

**SEASIDE GROUNDWATER BASIN WATERMASTER
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT**

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

City of Sand City, City Hall, 1 Pendergrass Way, Sand City, CA 93955 (Hybrid)

I. CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Directors Present:

City of Seaside – Mayor Ian Oglesby, Chair

City of Monterey – Council Member Kim Barber

City of Sand City – Mayor Mary Ann Carbone

Monterey County/Water Resources Agency – Supervisor Wendy Root Askew

Laguna Seca Subarea Landowner – Director John Gaglioti

City of Del Rey Oaks – Council Member Kim Shirley

Coastal Subarea Landowner – Director Paul Bruno

Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) – Director Alvin Edwards

California American Water (CAW) – David Pezzini, *alternate*

Directors Absent:

California American Water (CAW) – Director Tim O’Halloran

Others Present:

Bob Jaques, Watermaster Technical Program Manager (TPM)

Toni Gibbs, Watermaster Administrative Officer (AO)

Laura Paxton, former Watermaster AO

Georgina King, Montgomery & Associates*

Amy Woodrow, Sr. Hydrologist, Monterey County Water Resources Agency

Sarah Hardgrave, Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA)

Andreas Baer, Senior Engineer, City of Seaside

Jon Lear, Water Resources Manager, MPWMD

Mike McCullough, Assistant General Manager, MPWMD

Kevin Dayton

Perit Harmon, Gen. Mgr., Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA)

N. Monica Lal, President/CEO, Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce

Svetlana Peshkoff*

Susan Schiavone*

An asterisk () signifies virtual attendance*

III. ELECTION OF WATERMASTER BOARD 2026 OFFICERS

- A. Chairperson (Must be member of the Board of Directors)—Currently Mayor Ian Oglesby
It was moved by Director Oglesby and seconded by Director Bruno to nominate Mayor Mary Ann Carbone as Board Chair.

The Board concurred to vote once for all positions.

- B. Vice Chairperson (Must be member of the Board of Directors)—Currently Mayor Mary Ann Carbone
Director Shirley was nominated as Vice Chair.
- C. Secretary (Need not be a member of the Board of Directors)—Currently Admin. Officer Laura Paxton
Toni Gibbs was nominated as Administrative Officer.
- D. Treasurer (Need not be a member of the Board of Directors)—Currently Supervisor Wendy Askew
Director Askew was nominated to continue as Treasurer.

It was moved by Director Askew and seconded by Director Barber to elect Director Carbone as Chair, Director Shirley as Vice Chair, Toni Gibbs as Secretary, and Director Askew as Treasurer for the year 2026. It was unanimously approved 9-0.

IV. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Susan Schiavone sent her best wishes to all, thanked Laura Paxton for her work, and welcomed the new Chair and Toni Gibbs.

V. REVIEW OF AGENDA AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Presenter Sarah Hardgrave requested that Item VIII.c be moved after the oral presentations.

VI. ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- A. ***Salinas Valley Basin GSA Update (Sarah Hardgrave, Monterey County Water Resources Agency)***
Sarah Hardgrave presented an update on the SVBGSA’s work related to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. She discussed various groundwater models, including the seawater intrusion model, and highlighted the Deep Aquifer Study published in spring 2024. Ms. Hardgrave mentioned that deep aquifer extraction has significantly increased since 2013, coinciding with the appearance of new seawater intrusion areas. She outlined next steps, including developing a management framework for deep aquifers, updating models in the Seaside area and Monterey sub-basin, and completing grant-funded feasibility studies in the next quarter. Ms. Hardgrave also noted that 5-year reviews of groundwater sustainability plans are upcoming, and projects will need to be selected for the next phase of implementation.
- B. ***Introduction to the Monitoring Plan for the Deep Aquifers (Amy Woodrow, Sr. Hydrologist, Monterey County Water Resources Agency)***
Amy Woodrow presented the Deep Aquifers Monitoring Plan for the Salinas Groundwater Basin, resulting from the 2024 Deep Aquifers study. She explained that the Water Resources Agency took the lead on preparing the plan, bringing together input from various agencies. The monitoring plan aims to describe existing groundwater monitoring activities and align them for a comprehensive dataset. It includes collecting groundwater extraction and injection data, quarterly groundwater elevation data, and

annual groundwater quality data focused on seawater intrusion and stable isotopes.

Director Gaglioti asked if this was an opportunity to standardize groundwater monitoring frequencies and what constituents are being monitored. Ms. Woodrow replied that they are first looking at the frequency of sampling, and that the chemical constituents that are being monitored will be discussed in the future. Director Shirley asked if there were any deficits from the Seaside basin that needed to be addressed. Ms. Woodrow said that the Seaside basin does not conduct stable isotope monitoring, but her intention is not to impose financial burdens on entities. Director Barber asked if there were funds to perform isotope monitoring in the Seaside basin. Ms. Hardgrave said that the Deep Aquifers Monitoring Plan Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is not a cost-sharing agreement but a data-sharing agreement and mentioned that there could be grants in the future to support such sampling.

