AS NECESSARY FOR THE ACQUISITION

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Director Anthony Bianco	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Amber Duff	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee	Aye
Mayor Ron deHarte	Absent
Councilmember Michael O'Keefe	Aye
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Ben Guitron	Aye

B. Fiscal Year 2025-26 Agency-Wide, Programs, and Individual Funds Budget

Claude Kilgore, Director of Finance, presented the staff report and acknowledged the budget review by the CVCC Finance Committee.

Brief member discussion ensued with Mr. Kilgore answering a question regarding potential funding sources.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY SUPERVISOR PEREZ TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-05 AND ADOPT THE CVCC ANNUAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-26

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Director Anthony Bianco	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Elaine Holmes	Aye

Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Amber Duff	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee	Aye
Mayor Ron deHarte	Absent
Councilmember Michael O'Keefe	Aye
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Ben Guitron	Aye

C. Continued coordination with the University of California

Tony Quiroz, Management Analyst, presented the staff report.

Brief member discussion ensued with Mr. Quiroz inviting Dr. Lynn Sweet of UC Riverside's Center for Conservation Biology up to the podium to address climate change data and tracking.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR HERNANDEZ AND SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEM HOLMES TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS AS PART OF THE CVCC'S CONTINUED WORK WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA:

- 1. AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR TO EXECUTE A MASTER RESEARCH AGREEMENT WITH THE UC REGENTS ALLOWING CVCC TO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN CONTRACTS WITH UC; AND**
- 2. AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH UC RIVERSIDE'S CENTER FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY TO IMPLEMENT BIOLOGICAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY 1, 2025 TO JUNE 30, 2026, AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$261,960**

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Director Anthony Bianco	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Amber Duff	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee	Aye
Mayor Ron deHarte	Absent
Councilmember Michael O'Keefe	Aye
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye

Councilmember Ben Guitron

Aye

D. Legislative Efforts to Dedicate the Bump and Grind

This item was pulled from the agenda at the start of the meeting.

E. Contract for Illegal Dumpsite and Encampment Cleanup and Disposal Services

Mr. Quiroz presented the staff report.

Member discussion ensued regarding prevention measures for growing of encampments and collaboration efforts amongst various agencies. Staff was asked to return with additional data on illegal dumping.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER GUTIERREZ AND SECONDED BY DIRECTOR DUFF TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH AMERICAN INTERGRATED SERVICES TO PROVIDE DUMPSITE AND ENCAMPMENT CLEANUP AND DISPOSAL SERVICESFOR THE PERIOD FROM JULY1, 2025, TO MARCH 31, 2027, AT A NOT-TO-EXCEED AMOUNT OF \$249,234

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Mayor Steven Hernandez	Aye
Director Anthony Bianco	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Elaine Holmes	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Amber Duff	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee	Aye
Mayor Ron deHarte	Absent
Councilmember Michael O'Keefe	Aye
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen	Aye
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Ben Guitron	Aye

9. INFORMATION

A. Attendance Record

B. CVCC's Unaudited Financial Reports through March 31, 2025

- C. **CVCC's Quarterly Investment Report through March 31, 2025**
- D. **Automatic Cost-of-Living Adjustment to Administrative Fees for Project Reviews**
- E. **Update on North Shore Ranch acquisition in the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Delta Conservation Area**
- F. **Contracts under Executive Director's signing authority**
- G. **Coachella Valley Association of Governments' Meeting Calendar for Fiscal Year 2025-26**
- H. **Update on Reinstatement of Tipping Fees**

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next **Coachella Valley Conservation Commission** meeting will be held on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. The meeting is expected to be held at the Colorado Regional Water Quality Control Board, 73-720 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 100, Palm Desert, CA 92260. CVCC staff will confirm the location closer to the meeting date.

[Administrative note: After the meeting, it was determined that meetings would be held at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, 92260]

The next meeting of the **Coachella Valley Association of Governments' General Assembly** will be held on Monday, June 30, 2025, at 6 p.m. at the Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort & Spa, 71333 Dinah Shore Dr., Rancho Mirage, 92270.

12. ADJOURN

Chair Gardner adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elysia Regalado
Management Analyst