



# Ventura County Special Districts Association

*Approved  
Minutes*

## VCSDA MEETING MINUTES Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Motion: \_\_\_\_\_  
Second: \_\_\_\_\_

### VENTURA COUNTY SPECIAL DISTRICTS

#### MEMBERS

Bell Canyon Community Services  
Calleguas Municipal Water  
Camarillo Health Care  
Camrosa Water  
Casitas Municipal Water  
Channel Islands Beach Community Services  
Conejo Recreation & Park  
Hidden Valley Municipal Water  
Ojai Valley Sanitary  
Oxnard Harbor  
Pleasant Valley County Water  
Pleasant Valley Recreation & Parks  
Rancho Simi Recreation & Parks  
Saticoy Sanitary  
Triunfo Water and Sanitation District  
United Water Conservation  
Ventura County Resource Conservation  
Ventura Regional Sanitation  
Ventura River Water  
Ventura Port

The April 6, 2021 meeting of the Ventura County Special District Association was held via videoconference.

#### **1. and 2. CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by President Bruce Dandy, followed by everyone reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL: President Dandy**

President Dandy welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members in attendance included:

*Andres Santamaria, Scott Quady, and Raul Avila - Calleguas Municipal Water District*  
*Kara Ralston - Camarillo Health Care District*  
*Al Fox - Camrosa Water District*  
*Mike Flood—Casitas Municipal Water District*  
*Robert Nast—Channel Islands Beach Community Services District*  
*Charles Huffer, George Lange, Doug Nickles - Conejo Recreation and Park District*  
*Vince Ferrante, Charlotte Holifield- California Special District Association*  
*Mike Mishler—Pleasant Valley County Water District*  
*Mark Malloy, Elaine Magner, Mary Otten - Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District*  
*Kristen Decas - Port of Hueneme*  
*Elaine Freeman and Kathleen O'Brien - Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District*  
*Janna Orkney—Triunfo Water and Sanitation District*  
*Bruce Dandy, Kris Sofley – United Water Conservation District*  
*Todd Mitchell, Brian Pendelton —Ventura Harbor Village*  
*Bruce Kuebler – Ventura River Water District*

Members of the Public participating in the meeting included:

*Brian Brennan, District Representative, VC Supervisor Matt LaVere's office*  
*Burt Handy*  
*Robert O'Riley, Chief of Staff, VC Supervisor Carmen Ramirez' office*  
*Supervisor Carmen Ramirez, Ventura County Board of Supervisors*

#### **4. Approval of Minutes from Board Meeting of February 2, 2021 and Special Board Meeting of March 9, 2021**

Motion to approve February 2 Minutes, Brian Brennan; Second, Al Fox, unanimous approval, none opposed.

President—Bruce Dandy  
Vice President—Al Fox

Treasurer—  
Secretary to the Board—Kris Sofley

Motion to approve March 9 Minutes, Elaine Magner; Second, Elaine Freeman. Unanimous approval, none opposed.

5. **Treasurer's Report**—As there is no Treasurer at this time, the Treasurer's Report was omitted.

6. **Reports and Announcements:**

Elaine Magner: Ms. Magner thanked President Dandy and the Executive Committee for supporting legislation recognizing Special Districts for state disbursement of federal funding resulting from COVID-19 infrastructure assistance. She also announced that she was seeking re-election of the SCDA Seat A for the next three years and asked for everyone's support and their vote when ballots are distributed on May 28.

Charlotte Holifield: Ms. Holifield thanked everyone for their efforts in supporting the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (aka the COVID-19 Stimulus Package) a 1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the 117th United States Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11, 2021. She explained that CSDA was forming a coalition to sign on or provide a letter to Governor Newsom tomorrow asking for the authority to transfer funds to Special Districts. Ms. Holifield reported that CSDA had over 630 signatures on the support letter already from throughout California and thanked several individuals and special districts who encouraged signatures as well as email and letter writing campaigns to demonstrate to the Governor the widespread support for Special Districts. She also recognized State Senators Monique Limon and Henry Stern, Assembly members Jacqui Irwin and Steve Bennett and Congresswoman Julia Brownley as well as tonight's guest speaker Ventura County Supervisor Carmen Ramirez for their support of Special Districts. Ms. Holifield reminded attendees that CSDA's Legislative Days are scheduled for May 18 and 19 and early bird registrations earn a free guest (by one get two), and that this year's Legislative Days coincide with Special Districts' Week. Ms. Magner reminded everyone to submit paperwork for Resolutions from their organizations in recognition of Special Districts' week.

