

Mayor Donaldson Report

Below is a summary of board meetings I attended:

**Transportation Agency for Monterey County
(TAMC)**



December 3, 2025

Highway 1 Elkhorn Slough Corridor Climate Resiliency Project

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), working collaboratively with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR), will evaluate the risk of sea level rise impacting a key transportation corridor in north Monterey County and develop multimodal and nature-based transportation adaptation solutions to address this vulnerability.

The project is funded with \$2,250,000 from a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Climate Adaptation Grant program grant to prepare a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study and related documents, expanding on existing feasibility studies on nature-based and multimodal solutions to climate change impacts on the corridor.

This project focuses on an eight-mile stretch of Highway 1 through the disadvantaged community of Moss Landing and the parallel five miles of rail tracks traversing Elkhorn Slough. Providing multimodal options and integrating nature-based solutions are top priorities for this project. The corridor traverses Elkhorn Slough, a major estuary located in Monterey Bay, California, which provides valuable habitat area for hundreds of aquatic birds, fish, marine mammals, and invertebrate species.

Tidal estuarine habitats within the Slough, and the ecosystem services they provide, are at risk of substantial degradation and losses from sea level rise. Coastal Resilience Monterey predicts sea level rise to be 5.2 feet by 2100. The rail tracks through Elkhorn Slough, owned by Union Pacific railroad, carries freight rail traffic and Amtrak Coast Starlight passengers. The Central Coast Highway 1 Climate Resiliency study examined the climate impacts on the rail corridor and recommended an elevated trestle through the slough. This, along with

other alternatives, will be considered during the Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL Study) process.

A key component of the PEL study is to gather input and build consensus among internal and external stakeholders to shape the proposed corridor transportation vision. This is a comprehensive approach that involves resource and regulatory agencies, tribes, local stakeholders and engaging the public on an ongoing basis in meetings, workshops and public hearings and notices. Staff will seek feedback and input from stakeholders as key milestones of the project are reached.

After receiving the presentation, the TAMC Board of Directors approved the draft public outreach schedule.

TAMC Board Authorizes Agency Participation in the American Air Advantage Consortium to Support Local Advanced Air Mobility

The TAMC Board learned that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has launched the Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing Integration Pilot Program to accelerate safe deployment of Electric Vehicle Takeoff and Landing (eVTOL) and advanced air mobility technologies across the United States. This three-year pilot program will select a minimum of five regions nationwide for real-world testing and operational demonstrations.

The program aims to demonstrate the viability of eVTOL aircraft for passenger transport, cargo logistics, and emergency services, while developing safety data and regulatory frameworks for integrating these aircraft into the National Airspace System.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Board authorized the agency to participate in the American Air Advantage Consortium and similar efforts to support local Advanced Air Mobility transportation innovation, economic growth, and job creation, because the Monterey Bay region hosts one of the highest concentrations of eVTOL testing and manufacturing in the country, including Joby Aviation's facilities in Marina and Santa Cruz.

The consortium includes a range of public and private partners working in Northern California on Advanced Air Mobility, including: University of California Santa Cruz; Monterey Bay Economic Partnership; Drones, Aviation, and Robotics Technology; and 14 corporate entities operating in the unmanned aircraft space.

Monterey One Water (M1W)



November 24, 2025

Informational Items:

- *Pure Water Monterey Manager Dave Lindow gave an update on Pure Water Monterey Expansion and Pure Water Monterey Projects*

Board Actions:

- *Approved a Construction Contract to Leed Electric, Inc for CP355 Advanced Water Purification Facility Switchgear Replacement Project for a Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$2,599,590, including 5% contingency and Approval of a Budget Transfer*
- *Approval of a Contract Amendment with Kennedy Jenks for Engineering Services During Construction for the Advanced Water Purification Facility Switchgear Replacement Project for a Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$279,734 and Approval of a Budget Transfer*

**Council Report from Councilmember John Uy
December 16, 2025 Meeting**

I. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the DRO City Council on November 18, 2025



Dear neighbors,

I wanted to share a warm, plain-language recap of what your City Council worked on at our November 18 meeting. So much of what we do looks technical on paper (ordinances, policies, acre-feet of water, budget amendments), but underneath those details are real people, real homes, and real hopes for Del Rey Oaks.

Caring for neighbors facing a food gap

One of the most meaningful items on our agenda was a contribution to the Food Bank for Monterey County in response to a federal SNAP funding gap caused by the ongoing government shutdown. On paper, this was a \$5,000 contribution and a budget amendment.

