Santa Cruz County
Measure Q Citizens Oversight Advisory Board

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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 19th, 2026 5:30pm – 7:30pm Regular Meeting	**Simpkins Family Swim Center** **Community Rooms** 979 17th Avenue Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Introductory Items

1. **CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL** Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

Present: Julie Howard (District 1), Dennis Webb (District 2), Sandy Brown (District 3), Mark Correira (District 5), Scott Harway (City of Capitola), David Sanguinetti (City of Scotts Valley), Celeste DeWald (City of Watsonville)

Absent: Rachel Dann (City of Santa Cruz)

Vacant: District 4

Staff: Dave Reid (Director – OR3), Rebecca Hurley (Deputy Director – Parks), Clare Peabody (Senior Analyst – OR3), Juan Perez Alvarez (Administrative Services Manager – Parks), Alexis Rodriguez-Rocha (Admin Aide/COAB Liaison – Parks)

2. **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS** No modifications.

3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS** No members of the public addressed the advisory board.

4. **ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA** (items 10-12)

Approved consent agenda – Motion/Second: Sanguinetti/Harway

AYES:	7
NOES:	0
ABSTAIN:	0
ABSENT:	1
VACANT:	1 (District 4)

REGULAR AGENDA

5. **COUNTY STAFF REPORT**

Clare Peabody, Senior Analyst, provided a brief update on FY 2025-26 Grant Awards and the contracting process. She also provided a summary of 6 projects that are being proposed for funding out of the Santa Cruz County allocation to the Board of Supervisors at their Tuesday, August 25th meeting.

Information Items

6. **Fiscal Year 2025-26 Direct Allocation Presentations** | page 4

Staff from the City of Watsonville, City of Santa Cruz and County of Santa Cruz provided a brief overview of their planned, ongoing, and completed projects from Fiscal Year 2025-26.

7. **Measure Q Fiscal Year 2025-26 Grant Program After Action Report** | page 6

Clare Peabody presented the Measure Q FY 2025–26 Grant Program After-Action Review, outlining feedback from applicants, external evaluators, peer grantmaking agencies, and County staff. The review identified opportunities to improve transparency, application procedures, scoring consistency, and the final award decision process.

COAB Discussion

Vice-Chair Correira asked how adding a third evaluator would affect scoring and whether alternative approaches, such as group scoring, would be preferable to averaging individual evaluations.

- Staff explained that a third reviewer could help reduce scoring variability and the impact of individual differences. Staff noted that blind scoring by external evaluators had been attempted during the first grant cycle since evaluations could be influenced by exposure to other scores and individual judgment. To minimize bias, staff recommended maintaining independent initial evaluations and implementing a variance-flagging process for the next grant cycle. Significant scoring discrepancies would prompt further discussion to better understand and resolve differences.

Commissioner Brown supported the proposal to use three evaluators, noting that the approach could help address concerns and reduce scoring variability. She also raised a concern regarding a Board of Supervisors member's suggestion to use AI in the evaluation process to reduce staff workload.

- **Vice-Chair Correira** asked whether the COAB wished to take a position on the use of AI in the grant process.
- **Commissioner Howard** expressed concerns about using AI to evaluate grant applications, noting that while it may eventually be useful for verifying application completeness, it is not yet sufficiently developed to score applications. She suggested exploring the use of other County employees as evaluators as a potential cost-saving measure.
- Staff noted that many applications contained AI-generated content and discussed ways to improve application quality by using more focused questions and reducing narrative requirements. The goal would be to obtain more authentic, objective, measurable, and outcome-oriented responses.

Commissioner Dewald asked whether evaluators had collaborated to inform the staff recommendation and whether convening them to discuss a collective score might be beneficial.

- Staff explained that evaluators submitted their comments independently. They also noted that a collaborative scoring approach could be explored but may introduce additional variability due to individual biases.

Commissioner Dewald expressed appreciation for the in-depth review and support for the Pajaro Valley set-aside approach and a single staff funding recommendation, noting that this approach would be easier to respond to. She emphasized the importance of applying evaluation criteria consistently and recommended providing COAB members with the same training as

evaluators. She clarified that her concern was not with the transparency of the process, but with the inconsistent application of evaluation criteria.

Commissioner Brown asked when the FY 2026–27 grant guidelines would be discussed and emphasized the need to further address project environmental impacts and potential mitigation measures, suggesting these topics could be incorporated into the application. She also noted the importance of improving communication between the COAB and the Board of Supervisors regarding the grant recommendation process.

- Staff clarified that the FY 2026–27 grant guidelines would be presented for discussion at the next proposed meeting in October. Staff also requested clarification on the COAB's interest in addressing environmental impacts, including what information members would like to see or incorporate into the grant application and guidelines.
- **Commissioner Howard** noted that applicants may not know which CEQA review pathway will apply to their projects at the time of application, making it difficult to answer questions about environmental impacts. She explained that projects would undergo the applicable environmental review as they move forward and suggested linking to the relevant information on the Clearinghouse website.

Vice-Chair Correira emphasized the challenge of developing a fair and equitable application process given the broad range of projects eligible for Measure Q funding. He raised the question of how the COAB and staff can design an application process that promotes equitable funding distribution without disproportionately concentrating funds in one area. In light of the divided vote on funding recommendations, he also raised the possibility of requiring a higher voting threshold to approve grant recommendations. Additionally, he requested that deliberations on grant awards be scheduled on a date when a majority of COAB members could attend in person.

Commissioner Dewald asked whether any funded projects affect natural habitats.

- Staff explained that grant agreements require compliance with CEQA and all applicable state and local regulations. Applicants were asked to indicate whether their projects were exempt from CEQA or whether an environmental review pathway had been identified. Staff noted that applicants were at varying stages of the environmental review process.

Commissioner Webb cautioned that CEQA compliance is more complex than checking a box or self-certifying an exemption, given the multiple layers of applicable laws and requirements. He noted that the COAB may have limited visibility into project-level environmental review and cautioned that an in-depth discussion could extend beyond the COAB's role. He also suggested that the application could instead include additional narrative questions regarding environmental review and compliance.

Public Comment

3 members of the public addressed the COAB.

Action Items

8. **Approve special meeting on Wednesday, October 14th, 2026** | page 8

Approved special meeting on *Wednesday, October 21st, 2026* – Motion/Second: Webb/Dewald
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 2
VACANT: 1 (District 4)

9. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair | page 10

Elect Mark Correira as Chair for the remainder of 2026 – Motion/Second: Brown/Webb
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 2
VACANT: 1 (District 4)

Elect Sandy Brown as Vice-Chair for the remainder of 2026 – Motion/Second: Correira/Sanguinetti
AYES: 6
NOES: 0
ABSTAIN: 0
ABSENT: 2
VACANT: 1 (District 4)

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent items include routine business that does not call for discussion. One roll call vote is taken for all items. Only a Board Member may pull items from Consent to Regular Agenda. Members of the public must request that a Board Member pull an item from the Consent Agenda prior to the start of the meeting.

10. Approve meeting minutes from May 27th, 2026 | page 11

11. Review and approve template for the Annual Citizens Oversight Advisory Board Measure Q Report to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors | page 16

12. Accept and file reports on the FY 2025-26 Measure Q Direct Allocations | page 18

Written Correspondence Listing

I. Letter from Coastal Watershed Council

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

5:30 PM Wednesday, ~~November 18th, 2026~~ October 21st, 2026

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