

# **WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Monday, October 6, 2025**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Kevin Bash at 11:31 a.m., in the March Field Conference Room at the County of Riverside Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, Third Floor, Riverside, California, 92501.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

#### **Members/Alternates Present**

Karen Spiegel\*  
Chuck Washington  
Julio Martinez  
Kevin Bash  
Crystal Ruiz\*  
Joseph Morabito

#### **Members Absent**

\*Arrived after the meeting was called to order.

### **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Aaron Hake, Executive Director.

### **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no requests to speak from the public.

### **5. ADDITIONS / REVISIONS**

There were no additions or revisions to the agenda.

### **6. CONSENT CALENDAR – *All matters on the Consent Calendar will be approved in a single motion unless a Board Member(s) requests separate action on specific item(s).***

**M/S/C (Martinez/Morabito) to approve the following Consent Calendar items.**

#### **6A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 5, 2025**

**7. INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2025-014 TO AMEND BYLAWS WITH REGARD TO BOARD SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Lisa Mobley, Administrative Services Director/Clerk of the Board, presented the proposed amendment to the RCA Bylaws that clarifies the process for Board selection and approval of Executive Committee Members. While the current bylaws define the composition of the Executive Committee, they did not provide a clear procedure for how the Board nominates and selects its' two members.

The proposed update introduces a structured, transparent process for nominations, voting, and run-off procedures if needed. This process mirrors the one currently used in the RCTC Admin Code, ensuring consistency across agencies.

Board Member Morabito wanted to know what the difference was between what RCA is doing now and what the amendment will mean. Lisa Mobley stated that what RCA is doing now is just saying that the Board must appoint two members, but as happened at the last selection, there were more than two nominations and there was not a clearly defined process on how to move through the nominations. This amendment to the bylaws is to make the process clearer.

Board Member Washington clarified that the Board only made two appointments because there are some spots that are automatically filled. Lisa Mobley confirmed that it was correct. The Chair, Vice Chair, and immediate Past Chair are on the Executive Committee by default.

Board Member Martinez wanted to make sure the timing for informing Board Members of the change to the bylaws was still four weeks. Lisa Mobley confirmed that it was correct, and that any change to the bylaws would require a four-week notice period.

Board Member Washington asked if there was a requirement for the Board of Supervisors on the Executive Committee. Lisa Mobley stated that the bylaws state there must be at least two Board of Supervisor members.

Board Member Washington asked for further details on the composition of the Executive Committee.

Lisa Mobley shared that the Executive Committee was comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, immediate Past Chair, two appointed by the Board, and two appointed by the Chair. That is a total of seven, of which at least two and no more than three must be from the Board of Supervisors. There is no change recommended to the composition of the Executive Committee, just the Board selection of their two appointees.

Chair Bash explained the process of selecting the Chair appointees which included speaking to staff and reviewing attendance records.

Board Member Washington thought that there should possibly be a process for the Chair's appointees to avoid any viewing of favoritism with future picks. It was suggested that the Chair

take the time to interview applicants that expressed interest in being on the Executive Committee, if that process would not be too restrictive.

Steve DeBaun, general counsel, stated that all the bylaws amendment did was establish a voting process when there are more than two people nominated by the Board. What has been suggested would be establishing a more substantive process.

Aaron Hake clarified the request being brought forward today is for the two Executive Committee Members that are selected by the Board. The issue being raised today is that when the Board is nominating their selections, what happens if there are more than two. This stems from the last time when there were three nominations, there was no process for voting.

**M/S/C (Washington/Bash) to:**

- 1) Approve the proposed amendments to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) Bylaws, subject to the four-week noticing period required in Article XIII(B) of the RCA Bylaws; and**
- 2) Introduce Resolution No. 2025-014, *“Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority Amending Its Bylaws with Regard to Board Selection and Approval of Executive Committee Members”*.**

At this time, Vice Chair Spiegel arrived.

## **8. UPDATE: STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Aaron Gabbe, Regional Conservation Director, provided a presentation on the Strategic Improvement Assessment and Action Plan (SIAAP) Implementation Update. On September 5, the RCA held a Board Workshop to receive the SIAAP.

The first items approved by the Board directed the Executive Director to initiate the amendment process with the Wildlife Agencies to add Crotch’s bumble bee as a covered species to the MSHCP and associated permits. To do so, RCA needed to negotiate an amendment to the existing SIAAP contract with ICF for consultant support to amend the MSHCP. A proposed contract amendment with ICF to assist staff with the Crotch’s bumble bee amendment is on today’s RCA Board of Directors Agenda. The RCA and Wildlife Agencies are holding a kickoff meeting in November to begin the MSHCP amendment process.

The next Board direction to staff was to refer the SIAAP to the Stakeholders Committee for review and input. RCA staff held a Stakeholder Committee on September 24, and presented an overview of the SIAAP findings, and recommendations provided by the Board. The Committee engaged in a discussion after the presentation providing some early feedback. Stakeholder Committee Members will continue to review the SIAAP, and provide comments to staff, which will be forwarded to the Board and include any recommendations made. Staff also requested that Committee Members consider and provide feedback on how they can contribute to the SIAAP implementation process, particularly to strengthen Permittee and public

engagement in MSHCP implementation which will be discussed at the next meeting in November.