But in reality, it's about who we are as a community when our neighbors are hurting. Because of the federal shutdown, families who rely on SNAP are suddenly seeing less help with groceries. That doesn't feel like "federal policy" to them; it feels like:

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- an empty pantry,
 - a parent quietly doing the math in the cereal aisle,
 - or a senior stretching what's in the fridge for one more week.

The Food Bank for Monterey County is stepping into that gap, *including for families right here in Del Rey Oaks*. Across the county, cities were asked to contribute \$10,000 each to help bridge this emergency. For some of our larger neighbors, that's a manageable discretionary amount. For a small city like Del Rey Oaks, that same number has a much bigger impact on our limited flexible funds. So we did what we've done before with other regional efforts: we participated *proportionally*. The City moved quickly, authorizing a \$5,000 contribution, using one-time General Fund balance, and then bringing it to the Council for formal budget authorization.

To me, this says a few important things about Del Rey Oaks:

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- We may be small, but **we show up**.
 - We are **fiscally careful**, and still clear that no one in our community should go hungry.
 - We recognize that our residents are part of a larger Monterey County family—and we help when the need is urgent.
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I fully support this contribution and am deeply grateful to the Food Bank for the work they do for our residents and our neighboring communities.

Water, housing, and a letter to the State Water Board

We also discussed a major regional water issue: whether to send a letter supporting a modification to the State Water Resources Control Board's Cease-and-Desist Order (CDO) WR 2016-0016.

Right now, that CDO and related CPUC actions limit California American Water (Cal-Am) from issuing new water connections in much of the Monterey Peninsula. That has made it very difficult for cities, including Del Rey Oaks, to move forward with new housing, economic development, and community projects that need new water meters.

A few key facts:

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- The **Pure Water Monterey** recycled water project came online in 2021, adding new potable supply.
 - Cal-Am has stayed within its legal Carmel River pumping limits for the past four years, thanks to that new supply and community-wide conservation.
 - With the **Pure Water Monterey Expansion** now coming online, the CPUC has concluded that Cal-Am is not projected to exceed those legal limits in the foreseeable future.

Because of these changes, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District is asking cities to support a modification that would rescind Condition 2 of the CDO, the piece that blocks new service connections.

Here's my position:

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- I **support** sending a letter backing the modification of the Cease-and-Desist Order so that, with the new recycled water supply in place, we can responsibly move forward with housing and community projects, including here in Del Rey Oaks.
 - I support using the **neutral template** that focuses on Pure Water Monterey and the science and performance of that project.
 - I **do not** support using the version that explicitly endorses desalination as our long-term solution, *unless and until* the Council has had a full, open policy discussion about desalination as part of our water portfolio.

In other words: I want us to be clear and united in asking the State to recognize the success of Pure Water Monterey and to free our region to build the housing and local-serving projects our residents need, without pre-deciding more controversial long-term water strategies in a single letter.

A new water allocation policy: turning 6 acre-feet into real community benefits

The other big water item was a proposed **Policy Guiding the Allocation of Additional Water Resources**, specifically, the 6 acre-feet (AF) of water Del Rey Oaks received from the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District through the Pure Water Monterey Expansion Project.

For context:

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- MPWMD granted the City **6.0 AF** of potable water earlier this year.
 - MPWMD controls how much water each jurisdiction gets, but each city is responsible for deciding *how* to use its allocation. We are also expressly prohibited from “selling” water.
 - MPWMD maintains a larger **2,000 AF reserve** that could provide additional water to Del Rey Oaks in the future as needs arise.
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Six acre-feet is tiny in the grand scheme of a region, but for a small city, it’s a precious new tool. The draft policy turns that scarce resource into a strategic asset, explicitly aligned with our **General Plan, Housing Element**, and regional water rules.

How the 6 AF is proposed to be used

Under the draft policy, our 6 AF would be divided among four categories:

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs & JADUs) – 3.0 AF

To help homeowners add small units (garage conversions, backyard cottages, or junior ADUs within existing homes) that provide more flexible, often more affordable housing options.

1. Economic Development (Commercial Uses) – 1.5 AF

- For new or expanded small businesses that create jobs, provide services, and bring life to our local commercial spaces.
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2. Municipal Uses – 1.0 AF

- For public facilities and operations, things like park restrooms, public landscaping, or modest City Hall or public works upgrades.
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3. Single-Family Home Remodels/Expansions – 0.5 AF

- For small home additions—an extra bedroom, a bathroom, or similar improvements that slightly increase water use but help families stay and grow in place.
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Why I support adopting the policy

Given what’s in the packet, I voted **YES** to adopt this policy.