Elaine Freeman: Ms. Freeman advised participants that CSDA was recommending opposing AB59, Mitigation Fee Act, as introduced by Assembly member Gabriel, which increases the timelines on certain fee and rate hearings. CSDA sponsored AB 361, which allows entities to hold meetings via teleconferencing during emergencies and while transitioning back to in-person meetings. She also mentioned AB 1500 (Garcia) Safe drinking water and said she would send a memo to members with more details. Ms. Freeman also said that LAFCo would be meeting again, in April.

Mike Mishler: Mr. Mishler stated that the County has had no meetings so there is nothing to report. No other reports were presented.

7. **Guest Speaker—Supervisor Carmen Ramirez**

President Dandy introduced Supervisor Ramirez. She began her address to the VCSDA by stating that in all of the ten years that she had served on the Oxnard City Council, she had never missed a meeting. Before being elected to the Oxnard City Council, she had spent 16 years serving the community as a public interest lawyer for those without the means to hire private counsel. She was elected to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in November 2020, for a four year term, serving residents in unincorporated areas along the coast, including Hollywood Beach and Silver Strand as well as El Rio, Nyeland and Strickland. She is an active member of numerous community organizations and non-profits. In fact, Supervisor Ramirez is also chair for the Ventura County Animal Services Commission and LAFCo and is a member of the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency, among others.

Supervisor Ramirez began by saying that she had known many of the VCSDA members for a long time and that after an 18-month long campaign, she was grateful to be here. She said that being an elected official during a global pandemic and economic shutdown wasn't the most fun, but she is battle tested, has survived a recall effort while a member of the Oxnard City Council over wastewater rates, but she knows that sometimes the public doesn't understand the costs of services. Stating that she had learned some very valuable lessons while serving on the City Council in Oxnard, Public Health is her number one priority and she is encouraging vaccinations and is engaged in County assistance programs to help local businesses and that she expects the Federal relief bill signed by the President will help local agencies as well.

She also explained that throughout her formidable career, working with numerous agencies and elected officials, even when people strongly disagree, they can still be collegial. She added that among her numerous concerns were public safety and public health, law enforcement, and emergency planning. She said she had recently spoken with Ventura County Sheriff Bill Ayub and that the County had done a very good job on emergency planning, but that it was predicated on a very large earthquake, not a pandemic. There are plans in place for emergency situations with dams, fires, losing water supply, and lives and her goal is to make Ventura County as prepared and as modern as possible.

President Dandy asked Supervisor Ramirez about Ventura County's Regional Energy Alliance. Supervisor Ramirez said that there needs to be more energy audits of homes and businesses, expansion of electric vehicles and mentioned that there are programs being funded by CA Utility and Energy Commissions. President Dandy added that Scott Quady had invited the VC Regional Energy Alliance folks to speak at a future VCSDA meeting. Mr. Quady said initially he thought the agency could address Public Safety Power Shutoffs and the opportunities for greener energy conversions so Special Districts could become more self-reliant. Supervisor Ramirez said she was concerned about shut offs, especially hospitals. She also spoke of moving utilities underground, but added that it was very expensive and if the power companies pay for these upgrades, ultimately the public pays for it through higher utility rates.

