

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
MINUTES

Wednesday, June 24th, 2026, 5:30 PM, In Person and **ZOOM**

Attending:

President – Bryan Tsu

Board Members – Mario Cuevas, Yugina Yun, McKenna Wegner (virtual), Bettina Eastman (virtual), Diane Daruty, Maureen Flanagan, Julia Powers

Staff and guests - Heather Cieslak

OC Parks – Molly Waldram

Excused Absence: Peter Bryant, Lori Metherate

5:34 Call to order/roll call: Bryan

Approval of Minutes: May 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Molly moved; Yugina seconded; Unanimously approved

1. Operations Report: Heather

The Operations Report was provided ([see attached](#)). 65 volunteers were hosted at the Back Bay Science Center on 6/4 for an appreciation celebration. FiiN applications are currently being reviewed, having 46 applicants for 20 positions. A reminder to the board of the SOCALPAPA art reception coming up on 7/17. The initial meeting with CDFW was conducted on 6/11 with a follow up meeting scheduled for 8/27 to discuss the MOU. The board discussed volunteer help in reviewing the draft MOUs in prep for the follow up meeting on 8/27.

2. Restoration Committee: Yugina

The Restoration Report was provided ([see attached](#)). The team has begun planning out what their next grants will look like and what resources will be beneficial to the team. The Restoration Team is fully staffed as of June 2026 for active projects as well as hiring a new restoration technician. Molly motioned, Mario seconded; and the board unanimously approved a budget amendment allocation of up to \$60,000 for the removal of invasive species and gnatcatcher biomonitoring in Big Canyon Phase III. Approving the funds now utilizes the sub-contractor's current mobilization onsite.

3. Treasurer's Report: Julie

The Treasurer's Report was provided ([see attached](#)). The Board was reminded of the critical importance of maintaining strong, consistent fundraising momentum. Preparations for the upcoming audit are ongoing, and the committee has developed a new financial handbook that captures the organization's internal policies and procedures.

4. Board Development Committee: Maureen

The Board reviewed the candidacy of David Bañuelas for a seat on the Board of Directors. Mr. Bañuelas, is a naturalist with prior involvement in Big Canyon Phase II. Following the discussion, Yugina motioned to approve the recommendation to appoint Mr. Bañuelas to the Board, and Mario seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Education Committee: Mario

The Education Report was provided ([see attached](#)). Naturalist volunteer training will take place soon. The organization will hire 5–6 interns this fall through the YCA grant. The grant will also fund 16 field trips for students in grades K–5. The Board discussed interactive fundraising strategies for the upcoming GBTB event, specifically targeting donations to sponsor the education committee. Plans include designing educational infographic cards and organizing the logistics for the GBTB education booth.

6. Community Outreach Committee: Bettina

The Board Recruitment Committee update will be provided at the next meeting.

8. Audit Committee: Diane

The Audit Committee update will be provided at the next meeting.

7:07 Adjournment: Bettina moved; Diane seconded.

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