My reasoning:

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- It turns a scarce new resource into a **strategic tool** for:
 - more housing options (especially ADUs),
 - small-scale economic vitality,
 - and improved public facilities.
 - It aligns with our adopted General Plan and Housing Element, which emphasize water-wise growth and priority connections for housing and community needs.
 - It creates **clarity and fairness**, so decisions aren't made through case-by-case lobbying, but through a transparent framework available to everyone.
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But it shouldn't be carved in stone

I **totally support** the structure, but I want to emphasize a few things:

1. Built-in flexibility and review

The policy already authorizes the City Manager to track and pause allocations and to recommend reallocations if certain categories are not being used.

- I would like to see this paired with an explicit **check-in**: for example, a brief annual report to Council or a review once any category is half-depleted so we can adjust if one "bucket" is oversubscribed and another is barely used.
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2. Equity in how we use the water

- **For ADUs**: I want to make sure lower- and middle-income households can access this water, not just those doing large high-end remodels. That might mean outreach, technical assistance, or program design that works for regular families, not just sophisticated developers.
 - **For economic development**: I want us to prioritize local-serving businesses and community-benefit uses, places where residents can eat, shop, or receive services, rather than simply whoever can pay the most.
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3. Planning for future water

6 AF is our *starting* allocation. As MPWMD's 2,000 AF reserve is distributed over time, we may want to revisit these proportions so they continue to match Del Rey Oaks' needs and values. In short, I support adopting the policy now to create order and opportunity, but with the understanding that we'll keep checking back to make sure it's working for our community.

Thank you

Serving as your councilmember is an honor I don't take lightly. Every line item and policy we vote on ultimately comes back to the same questions:

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- Are we taking care of our neighbors?

- Are we planning wisely for the future, especially around water and housing?
 - Are we spending your tax dollars with care and compassion?
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If you have questions about any of these items or ideas for how we can better serve our community, please reach out. Your lived experience here in Del Rey Oaks is the best guide we have.

II. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the Seaside County Sanitation District (SCSD) Board of Directors – December 9, 2025



Dear neighbors in Seaside, Del Rey Oaks, and Sand City,

As Chair of the Seaside County Sanitation District Board, I want to share a quick and clear recap of what we accomplished at our December 9 meeting. On paper, our work is about pipelines, master plans, and resolutions, but underneath, it's really about protecting your homes, your streets, and our shared Monterey Bay.

Keeping our system running safely and quietly

We received the Operations Report for October and November, which is basically the “health check” for our sewer system. It covers how many miles of pipe were cleaned and inspected, where crews jetted lines, and whether there were any stoppages or overflows.

Here's the bottom line:

- Crews are consistently out in the field cleaning and video-inspecting thousands of feet of pipe to keep things flowing.
- Stoppages and overflows remain rare, and when they do occur, staff responds quickly.

If you *don't* think much about the sewer system, that's actually a success story. It means that when you turn on the tap, take a shower, or flush a toilet, everything works, and wastewater is safely carried away for treatment instead of causing backups in your home or our streets.

Partnering regionally to prevent clogs and spills (FOG program)

We also approved continuing our participation in a regional public education program to keep fats, oils, and grease (often called FOG) *out* of our pipes. This is the “ClogBusters” campaign you may have seen in ads and outreach materials.

Why this matters:

- When cooking oil, bacon grease, or rich sauces are poured down the sink, they cool and harden inside pipes.
- Add so-called “flushable” wipes and other debris, and you’ve got a recipe for blockages, sewer spills, and expensive emergency repairs.

By joining forces with Monterey One Water and neighboring agencies, we:

- Share the cost of a year-round education campaign (TV, radio, digital, and community events) instead of each agency running its own small program.
- Reach far more residents and businesses with a simple, important message: **Scrape it, can it, trash it—don’t pour it down the drain.**
- Help meet state requirements to actively prevent sewer blockages, not just respond to them after the fact.

Our district’s share of this regional program is a little over \$2,000 for the year, an efficient investment in prevention, environmental protection, and long-term cost savings for ratepayers.

Investing in Broadway Avenue: sewer upgrades that support the future

Another major item was adding the **Broadway Avenue Sewer Line Upgrade Project** to our Capital Improvement Program and approving design funding of \$115,000 from the General Fund.

