



**STOCKTON
EAST WATER
DISTRICT**

PROVIDING SERVICE SINCE 1948
www.sewd.net

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SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

The Administration Committee
of the Stockton East Water District
Board of Directors will meet at
11:00 a.m., Wednesday, April 29, 2026
at the District Office, 6767 East Main Street, Stockton, CA

Assistance for the Disabled: If you are disabled in any way and need accommodation to participate in the meeting, please call Administrative Staff at (209) 948-0333 for assistance so the necessary arrangements can be made.

AGENDA

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|----|---|------------------------|
| 1. | Roll Call - Chairperson Sanguinetti, Director Nakaue, Director Watkins, Director Panizza (Alternate) | <u>Page No.</u> |
| 2. | Public Comment | |
| 3. | Stockton East Water District – Staff Report – Consideration of Organizational Changes: Position Restoration, Staffing Augmentation, and Executive Title Modernization | 01 |
| 4. | Adjournment | |

Certification of Posting

I hereby certify that on April 23, 2026, I posted a copy of the foregoing agenda in the outside display case at the District Office, 6767 East Main Street, Stockton, California, said time being at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting of the Stockton East Water District Administration Committee Meeting (Government Code Section 54954.2). Executed at Stockton, California on April 23, 2026.

Priya Ram, Director of Finance & Administration
Stockton East Water District

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DATE: April 29, 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3

TITLE: Organizational Restructuring and Position Authorization

SUBJECT: Consideration of Organizational Changes: Position Restoration,
Staffing Augmentation, and Executive Title Modernization

Executive Summary

Staff is requesting that the Administration Committee review and recommend that the Board of Directors approve several organizational changes intended to improve operational effectiveness, support leadership succession, and align the District's structure with modern public sector practices. These changes include: (1) restoration of the Special Projects Manager position, (2) addition of an Administrative Clerk position, and (3) modernization of executive job titles to Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), and Chief Financial Officer (CFO). These actions are intended to strengthen organizational capacity, improve efficiency, and position the District for continued growth and leadership in the region.

Background

Stockton East Water District (District) has experienced significant growth in operational complexity, public engagement, regulatory requirements, and regional leadership responsibilities. As the District continues to evolve, organizational structure and staffing levels must adapt to support both current operations and future strategic priorities.

Historically, public agencies—including water districts—have relied on traditional titles such as “General Manager,” a designation that originated in the late 19th century during the early development of utility and railroad management structures. Similarly, the first City Manager role, widely recognized as the beginning of the modern professional public administration model, was established in Staunton, Virginia in 1908, marking a shift toward professionalized management of public agencies.

Over time, both the private sector and public agencies have increasingly adopted C-suite executive titles (CEO, COO, CFO) to reflect organizational complexity, clarify leadership roles, and align with modern governance practices. Today, it is estimated that a significant and growing portion of mid-sized to large public agencies—particularly utilities and special districts—utilize C-suite titles, with adoption rates commonly cited in the range of 40–60% among larger or more complex agencies nationwide.

In addition to structural considerations, the District is currently managing increasing administrative workload demands and planning for leadership transition within key operational roles.

Summary

The requested organizational changes are driven by a convergence of immediate operational needs and strategic timing. The District is currently facing increasing administrative workload demands, expanding public engagement responsibilities, and an impending leadership transition within the Operations Department. At the same time, the

recent implementation of salary survey adjustments and continued organizational growth present a natural opportunity to evaluate and modernize the District's structure. Acting now allows the District to proactively address capacity constraints, ensure a smooth transition of critical leadership roles, and align its organizational framework with current industry standards before operational inefficiencies or service impacts become more pronounced.

1. Restoration of Special Projects Manager Position

Staff is requesting restoration of the Special Projects Manager position to facilitate leadership transition within the Operations Department.

This position will:

- Allow the District to retain the institutional knowledge and expertise of the current Water Operations Manager, Jim Wunderlich
- Provide dedicated time for mentoring and onboarding the next Water Operations Manager
- Ensure continuity of operations during a critical leadership transition period
- Support high-priority operational and capital projects

The position is expected to remain in place until Mr. Wunderlich's retirement, anticipated in approximately two years, at which time the position will sunset.

Additional Benefits:

- Reduces operational risk during leadership transition
- Preserves institutional knowledge that would otherwise be lost
- Improves succession planning and leadership development
- Enhances project delivery and operational efficiency

1. Addition of Administrative Assistant Position

Staff is requesting the addition of one Administrative Assistant to address increasing administrative workload demands.

Current workload factors include:

- Approximately 50 hours per week supporting Board meetings (agenda preparation, hosting, and minutes)
- At least three standing committee meetings per month, plus ad-hoc committees
- Increased external event coordination and public engagement activities
- Expanded social media and communications efforts
- Approximately 15 hours per week managing Board and General Manager calendars

Current staffing levels are no longer sufficient to meet these demands, as evidenced by:

- Missed deadlines
- Incomplete processes
- Declining work product quality
- Signs of employee burnout

Additional Benefits:

- Improves reliability and timeliness of Board and committee processes
- Enhances quality and consistency of public communications

- Reduces burnout and improves employee retention
- Increases organizational resilience and redundancy
- Supports continued growth in public engagement and transparency

2. Modernization of Executive Titles (CEO, COO, CFO)

Staff is recommending modernization of executive titles as follows:

- General Manager → Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Assistant General Manager → Chief Operating Officer (COO)
- Director of Finance and Administration → Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

These changes reflect:

- The evolving complexity and scale of the District’s operations
- Alignment with modern public and private sector organizational standards
- Increasing adoption of C-suite titles across public agencies nationwide

Additional Benefits:

- Improves clarity of roles and responsibilities both internally and externally
- Enhances credibility and professionalism in regional, state, and federal interactions
- Aligns the District with peer agencies and industry standards
- Strengthens recruitment and retention of executive-level talent
- Better reflects the strategic leadership responsibilities of executive staff

These changes are title modifications only and do not inherently change any job descriptions, compensation, or reporting relationships.

Financial Impact

The financial impact of the proposed changes is \$162,459 as shown in Table 1. The additional cost of \$36,112 for the Special Project Manager position was accounted for in the Fiscal year 2026-2027 budget. However, the additional cost of \$126,347 for the Administrative Clerk position is not currently funded within the budget. Of this amount, \$41,243.25 will be covered through available balances in compensated absences and OPEB. The remaining \$85,104 will be funded when the salary survey transfer will be brought to the board in the last quarter of FY 2026–2027.

Change	Description	Cost
Special Project Manager	Wage increases in WTP staff structure	\$36,112
Administrative Assistant	Create and fund new position w/ benefits	\$126,347
Title Modernization	Convert to C-Suite Titles	\$0
Total		\$162,459

Table 1. Itemized Costs of Proposed Reorganizational Changes

Table 2: Budget transfer request


Recommendation

Staff requests that the Administration Committee consider recommending to the Board for approval:

1. Restoration of the Special Projects Manager position

2. Addition of one Administrative Assistant position
2. Modernization of executive titles to CEO, COO, and CFO.

Staff Responsible for Report



Justin M. Hopkins, General Manager

Date: 04/29/2026