The Board also directed staff to conduct a three-part economic and financial analysis to: 1) initiate an economic and community benefits analysis of the MSHCP; 2) initiate a study to explore new sources of revenue to fund MSHCP land acquisition; and 3) initiate a nexus study to evaluate the Local Development Mitigation Fee. This will require consultant support and RCA staff are preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a consultant to conduct these analyses to be released in November. Staff will bring a proposed contract award to the Executive Committee and the Board in early 2026.

The Board directed staff to develop strategies and report back to the Board, in collaboration with Permittees and in consultation with stakeholders, that:

- a. Expand non-monetary compensation strategies in exchange for land dedication to the MSHCP reserve;
- b. Better align areas described by the MSHCP for conservation and land use zoning designations;
- c. Incorporate more Permittee-owned land into the MSHCP reserve;
- d. Explore large-scale Criteria Refinements that could be used to increase land acquisition flexibility; and
- e. Evaluate targeted changes to the MSHCP that can be strategically implemented during an amendment to the MSHCP to add Crotch's bumble bee.

The first four strategies require collaboration with the County and cities to implement. Ultimately, it is the County and cities that have the jurisdiction to implement these actions. Staff currently does not have the bandwidth to develop and flesh out these strategies concurrently with carrying out the required day-to-day functions of the RCA such as processing Joint Project Reviews, Participating Special Entities, land acquisition, land management, and responding to requests by Permittees, developers, and other stakeholders for assistance. Additional staff are needed to engage with Permittees and develop the solutions identified in the SIAAP and to support day-to-day operations.

The final recommendation from the Board to staff was to direct staff to conduct a financial and human resources analysis to determine budget and staffing needs to implement the Board's direction on SIAAP-related initiatives. Pursuant to the Board's direction, staff are conducting a human resources and finance analysis of RCA's current workload and what new staff positions are needed, along with what the financial impact will be on RCA. Additional staff is merited to simply operate the RCA, let alone add the work efforts directed by the Board stemming from the SIAAP and the Crotch's bumble bee amendment. RCTC has engaged a consultant, Gallagher's Human Resources & Compensation Consulting, to develop job descriptions for newly proposed positions. Any new positions will need approval from the RCTC Executive Committee, including a revised organizational chart and salary range table, per the RCTC Administrative Code.

Board Member Morabito wanted to know how close RCA was to bringing Crotch's bumble bee into the MSHCP. Aaron Gabbe shared that the amendment and scope of work that will be discussed at the next meeting predicts about two years for the process.

Aaron Hake added that this amendment would be seen as a project so it would need to include California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approval. RCA staff are not waiting, even though the Board has not approved the contract amendment yet, there is a meeting already scheduled with the Wildlife Agencies to kick off this Major Amendment.

Vice Chair Spiegel asked what will happen for those two years of the amendment process and whether anyone will be able to move forward on projects. Aaron Gabbe stated that there is an interim permitting strategy that RCA will be rolling out to the Permittees. While it does not provide permit streamlining, it will provide a synchronized process for applicants in the cities to time the Crotch's bumble bee permitting process with the MSHCP and local permitting process. This also includes the added benefit of offering RCA land for uplift that might be required by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), thus preventing the projects from being held back.

Aaron Hake wanted to make it clear that there would still be a separate process, but it would be concurrent with the MSHCP process. Unfortunately, the process will not be through the RCA, but rather the CDFW.

Board Member Morabito asked how often this process would be necessary for a developer on a project and if it was affecting every project. Aaron Gabbe shared that it would depend on what was on the property, but as it turns out the Crotch's bumble bee habitat is most everywhere, so it is affecting a lot of projects.

Vice Chair Spiegel wondered how it could be listed as an endangered species if they are found everywhere. Aaron Gabbe explained that while they seem to be found everywhere, their range through California is restricted from complete habitat loss, and this happens to be one of the few places they are left.

Aaron Hake reminded the Board that there are actually four species of bumble bees that are being considered for listing, but only Crotch's bumble bee is found in Western Riverside County.

Board Member Morabito thought it was strange that it seems so difficult to add an additional species, and it is a shame that doing so adds this burden of cost. It should be easier to add to the Plan.

Aaron Gabbe stated that it will be easier to add to the Plan than when the Plan was first approved, but there are still so many procedures, staff time, and environmental review required.

Board Member Martinez wanted to know, going forward, out of the recommendations that ICF presented, which of them are staff still actively pursuing. Aaron Gabbe could not say specifically without the SIAAP report to refer to, but the recommendations presented and voted on by the Board represented the entire breadth of issues that were identified by the report. Some narrow recommendations in the report were covered by broader recommendations to the Board. There were also some recommendations that were not feasible or would not provide the benefit necessary for action.

Board Member Martinez agreed that some of the report recommendations sounded good, but a deeper drive showed they were not realistic. RCA staff seemed comfortable refining those for what the agency needs going forward despite the Board's frustrations. Aaron Gabbe confirmed that was correct and the challenging part is that the expressed frustrations are also felt at the staff level, but they are an unfortunate byproduct of the basis and structure of our Plan.

**This item is for the Executive Committee to receive and file an update on the status of Strategic Improvement Assessment and Action Plan (SIAAP) implementation tasks.**

#### **9. BOARD OF DIRECTORS / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS**

There were no comments or reports.

At this time, Board Member Ruiz arrived.

#### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for consideration by the Executive Committee, Chair Bash adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled to be held on **Monday, November 3, 2025.**

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Mobley  
Administrative Services Director/  
Clerk of the Board