Here’s what that means in everyday terms:

- Broadway Avenue is a key corridor in Seaside, and the City is moving forward with a major corridor improvement project (road diet, safer crossings, bike lanes, roundabouts, and better lighting and signage).
- Under that street are sewer lines that were flagged years ago in the sewer master plan as needing an upgrade to handle future development and ensure reliable service.
- If we *don’t* coordinate now, we risk tearing up a newly improved street later to fix or upsize pipes. It will be costly, disruptive, and frustrating for everyone.

By funding the design of the Broadway sewer upgrade now, we are:

- Making sure the sewer system beneath Broadway is sized and ready for the future, including new homes and businesses.
- Lining the work up with the City's street project so construction happens once, not twice.
- Using public dollars more efficiently by combining projects and reducing repeated disruptions to residents and businesses along Broadway.

Construction funding will come back to the Board once design is complete and we have clear cost estimates and a reimbursement agreement with the City of Seaside. For now, we've taken the important first step: putting the project into the capital program and funding its design.

Routine business, continuity, and appreciation

We also:

- Approved the minutes from our October 14 meeting, which included authorizing ongoing engineering support for district projects.
- Provided time for staff updates and Board member comments, ensuring open communication between field staff, management, and the Board.

As Chair, I again expressed my appreciation for the professionalism and dedication of district staff. They do the behind-the-scenes work, often at odd hours and in tough conditions, that keeps our communities safe, sanitary, and environmentally responsible.

How this all affects you

Put simply, the actions we took at this meeting are about:

- **Quiet reliability** – keeping wastewater moving safely, out of your home and out of our bay.
- **Smart prevention** – educating the public so we avoid clogs and spills before they happen.
- **Future-readiness** – upgrading critical infrastructure like Broadway Avenue's sewer lines so our system can support growth and revitalization without repeated construction headaches.

If you ever have questions about what the Seaside County Sanitation District does, or ideas on how we can communicate better with the public, I'd love to hear from you. Our job is technical, but our purpose is simple: to protect the health and quality of life of everyone in Seaside, Del Rey Oaks, and Sand City.

III. Council Report: AMBAG Board of Directors Meeting – November 12, 2025

For this month’s report on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), I want to begin by noting that the AMBAG Board does **not** have a regular meeting scheduled in December. Even without a formal Board session, the work of AMBAG continues in the background, and it remains very important to Del Rey Oaks. I would like to use this brief pause in the meeting schedule to highlight what AMBAG is doing for our region, how that benefits our city, and what to expect in the coming months.



First, a quick reminder of what AMBAG is. It is our regional planning body, bringing together cities and counties from across the Monterey Bay Area to tackle issues that do not stop at city limits. These include transportation, housing, climate resilience, regional data, and long-range planning. In that sense, AMBAG is one of the most important regional tables where Del Rey Oaks has a seat, a voice, and a vote.

Although the Board is dark in December, AMBAG staff are using this time to advance the long-range work we have been discussing all year. That includes refining the regional transportation plan, tracking new state and federal funding opportunities, supporting local jurisdictions with housing and climate planning, and preparing items for the Board’s early 2026 agenda. Much of the detailed analysis happens in these quieter periods, so that when items come before the Board, they are ready for thoughtful, well-informed action.

For Del Rey Oaks, AMBAG’s ongoing work matters in several concrete ways:

- **Transportation and safety:** AMBAG is our link to regional transportation planning and funding. The traffic models, project lists, and funding strategies they develop shape the future of roads, transit, and bike and pedestrian networks. When we advocate for safer routes, congestion relief, or better connections to jobs and services, we are working within this regional framework.
- **Housing and compliance:** AMBAG plays a key role in the regional housing needs process that informs our Housing Element. Their data, projections, and coordination help ensure that small cities like ours are treated fairly and that we remain aligned with state requirements while still reflecting local realities.
- **Climate and resilience:** AMBAG’s climate plans and greenhouse gas reduction strategies support our own local goals for sustainability, clean air, and resilience to climate impacts. Active participation helps ensure that the needs of smaller jurisdictions are not overshadowed by larger neighbors.
- **Data and technical support:** AMBAG maintains regional datasets on population, employment, land use, traffic, and more. We rely on these for grant applications,

planning documents, and policy decisions. For a small city with limited staff capacity, access to high-quality regional data and modeling is a powerful advantage.