George Lange asked Supervisor Ramirez to explain the "silver tsunami." She said that the population of Ventura County is aging, even though Oxnard has a younger population. She mentioned a study that was done two years ago with Cal Lutheran University, Master Plan for Aging, which discussed seniors who stay in their own homes faring better than those who are living in convalescent facilities, which usually are understaffed and/or staffed by lower paid workers. (Her office provided a link to the study via chat: <https://www.vcaaa.org/about-us/planning-strategy/>)

Kara Ralston thanked Supervisor Ramirez for mentioning this issue and said that 22 percent of the population of Camarillo is 60 years of age or older, compared to the national average of 12 percent. She added that two out of three females will be diagnosed with Alzheimer's and since older females are typically the family caregivers, it creates yet another public health/community health concern. Supervisor Ramirez added that many seniors rely on Social Security income, which averages about \$1000 per month, which also adds to the problems of aging.

Al Fox asked Supervisor Ramirez about cannabis and petroleum in water due to fracking. Supervisor Ramirez said that since cannabis is legal in California, we have to deal with it and referred participants to <https://www.ventura.org/cannabis/> website for more details. She did add that Port Hueneme has allowed for retail medicinal and recreational cannabis and that it was becoming a lucrative business income for the City. She also mentioned that the establishing of cannabis retailers in El Rio and Nyland Acres was a way to bring more money into disadvantaged communities, and that the City of Oxnard, which has issued a number of licenses, limits retail locations so that none are near schools, hospitals or churches and they also require a big deposit when submitting applications for cannabis retail licenses.

On the subject of oil contamination of the water supply, she mentioned an emergency ordinance to stop oil well drilling and/or fracking to protect aquifers. She said the USGS did a two year study that was non-conclusive but that data is still being developed to determine the impact of fracking on water supplies. She concluded by saying that once an aquifer is contaminated, it is very difficult to repair.

Supervisor Ramirez responded to a question from Elaine Freeman, saying that the potential infrastructure bill will be helpful in upgrading the County's power grid, adding that she is a proponent and support of the Clean Power Alliance and while it doesn't replace Southern California Edison, it does provide a review of clean energy such as wind, solar and battery storage. She said 50 years ago, power plants were built on beaches in Oxnard, and now the Energy Commission refuses licenses in that area because it is too close to the water.

Supervisor Ramirez then discussed how critical infrastructure (roads, bridges, facilities) are being threatened by rising seawater; how 100 MW battery storage facility in El Rio replaces a power plant on the beach and mentioned CA Independent System Operator (CAISO.com) if people wanted more Information.

Doug Nickles asked Supervisor Ramirez if she had two or three items that she would like to accomplish and for which the Special Districts could provide support. Supervisor Ramirez said one of her goals is to provide better information to constituents, especially to disabled workers, farm workers and other who may not have access to technology. She also said she supports SOAR and water conservation, which is a huge concern in Ventura County. She said all of us need to think about how we disperse trash in landfills, recycled water use and we all have to do a better job at being more modern, more resilient. She also mentioned that one third of the people currently in detention have mental health issues and we need to look at how to treat people better. She said it's more complicated than that, but that we need to use resources well and better. She added that half of the County's homeless population are 55 years of age and older and that problems need to be addressed before they become a crisis. Water, recreation, sanitation, ports...how are we using resources and how we can work together to improve things. She said all of us need to do things better rather than what's easy. "It may cost more," she stated, "but it's worth it."

Supervisor Ramirez ended by saying that as the county moves into the orange tier, we still need to be careful. Don't take chances with your health, continue to wear masks and be careful, be safe.

President Dandy thanks Supervisor Ramirez for her time and her comments. He then asked Mr. Quady if the Ventura County's Regional Energy Alliance had confirmed to address the VCSDA at its June meeting. Mr. Quady said he had not heard back from the group.

Elaine Freeman reminded Charlotte Holifield to sent the template for the letter support Special District funding to Linda Parks as chair of the Board of Supervisors. President Dandy suggested that she work with Mike Powers. Ms. Holifield said she would send the coalition letter.

President Dandy again thanked Supervisor Ramirez, said she was great, and reminded everyone of the next meeting on June 1 and adjourned the meeting at 6:46p.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT TO NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting will be on June 1, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted, *Kris Sofley*

Kris Sofley, Secretary to VCSDA