Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting of the
Apple Valley Foothill County Wate District
July 27, 2026, | 1:02 – 3:01 PM
22545 Del Oro Road, CA 92308

The meeting held on July 27, 2026, by the Apple Valley Foothill County Water District, opened with a roll call conducted by President Justin Miller. The meeting included all members of the board and district staff. The session began at 01:02 p.m. with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: President Miller, Vice-President Penfold, Directors Smith, Nobles, and Fonseca
Absent: None
Also Present: General Manager Smith and Office Secretary Simmons
Public Present: Sharon Silva-Houts and Karen Madison

Key Points Discussed:

1. **Public Hearings and Comments**: Before the public hearing commenced, public members raised questions about consumer confidence reports and standby assessments traditionally mailed, querying their absence. The response indicated these are now provided electronically, with past reports physically posted on the office door. Questions about the standby assessment money not being deducted from tax bills were addressed. The county has changed its process which delayed collection, but submissions were approved for the current and past fiscal years.
2. **Financial Transparency**: There was a discussion around checks listed under director's fees, seeking clarification on certain amounts. The board clarified the changes in the billing process to increase financial transparency, mentioning that not all expenses incurred are available in the July 2026 draft documents, as future transactions will most likely occur from the current date to the 31st. of the month.
3. **Budgetary Approvals**: The approval of standby assessments, fiscal budgets, and water rates for the coming year were significant agenda items. Adjustments were noted in the budget, especially related to maintenance and repairs, indicating consideration for future capital improvements.
4. **Technological and Process Improvements**: The board is moving toward digital solutions, with an emphasis on reducing operational costs and inefficiencies. Discussions included transitioning to QuickBooks and Gusto for financial and payroll management and enhancing digital communications with a move towards paperless billing systems. Concerns about technological transitions and clarity in communication with customers were acknowledged.
5. **Water Resource Management**: Updates on water usage and production indicated a balance within allowed limits but highlighted a need for continuous monitoring, specifically mentioning water well functionality and fire hydrant replacements due to extensive system repairs needed.
6. **Policy and Governance**: Several policies were reviewed and approved, touching on legal counsel engagement, the general manager's roles, legislative advocacy, and digital signature protocols. Discussions emphasized the importance of periodic reviews and ensuring alignment with legal recommendations.
7. **Election and Board Roles**: With upcoming elections, there was discussion about the candidacy filing process, urging existing board members and new candidates to file their nominations. The meeting concluded with administrative and procedural discussions regarding enhancing efficiency in board meetings, setting specified time limits, and addressing public inquiries proactively, reflecting the board's commitment to transparency and responsiveness.

- ❖ File a motion to open the public hearing.
- ❖ Submit Standby money collections for last year and this year.
- ❖ Check why director's checks are not on the list of disbursements.
- ❖ Approve the list of disbursements at next month's meeting.
- ❖ Makayla to track down the extra amount on director's check for June.
- ❖ Submit and get approval for standby assessments and resolutions for the fiscal year.
- ❖ Switch to QuickBooks and Gusto for financial and payroll to save costs.
- ❖ Send out a letter on August 1st to begin paperless billing as default with an option to opt for a paper copy.

Opening and Roll Call
The meeting is officially opened with a roll call from attendees, including board members and public representatives. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.

Public Comment Session
Public members raise questions and concerns regarding consumer confidence reports, standby assessment, and other tax-related issues. Board and staff address these concerns.

Discussion on Financial Processes and Approvals
General discussion on financial procedures, review of bills to pay, disbursements, and the introduction of new systems like QuickBooks and Gusto for financial management.

Approval of Budget and Resolution
Board members discuss and approve the budget for the fiscal year 2026-27, including water rates and resolutions. Adjustments to base and capital improvement rates are made.

Consent List Approval
The board considers approval of several agenda items as a consent list, particularly meeting minutes which require revisions.

General Manager's Report
The General Manager provides updates on well maintenance, water usage, and other operational matters concerning the district.

New District Policies
Second, reading new district policies concerning legal counsel, general manager's role, legislative advocacy, and digital signatures. Discussions and approvals are made.

Discussion on Water System Projects
Updates on water well flow meters and fire hydrant replacement projects are given, highlighting costs and project status.

Board Comments and Meeting Adjournment
Board members share final comments on meeting efficiency and future processes. The meeting is officially adjourned.