Even in a month without a meeting, I see my role as your AMBAG delegate as staying engaged with staff updates, reviewing materials that are circulated, and preparing to advocate for Del Rey Oaks when items return to the Board. This includes watching for opportunities where AMBAG's work can help us:

- position Del Rey Oaks competitively for transportation and infrastructure grants,
- align our local plans with regional strategies in ways that leverage effort rather than duplicate it, and
- ensure that regional decisions about roads, transit, housing, and climate reflect the perspective of a small, built-out, but deeply engaged community like ours.

Looking ahead, the next AMBAG Board agenda is expected to bring back items related to long-range transportation planning, funding programs, and continued implementation of regional plans. When those discussions resume, I will continue to prioritize:

- keeping Del Rey Oaks informed and fully at the table,
- supporting regional solutions that respect local control and community character, and
- seeking practical benefits for our residents, whether that means safer streets, better access to funding, or clearer pathways to meeting our housing and climate obligations.

In short, December may look quiet on the calendar, but it is not quiet behind the scenes. AMBAG remains an essential partner in shaping the long-term future of our region. Our continued participation ensures that Del Rey Oaks is not simply being carried along by regional decisions, but is actively helping to shape them.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your AMBAG representative.

IV. Council Report: Holiday Message from Councilmember John Uy

Dear neighbors and friends,

As this year comes to a close, I want to take a moment to reach out from my heart to yours and simply say: **thank you**.

To my fellow residents of Del Rey Oaks:

Thank you for the everyday kindness that rarely makes headlines but absolutely defines who we are. The hello at the mailbox. The trash can brought in for a neighbor. The patient driver who lets someone merge. The quick text to check in on a friend. These small acts add up to something powerful. They make Del Rey Oaks feel less like a city and more like a community.

To our City Hall team:

From the staff at the front counter, to our finance and administrative teams, to public works, police, and everyone behind the scenes, I see how much dedication and care you bring to your work. You answer questions, solve problems, and keep things moving even when the workload is heavy and the recognition is quiet. Our city simply does not function without you, and I am deeply grateful.

The holiday season can be joyful, but it can also be complicated. Some of us are celebrating with family and friends. Others may be missing loved ones, working through challenges, or just feeling tired from a long year. Wherever you find yourself this season, I hope you feel this truth: **you matter to this community**. Your presence here, your story, and your contributions, big and small, are part of what makes Del Rey Oaks special.

As your councilmember, I am honored that you have trusted me with this role. I carry that responsibility seriously and with gratitude. My promise to you in the year ahead is to keep listening, to keep learning, and to keep working for a city that is safe, welcoming, and full of opportunity for everyone, regardless of age, background, or income.

My wish for us as we enter the new year is simple:

- That we continue to look out for one another.
- That we stay curious and open, even when we disagree.
- That we keep building a community where every person feels seen and valued.

If you are able, I invite you to take a moment this season to reach out to someone who might need a little extra light. A neighbor who lives alone. A co-worker who seems overwhelmed. A friend you have been meaning to call. Sometimes a short note, a kind word, or a shared cup of coffee can make all the difference.

From my family to yours, and from our City Hall family to the households across Del Rey Oaks, I wish you peace, good health, and moments of real joy in this holiday season and the coming year.

With appreciation and warmest holiday wishes,
John Uy



Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Friday, November 14th- City Finance Committee Meeting- We had a total of three items to cover during this meeting, and the first was reviewing the October financials. I had a few questions, but nothing out of the ordinary, as the city remains on track with its budget. Our second item was going to be reviewing our draft audit, but it was not ready, so we moved on to the last item, which was talking about the implementation of our Housing Element. We knew it as we were writing it, but our Housing Element has a lot of programs that will need to be implemented. Given our limited staff and budget, we don't have someone who can be fully dedicated to developing our Housing Element programs, especially on its current timeline. I believe we all understand that implementing the programs won't get us much closer to actually building affordable homes since most of the building is focused on our Ft. Ord property, but I do believe there are some programs that can be implemented that will help support our larger community. Knowing that, I suggested that we review the programs, with the help of our planner Denise Duffy, and tackle the low-hanging fruit or the programs that will best serve our current community, while also implementing programs that will move the needle towards building in Ft. Ord. It sounds like we can look forward to these discussions during the first part of 2026.

