WESTSIDE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE DISTRICT

**WEST SIDE COMMUNITY HEALTH CARE DISTRICT**
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
**MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026, 7:00 P.M.**
**CLOSED SESSION WILL START AT 6:00 P.M.**

# COMMUNITY BUILDING, KERN STREET
# NEWMAN, CA 95360

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

Board of Directors: DIRECTOR VARGAS, DIRECTOR CASTEEL, DIRECTOR GUAJARDO
VICE PRESIDENT LOPES, PRESIDENT VARNELL- Absent
Legal Counsel-Jessica Vived

**CLOSED SESSION** 6:26 P.M.

- *Conference with Labor Negotiators (54957.6); agency designated representatives; Mike Courtney and Roberta Casteel.*
- *Public Employment Appointment 54957; Administrative Assistant*

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION-MEETING WILL BE RECORDED**

**CALL TO ORDER-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Please take a moment to silence your cell phones*

**OPEN SESSION-7:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Please take a moment to silence your cell phones**

**REPORT FROM SESSION CLOSED**

- Designated representative Michael Courtney, Roberta Casteel, and attorney Giulio Sanchez will meet with the union to enter into labor negotiations with the union. Date not set.

- Public Employment Appointment 54957; the Administrative Assistant position will be posted again for recruitment for an additional two weeks. Salary to be set as $25 to $28 per hour.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Members of the public may bring matters not listed on the agenda before the Board. The Board may refer such a matter to the Board Clerk to take it under advisement but shall not take action at that time. Comments will be accepted during this time concerning any action item on the agenda. The Board will consider all comments prior to taking action on the item as listed on the agenda in the Action Item section . (Gov. Sec. 54954.03). Individual speakers shall be allowed three (3) minutes to address the Board on each agenda or non-agenda items.

*No Public Comments

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

All matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and may be approved by one action of the Board of Directors, unless any member of the Board of Directors wishes to remove an item for separate consideration.

Are there any items on the consent calendar that any member of the public would like to comment on?

1. Minutes of April 26, 2026, Regular Meeting
   Recommendation: Review and Approve
2. Cash Disbursement Journal
   Recommendation: Review and Approve

Vice President Lopes introduced the consent calendar. There was no public comment. Director Casteel moved to approve the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by Director Guajardo and carried by vote, 4-1. Absent.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

1. **Agreement with Coneth Solution for IT services.**

   Staff Report by Administrative Service Manager, Roberta Casteel.

   Staff requested Board approval to change the District's IT service provider. The proposed change would result in an estimated monthly savings of approximately $540 to the district, with a one-time setup fee of $3,670.

   Director Casteel asked staff for their opinions regarding the district's current IT services. Staff indicated that, given the projected savings and the more personalized, one-on-one service offered by the new provider, it was an appropriate time to make the change.

   The Chief reported that legal counsel had reviewed the agreement and recommended revisions to several provisions. Director Casteel inquired about the sections of the contract that raised legal concerns.

   Chief Courtney stated that the concerns involved the Termination, Limitation of Liability, and Indemnification provisions. The district would also be required to provide the current IT service provider with thirty (30) days' notice of termination.

   Director Casteel moved to approve entering into an agreement with Coneth Solution, subject to the revisions recommended by the district's legal counsel. The motion was seconded by Director Guajardo and carried by a vote of 4–1. One Board member was absent.

2. **Updated Policy on Narcotics Procedures.**

   Staff Report by Administrative Service Manager, Roberta Casteel.

   The district's policy regarding the handling and tracking of narcotics has been revised to reflect the implementation of an electronic tracking system. The updated policy formalizes and clarifies the daily inventory procedures that are already in practice.

   Courtney explained to the Board and the public that the district's current narcotics tracking process is entirely paper-based.

   Director Casteel moved to approve Policy 5.11, Narcotics. The motion was seconded by Director Guajardo and passed by a vote of 4–1. One Board member was absent.

3. **Rate increase request to Stanislaus County Emergency Medical Service Agency.**
Staff Report by Administrative Service Manager, Roberta Casteel.

Staff is seeking the Board's approval to submit an ambulance rate increase request to the Stanislaus County Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMSA). The proposed adjustment would increase ambulance transport rates by 38 percent over current contracted rates and is intended to help offset rising operational expenses and inflationary pressures. The last rate increase was approved in 2016.

Chief Courtney informed the Board and the public that any rate increase must first be approved by EMSA and subsequently by the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors. He explained that, while the proposed rate adjustment would increase charges to self-pay patients and commercial insurance providers, reimbursement rates for Medi-Cal and Medicare are fixed and would remain unchanged. The increase is projected to generate an estimated 5 to 8 percent increase in district revenue.