Director Askew noted that the Seaside Basin operates as a legally unique "island" within a broader regional system, where coastal issues like saltwater intrusion might be most efficiently solved by projects located further upstream. She asked how the Seaside Basin can better integrate into these regional, cross-boundary solutions, specifically regarding who should fund and implement projects that benefit the entire basin. Ms. Hardgrave noted that Seaside's groundwater challenges are linked to regional factors and will benefit from participation in multi-basin strategies.

Public Comments: None received.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A *Deep Aquifers Monitoring Plan and MOU*

The Board reviewed and discussed the TPM transmittal report, which recommended signing an MOU to implement the Deep Aquifers Monitoring Plan for the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. The plan, based on a 2024 study, aims to incorporate groundwater level and quality monitoring across multiple sub-basins and formalizes data sharing and cooperation between several agencies, including the SVBGSA, MCWRA, MCWDGSA, and the Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster. The Watermaster's legal counsel has approved the revised language regarding indemnification and data warranties, and the execution of the MOU will have no fiscal impact on the Watermaster. The MOU will need to be updated to include the new post office box for the Watermaster.

Director Bruno asked the TPM if the Deep Aquifers Monitoring Plan includes monitoring done by the Watermaster. TPM Jaques confirmed the Plan accurately reflects the current Watermaster monitoring program. Director Bruno pointed out that if the cost of any additional monitoring begins to impact private producers, they will need to be informed. Director Askew asked how long the MOU lasts and what the impact to the Watermaster would be. TPM Jaques said it expires when the penultimate party withdraws from it. He recommended that the Board approve signing the MOU, which calls for an annual review of the Plan. At the end of each year, the Plan will be reviewed, and each governing body will need to decide whether the Plan should be modified. If so, this would be brought before the Board for its approval. Director Oglesby cautioned focusing on the stable isotope sampling when there may be other sampling that also needs to be considered. Director Bruno said the MOU allows for the sharing of data across entities, and because

the Watermaster is independent, it can change its collection plan as it sees fit.

It was moved by Director Askew and seconded by Director Shirley to accept the MOU with the Watermaster post office address updated, and to add the direction to the TAC to review sampling for stable isotopes in the future. The motion was unanimously approved 9-0.

Public Comments: None received.

IX. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Minutes of Regular Board meeting held on November 5, 2025
- B. Board and TAC Schedule of Meetings for 2026
- C. Summary of Payments made October - November 2025
- D. Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Reports through November 30, 2025

It was moved by Director Bruno, seconded by Director Oglesby, and unanimously carried to approve the Consent Calendar items as presented.

X. NEW BUSINESS (continued)

- B. Consider Approving Seawater Intrusion Analysis Report for 2025—Georgina King, Montgomery & Associates

Ms. King presented the annual Seawater Intrusion Analysis Report for the Seaside Basin. She highlighted a few noteworthy changes, including small chloride increases in two monitoring wells, although concentrations remain well below drinking water thresholds and no sodium-chloride molar ratios have dropped below the 0.86 indicator for seawater intrusion. Stiff diagrams and Piper diagrams show some evolving water chemistry in certain wells over the years, but none display the characteristic chloride spike associated with seawater intrusion. Groundwater levels have been relatively stable or improving in some areas, aided by the golf course's switch to recycled water, reduced native groundwater pumping, and ASR injection retention. However, protective groundwater elevations are being met in only two of six monitoring wells for which protective elevations have been established. All the deep aquifer monitoring wells that have protective elevations established for them have groundwater levels lower than their protective elevations. There continues to be a significant groundwater depression in the vicinity of the major production wells in the Northern Coastal Subarea, where deep aquifer levels remain below sea level. Sentinel Wells 1, 2, and 4 continue to show increasing electrical conductivity at some shallow depths—trends that are being actively monitored. Overall, while there are no definitive signs of seawater intrusion currently, the report recommends continued vigilance, coordination with the MCWDGSA, and destruction of a damaged well to the north of the Seaside Basin that poses a cross-aquifer contamination risk.

Director Gaglioti asked whether the increase in groundwater elevations in some parts of the Seaside Basin could increase groundwater leakage from the Basin. Ms. King stated

that if groundwater levels outside of and adjacent to the Seaside Basin are decreasing, the groundwater will move in that direction and there will need to be management projects to prevent that from happening.

Director Shirley asked about Recommendation 2 (page 42 of the meeting packet) in Ms. King's report, which states that chloride concentrations and water chemistry should be verified at the 140-200 ft. zone of Sentinel Well 4. Director Shirley pointed out that the access to Sentinel Well 4 will be limited. Following discussion regarding restricted access at Sentinel Well 4 due to planned revegetation there, the Board directed staff to coordinate with the appropriate authorities to try to secure permanent monitoring access.

