

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES

Wednesday, August 26th, 2026, 5:30 PM, In Person and **ZOOM**

Attending:

President – Bryan Tsu

Board Members – Mario Cuevas, McKenna Wegner, Bettina Eastman (virtual), Maureen Flanagan, Julia Powers, David Banuelas (virtual), Lori Metherate (virtual), Yugina Yun (virtual)
Staff and guests - Heather Cieslak

OC Parks – Molly Waldram

Excused Absence: Peter Bryant, Diane Daruty

5:32 Call to order/roll call: Bryan

Approval of Minutes: July 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Bettina moved; Maureen seconded; Unanimously approved

1. Operations Report: Heather

The Operations Report was presented, highlighting that 16 volunteers and 6 Youth Community Access (YCA) interns are scheduled for naturalist training, alongside the welcome of 20 new part-time, temporary FiiN staff on September 8th ([see attached](#)). The Board formally recognized and thanked Denise Blocher for over a decade of dedicated service across various roles, including FiiN program staff and an Orange County Parks (OCP) Ranger Reserve, as she relocates to Colorado. Upcoming initiatives include Coastal Cleanup Day next month to engage new donors and partnerships, with a request for a Board member to assist in welcoming attendees, as well as the initiation of billing for the Youth Community Access grant. Project updates noted that the final walk-through for Big Canyon was completed on Tuesday, with a final punch list provided to the contractor, and the site will remain closed to the public until vegetation matures, while overall projects remain within grant budgets. Additionally, Sunday kayak tours have resumed for the first time since COVID-19. Finally, the Board was notified of an upcoming City of Newport Beach Water Quality and Tidelands Committee meeting on Thursday, September 3, regarding a potential preliminary restoration project near the Newport Aquatic Center where the organization could serve as a public management sub-contractor, with Heather to follow up via email regarding meeting details.

2. Treasurer's Report: Julie

The Finance Report was presented, highlighting that the audit team has uploaded the 2025 financials, with the engagement letter expected for Bryan this month and scheduled for board review and approval next month ([see attached](#)). The report noted successful utilization of QuickBooks for donations, which generated extra contributions, and extended appreciation to

Scott for drafting the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Additionally, the board reviewed the Statement of Activity and Statement of Financial Position, and the organization's primary focus for the second half of the year will be on fundraising.

4. Fundraising Committee: Bryan

Bryan presented a recap of the Gourmet By The Bay event, noting that its primary objectives were community fundraising, support, and awareness ([see attached](#)). While the event was successful, the board evaluated areas for improvement for next year, including driving higher public ticket sales through Humanitix and potentially changing the date to account for more attendance. Additionally, strong engagement with attending elected officials fostered a valuable connection with Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board Member Katrina Foley, helping potentially secure bus transportation for underdeveloped communities to attend the upcoming Earth Day event at the Bay.

5. Education Committee: Mario

The Education Report was provided, highlighting ongoing collaboration to develop a middle school curriculum that will complement existing programs for elementary and high schools ([see attached](#)). Additionally, the upcoming September education meeting will focus specifically on the FiiN program.

7. Community Outreach Committee: Bettina

The Community Outreach Committee update will be provided at the next meeting.

7:00 Adjournment: Mario moved; Julie seconded.

Respectfully submitted,
McKenna Wegner, Secretary and Bryan Tsu, President