Director Guajardo moved to direct the administrative staff to submit a request for a rate increase to Stanislaus County EMSA in accordance with the district's agreement with the agency. Director Casteel seconded the motion. The motion carried on a 4–1 vote, with one Board member absent.

4. **Discussion and possible action to impose a special tax to increase the revenue for purposes of adequately fulfilling its responsibility to provide ambulance service.**
Staff Report by Jessica Vived, Legal Counsel
Legal Counsel presented a PowerPoint presentation and distributed a handout to the Board and members of the public outlining the District's parcel composition and special tax options.

As requested at the previous Board meeting, the handout included a breakdown of the largest parcel owners in Merced and Stanislaus Counties, as well as a comparison of developed and undeveloped parcels based on building square footage and lot square footage. The information was provided to assist the Board in determining whether to move forward with placing a new funding measure on the November election ballot.

**Public Comment**

Sherri Marsigli of Gustine, California, commented that property owners are already burdened by rising expenses and expressed her belief that it is the County's legal responsibility to provide ambulance services to the area.

**Board Comments**

Director Vargas stated that regardless of whether a measure generated $400,000 or $600,000 annually, a significant portion of the tax burden would fall on grazing land used for livestock. He also inquired about the source of the projected revenue figures. Staff explained that the estimates were based on a study conducted for the district by a consulting firm in 2022. The district's accountant had provided projected financial needs to both the Board and the consulting firm.

Director Vargas further asked whether undeveloped land could be excluded from the proposed tax measure. Legal Counsel advised that their review found no authority permitting undeveloped parcels to be excluded.

Director Vargas also asked public attendee Paul Willette of Patterson Ambulance about Patterson's tax measure. Mr. Willette stated that Patterson's assessment is $27 per parcel with no annual escalator and that he was uncertain of the assessment applied to commercial properties. He further noted that Patterson Ambulance averages approximately three calls per day, although call volume varies.

Director Casteel suggested that the district consider pursuing grant-writing services rather than placing a measure on the ballot at this time. She expressed concern that spending funds to pursue a ballot measure could be wasteful if the measure was unlikely to pass.

Financial Advisor Leo Landaverde stated that a tax measure represents the district's only viable long-term funding solution.

Vice President Lopes commented that, given current economic conditions, passage of a funding measure would be challenging.

Following the discussion, the Board agreed to table consideration of a resolution placing a measure on the ballot until a future election cycle.

**FINANCIAL REPORT-**

1. Receive Staff Report on Ambulance Statistical and Administrative Report.
    - No Financial Report Given

**AMBULANCE REPORT**

1. Receive Staff Report on Ambulance Statistical and Administrative Report.
   Statistical Report: Michael Courtney presented the April 2026 operations report to the board, which outlined responses and transport for both Counties.
    - Total Responses 161, 129 transports for service
    - 0 Requests for Service to Merced resulting in 0 transport
    - 3 requests to assist AMR, resulting in 1 transport
    - 1 request to assist Patterson, resulting in 0 transport
    - Chief Courtney stated the two (2) new ambulances have arrived, and he will be working on the graphics, registration, and radios for the new units.
    - Director Casteel asked what the cost would be to retrofit the new ambulances? Chief Courtney stated that the graphics alone will be approximately $ 3,000 per ambulance. The small items the Chief is doing himself.
    - Director Vargas asked if the radio stations would be switched over to PT25. Chief Courtney stated he spoke to Stanislaus County EMS and was told by the director that only one (1) PT25 was needed and that it was already placed in the command vehicle.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE MANAGER COMMENTS**

**DISTRICT'S LEGAL COUNSEL COMMENTS**

**BOARD CORRESPONDANCE/COMMENTS**

Vice President Lopes thanked the public for attending this evening, and she believes the board has their heart in the right place for the district.

If any members of the public or staff have any feedback or ideas for the future of the district, Vice President Lopes is open to discussing them.

**ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION (if needed)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Director Casteel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Guajardo seconded the motion at 8:25 p.m.

1. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, a disabled person requesting a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting must contact the district office at (209) 862-2951. Requests must be made as early as possible, preferably one full business day before the start of the meeting.
2. Any document provided to a majority of the Board of Directors regarding any open session item on this agenda is available for public inspection during normal business hours at the front counter of the District Office located at 990 Tulare Street, Suite C, Newman, CA. Documents or writings received after the general distribution of the agenda are also available for inspection.

Attested by

Debbie Lopes

Debbie Lopes
Vice President/Secretary