Context:

- **Date and Time:** July 27, 2026, at 1:02 p.m.
- **Purpose:** Regular board meeting to discuss various operational, financial, and policy matters.
- **Key Discussion Points:** Public comment session, fiscal reports, election filing deadlines, digital management systems, and policy reviews.

Actions:

1. **Public Hearing Questions:**
    - Addressed queries regarding consumer confidence reports, Standby assessments, and billing discrepancies.
    - **Action:** Ensure current year's consumer reports are available electronically and review billing practices for accuracy.
    - **Responsible:** Dan and Makayla.
    - **Deadline:** Prior to the next billing cycle.
2. **Budget Approval:**
    - Approved budget for the fiscal year 2026-27.
    - **Action:** Implement of approved budget.
    - **Responsible:** General Manager (GM) and Finance Team.
    - **Deadline:** Immediate.
3. **Rate and Fee Changes:**
    - Approved rate adjustments with a new base rate and updated surcharges.
    - **Action:** Communicate rate changes to customers.
    - **Responsible:** GM and Office Staff.
    - **Deadline:** Before the next billing cycle.
4. **Election Filing:**
    - Discussed filing deadlines for board elections with scheduled assistance from the office for online appointments.
    - **Action:** Complete filing by the end of the month.
    - **Responsible:** Board Members and Makayla.
    - **Deadline:** July 2026 election filing deadline.
5. **Digital and Electronic Systems:**
    - Move towards a paperless billing system, with August 1st as the notice date for customers.
    - **Action:** Send out a notification for paperless billing transition.
    - **Responsible:** Makayla.
    - **Deadline:** August 1, 2026.
6. **Policy Approvals:**
    - Approved policies on legal counsel, general manager’s role, legislative advocacy, and digital signatures.
    - **Action:** Implement and document policies.
    - **Responsible:** Board and GM.

- **Deadline:** Immediate.

Responsible Parties:

- **General Manager (Dan):** Coordinate budget implementation, ensure compliance with new rate structures, manage digital systems transition, implement policies.
- **Makayla (Office Staff):** Assist in filing processes, manage communications for digital billing transition.
- **Board Members:** Ensure timely election filing, oversee policy implementation.

Deadlines:

- **Upcoming Billing Cycle:** Complete updates on consumer confidence reports and rate changes.
- **August 1, 2026:** Issue notice for paperless billing transition.
- **Immediate:** Implement budget, policies, and rate changes.

Notes:

- Ensure clear communication with customers about new practices and policies.
- Monitor transition to ensure the smooth implementation of new systems and processes.
- Encourage community participation and awareness of board activities and decisions.

During the scheduled board meeting on July 27, 2026, key agenda items included attendance roll call, a public hearing portion, and various board approvals. The board discussed proposals for transitioning to paperless billing, adjustments to water rates, and new district policies, including digital signature acceptance. Actions were taken on fiscal matters, including approval of the budget and standby assessments, with the meeting concluding at 3.01 p.m.

Brief Information & Summary:

The text outlines a community meeting held on July 27, 2026, involving discussions on management, finance, and operational issues of a water district. Attendees focused on public comments, water billing, financial policies, meeting procedures, and upcoming elections for board members. Key topics included transitioning to paperless billing, fiduciary responsibilities, and approving several resolutions and policies.

People & Organizations:

- Justin Miller (President)
- Duane Penfold (Vice President)
- Harold Nobles (Director)- Suzi Smith (Director)
- Sharon Silva-Houts (Public Attendee)
- Karen Madison (Public Attendee)
- Ms. Makayla Simmons (Office Staff)
- Daniel Smith (General Manager)
- James Champa (Legal Counsel)
- Kelly's Construction (Repair Contractor)
- Eagle Drilling (Water Well Contractor)

Locations & Places:

- United States of America
- San Bernardino County

Dates & Time References:
- July 27, 2026 (Meeting Date)
- Fiscal Year 2026-27
- Meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Key Terms & Topics:
- Water District Management
- Public Hearing
- Consumer Confidence Report
- Online Billing System

- QuickBooks Implementation
- Legal Counsel Engagement
- Electronic/Digital Signatures
- Water Conservation and Usage
- Board Election Procedures
- Capital Improvement Surcharge
- Financial Reporting and Disbursements

Overall, the meeting was primarily focused on operational efficiency, financial management, regulatory compliance, and fostering public interaction in community utility management.

Daniel B. Smith, General Manager
Apple Valley Foothill County Water District

APPROVED:

Justin Miller, President of the Board of Directors
Apple Valley Foothill County Water District