

ITEM 6A

Energy & Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes June 13, 2024



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

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Oscar Ortiz, City of Indio, at 12:13 p.m. at the CVAG Conference Room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, in the City of Palm Desert. Zoom videoconferencing was available from the City of Blythe.
2. **ROLL CALL** – Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Vice Chair Candace Patencio Anderson
Mayor Joseph DeConinck
Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Ross
Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Virgen
Councilmember Russell Betts
Director JB Hamby*
Councilmember Dana Reed (*alternate*)
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz, *Chair*
Mayor Linda Evans, *Vice Chair*
Director Amber Duff
Councilmember Gina Nestande
Mayor Pro Tem Ron deHarte
Mayor Pro Tem Ted Weill
Supervisor V Manuel Perez **
Vice Chair Joseph Mirelez

Agency

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
City of Blythe (*via Zoom*)
City of Cathedral City
City of Coachella
City of Desert Hot Springs
Imperial Irrigation District
City of Indian Wells
City of Indio
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Palm Springs
City of Rancho Mirage
Riverside County – District 4
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

* *Jointed the meeting using AB 2449 for Just Cause*

***Deputy Chief of Staff Pat Cooper became Supervisor Perez's alternate after Item 7B*

Members/ Ex-Officios Not Present

Director Anthony Bianco
Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez

Coachella Valley Water District
Riverside County – District 5

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Russell Betts led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

It was announced that public comment for Items 7B and 7C would be taken during the item presentation.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Executive Director Kirk requested that items in the agenda be rearranged to be heard in 7B/7C/7A order as Supervisor Perez had to leave the meeting early. Mr. Kirk announced that there would not be an actual presentation for Item 7C as both members from the South

Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) were unable to make it to the meeting due to Jury Duty obligations.

Mr. Kirk also provided an update on CVAG's efforts to secure additional grant funding, including the recently completed application for an extreme heat grant.

Chair Ortiz announced that there will be a public meeting tomorrow for the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument, starting at 10 a.m. at the Riverside County Fairgrounds in Indio.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approve May 9, 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes**
- B. Approve Amendment No. Five to the professional services agreement with the Southern California Mountains Foundation, authorizing the next cycle of Waste Tire Amnesty Grant Program at a not-to-exceed amount of \$50,000 and extending the contract term through October 2025**
- C. Authorize the Executive Director to take the necessary actions, including the related agreements with the County of Riverside and College of the Desert, to receive available funding from the Coachella Valley Air Quality Enhancement Grant Program for the region's Smart Scalping and Landscape Certification Program**

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER BETTS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR EVANS TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES, 2 AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.

Vice Chair Patencio Anderson	Aye
Mayor DeConinck	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Ross	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Virgen	Aye
Director Bianco	Absent
Councilmember Betts	Aye
Director Hamby	Absent
Councilmember Reed	Aye
Councilmember Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Evans	Aye
Director Duff	Aye/Abstained- only from 6A
Councilmember Nestande	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem deHarte	Aye/Abstained- only from 6A
Mayor Pro Tem Weill	Aye
Deputy Chief Cooper	Aye
Vice Chair Mirelez	Aye

7. DISCUSSION / ACTION

B. Increasing air quality concerns from the desert’s tourism industry, realtors, healthcare professionals and residents

Mr. Kirk presented the staff report and background information on the issue. Mr. Kirk introduce Emily Nelson, CVAG’s longtime consultant on air quality, and Supervisor Perez, who is a SCAQMD board member, to address the Committee before opening the floor for public comment on the item.

Dr. Nelson addressed the Committee and presented an update on the interactions she has been having on air quality issues with the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Supervisor Perez expressed the need to sit down with SCAQMD and voice our concerns and put together a pathway moving forward to address the issues, provide potential solutions and discuss how to pay for those solutions.

Ron Holmes, resident of PGA West in La Quinta, expressed his concern over the air quality issues and the lack of action and ownership of the issue.

Audio caller, resident of Palm Desert, joined the meeting via Zoom and did not present his name, expressed his concern for the air quality since Tropical Storm Hilary and echoed Mr. Holmes’ position.

Palm Springs Mayor Jeffery Bernstein joined the meeting via Zoom and expressed his concerns over air quality issues, noting how the issue has become a predominate topic of conversation amongst the residents and businesses in the city of Palm Springs. Mayor Bernstein urges the issue to be addressed.

Palm Springs Councilmember Christy Holstege joined the meeting via Zoom and expressed her concern over the lingering air quality issues, the impacts to children’s health and the financial impact to the City of Palm Springs, who just funded \$500,000 for equipment to clear roadways from blowsand during these windstorms.

Dena Fisher, Manager of Respiratory Services with Tenet Health, joined via Zoom and shared hospital data of respiratory patients seeking treatment, including those with no history of asthma nor allergies. Ms. Fisher noted many patients are pediatric patients under the age of 3 and they believe air quality is a major role.

Scott White, President and CEO of Greater Palm Springs, and Davis Myers, Director of Partnership for Greater Palm Springs, addressed the negative impact on tourism due to the ever-growing air quality issue since Tropical Storm Hilary.

Brandon Marley, CEO of Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, spoke on the air quality issues affecting business, residents, and life in general or all members of the Coachella Valley and the importance of addressing the issues.

Chris Christensen, CEO of the Desert Healthcare District/ Foundation, spoke about the strategic plan and the District’s efforts to address environmental health issues, including air quality.

Robust member discussion ensued after public comment. Staff was encouraged to continue to lead regional engagement on this issue.

No action was taken as this was an informational item.

C. Coordination with South Coast Air Quality Management District

This item was postponed to a future meeting date due to SCAQMD being unable to attend due to unforeseen conflicts in scheduling.

A. Imperial Irrigation District’s Coachella Valley Resiliency Initiative

In the interest of time, it was requested that this item be moved to September 2024’s meeting agenda.

8. INFORMATION – The following items were provided in the agenda for information only:

A. Attendance Record

B. CVAG Meeting Calendar for Fiscal Year 2024/25

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jeremy Wittie, General Manager with Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District, expressed interest in partnerships with CVAG for the waste tire recycling program and interest in being part of the discussion for landscape certification currently being addressed as all are important in addressing mosquito sourcing. Mr. Wittie also gave an update on the West Nile virus.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the **Energy & Sustainability Committee** will be held on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at noon at the CVAG conference room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, Palm Desert, 92260.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held on Monday, June 24, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. at the Desert Hot Springs Recreation Center, 11-750 Cholla Dr, Desert Hot Springs, 92240.

The next meeting of the **General Assembly** will be held on Monday, June 24, 2024, at 6 p.m. at the Desert Hot Springs Recreation Center, 11-750 Cholla Dr, Desert Hot Springs, 92240.

11. ADJOURN – Chair Ortiz adjourned the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elysia Regalado, Management Analyst