Public Comment: Mike McCullough asked whether water samples from Sentinel Well 4 could be analyzed for chloride and TDS, and if there was any history of induction readings from the well. Ms. King responded that induction logging cannot directly measure chloride or TDS; it only measures the conductivity of the pore water in the strata surrounding the well. However, she was able to do some calculations that indicate that TDS might have increased by 1,000 mg/L, but that increase is limited to this zone. Geophysical Imaging Partners performed a subsurface conductivity survey that may provide more information. Ms. King confirmed that the Watermaster will need to decide which monitoring wells will be used for sampling to fulfill the requirements of the updated Seawater Intrusion Response Plan. She said that historically Sentinel Well 4 did not allow for groundwater sampling because the long length of the screens does not allow samples to be collected from a specific depth.

It was moved by Director Bruno, seconded by Director Gaglioti, and unanimously carried to accept the 2025 Seawater Intrusion Analysis Report.

It was moved by Director Bruno, seconded by Director Askew, and unanimously carried to direct staff to investigate securing permanent access for induction logging at Sentinel Well 4 through the appropriate public bodies.

- C. Consider Approving Water Year 2025 Watermaster Annual Report. The body of the Draft 2025 Annual Report is included in the Board agenda packet. The complete Draft version is posted at: <https://seasidegroundwaterbasinwatermaster.wpcomstaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2025-Annual-Report.pdf>

TPM Jaques stated the Watermaster submits an Annual Report to the Court after the end of each Water Year to fulfill one of its obligations under the Court Decision that created the Watermaster. The document summarizes and provides information on all the Watermaster's principal activities. The TAC reviewed a preliminary draft of the Annual Report and made several revisions, which were included in the draft in the Board agenda packet.

Director Shirley mentioned that the ad hoc Replenishment Committee, which had met in July of 2025, had proposed 4 ideas for replenishment water, one of which was to eliminate carryover credit. She requested a formal Board discussion to consider ending this practice as a strategy for water replenishment. Director Askew said it would be a worthwhile conversation, and she would want the impacted parties to be invited to that discussion. Director Bruno said having carryover credits reduced would upset the affected parties because for many producers, their production is less than their allocation of the Natural Safe Yield. He did not see a need to reduce carryover credits, but he was open to discussing it at the appropriate time and asked that affected parties be specifically invited to participate in that discussion. Director Oglesby commented that if the ad hoc committee has recommendations, it should bring them to the Board for discussion.

Public Comment: None received

It was moved by Director Askew, seconded by Director Oglesby, and unanimously carried to approve the 2025 Watermaster Annual Report as presented.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

Water Year 2026 RE-Declaration of Unavailability of Artificial Replenishment Water

AO Gibbs requested that the Board approve a revised version of the 2026 Declaration of Unavailability of Artificial Replenishment Water. She explained that the 2026 Watermaster allocations had been revised to correctly credit the City of Seaside with stored water rather than distributing it to standard producers, as the city used in-lieu water from the Marina Coast Water District. Despite these adjustments to individual party allocations, AO Gibbs reaffirmed the declaration that no replenishment water is available for 2026.

Public Comment: Andreas Baer, a senior engineer from the City of Seaside, asked that the Watermaster replenishment fund tables be reviewed for omitted data for City of Seaside totals for Water Year 2023 and 2024, which he believes results in a positive allotment from recharged water. He sent a letter with details to AO Gibbs before the meeting. AO Gibbs said that she would look at the information.

It was moved by Director Oglesby, seconded by Director Gaglioti, and unanimously carried to review the production and replenishment data tables for the City of Seaside and bring any revised tables back to the Board for approval at a future meeting.

XII. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS (No Action Required)

- A. Watermaster report of Water Year 2025 Production of the Seaside Basin (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025)
- B. Update on Security National Guaranty Well
- C. Progress Report on Geophysical Imaging Work Near Sentinel Well No. 4
- D. Notice of transfers of water rights – DBO to CAW
<https://seasidegroundwaterbasinwatermaster.wpomstaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2018-19-20-Water-Entitlement-Transfer-Letters-1.pdf>

XIII. DIRECTOR REPORTS

Director Bruno and the Board recognized Laura Paxton for her 20 years of service. Staff was directed to prepare a formal recognition and gift for the next meeting.

Chair Carbone noted that after a decade of litigation, Ed Ghandour has regained control of the SNG well property and is currently securing the site with gates. He plans to decommission the existing well and develop a new one on the property.

XIV. STAFF COMMENTS

AO Gibbs said that she has letters of water rights transfer (Item X.d) for review and that the current Watermaster legal council gave notice that they will be resigning in May 2026. AO Gibbs will bring a draft of an RFP to seek new council and will bring a list of prospective legal firms for the Board to consider at the next meeting.

XV. CLOSED SESSION – None

XVI. ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m. to a regular Board meeting to be held Wednesday, February 4, 2026 – 2:00 p.m. in the City of Sand City Council Chambers, in person and remote.

Respectfully submitted by Toni Gibbs, Board Secretary