Tuesday, November 18th- City Council Meeting- Our meeting this evening addressed the consent and two new business items. Although nothing was pulled from the consent agenda, I would like to point out one of the items, which was a donation of \$5,000 to the Food Bank of Monterey County. A few weeks before our meeting, I had heard that Marina Council Member Jenny McAdams asked her City Manager to talk at the monthly meeting of City Managers about asking all cities to each donate \$10,000 knowing that it's likely within their purview to spend that amount and understanding the great impact multiple jurisdictions donating could make for our local communities who depend on that food assistance, especially with the delay in Federal SNAP benefits. With this knowledge, I asked our City Manager, John Guertin, to look into bringing this to the council. He responded that he'd ask the Mayor, and collectively they decided we'd be able to donate \$5,000, which seemed reasonable given the size of our budget in comparison to other jurisdictions. I was grateful for the response and happy that our city would be giving a little extra during this time when prices are rising, and benefits may not be able to cover the costs of food for everyone in need.

Our first item of new business was considering a letter of support sent to the State Water Resources Control Board for modification of the Cease and Desist order. Modification of the order would allow us and other peninsula cities to have new construction with new water meters (as opposed to finding water credits and applying those to current water meters when building). This is less important for our city since much of our new building will be out in Ft. Ord, where this Cease and Desist order does not apply, but this will allow

some residents to add additional bathrooms or to build ADUs without the need to find the water credits that could be applied to their present meter. Our council had the option of a "neutral" letter or a letter that offered the same message but also offered support for Cal-Am's desalination project. Our council easily decided on the "neutral" letter (the other letter wasn't brought up for discussion) and only added minor edits. I was happy we could support the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District in their bid for this modification.

Our second item was also water-related, as it was approving a policy that would guide the allocation of our additional water credits (6 Acre Feet) that we're receiving from the expansion of Pure Water Monterey. This policy had already gone through the Planning Commission, and our council also easily passed this policy. I appreciated the work the staff did on this policy, as it has the greatest allotment in the areas we need to focus on the most for housing that will help us meet our RHNA numbers for affordable housing. In this policy, we'll have 3 AF (acre feet) allotted to ADUs (accessory dwelling units), 1.5 AF to commercial, 1 AF to municipal uses (think city hall, park restrooms, etc.), and .5 AF to single-family home expansion or remodels.

Lastly, during comments from City Manager Guertin, he shared that the city is no longer working with City Ventures, the developer we had an exclusive right to negotiate with for our property in Ft. Ord. He stated that he'll be meeting with Denise Duffy (our contract planner) and David Zender (our contract economic development person) to talk about our next steps. He's planning on bringing up a discussion at our council meeting in December on this topic.

Friday, November 21st- ReGen Monterey Board Meeting- This month, after passing the consent agenda, we were able to recognize an employee, Victor Aguilon, for 25 years of service. It's always fun to meet employees and to hear more about their tenure at ReGen Monterey. In fact, this was paired with an article that was copied for all of the directors about a tour that was given to a few local officers of our OE3 union. In this article, they were describing the positive atmosphere they encountered at ReGen and the longevity of our employees. It really shows that when you provide upward mobility opportunities with a good working environment, it pays off in the long run for both the employees and our agency.

Next, during our discussion portion of the agenda, we approved a new limited-term financial analyst position, and we also approved an economic hardship discretionary bonus of \$500. I was very proud of the ReGen staff who suggested this bonus, which would go to our employees whose wages do not match the "living wage" of Monterey County, which is \$35/hr. The federal freeze of the SNAP benefits, along with the higher cost of living, affects these employees much more than those who are making higher wages. To show our appreciation for their work, 54 qualified employees were chosen for this bonus. Again, I appreciated the thoughtfulness of this action, and I do hope that other agencies consider

their lower wage employees and provide them with similar help during this time, when the need is greater.

Our third item was authorizing our general manager to negotiate and enter into a short-term power purchase agreement (1-3 years) with Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) and terminate our existing power sales agreement with 3 Phases Renewables. In short, the additional electricity that we're producing (beyond powering our campus and, in the near future, sending electricity to M1W) will be sold to 3CE for a higher price than what we're receiving by selling it to 3 Phases Renewables. In addition, we're supporting our local electricity provider whose focus is on clean, renewable energy. This contract with 3CE will also help us to utilize their expertise as we continue to investigate and decide how we want to best use our methane. It's ultimately a win-win for us both.

Our last decision item was reviewing the new changes to the Brown Act. Basically, the changes won't apply to our special district because of our size and the smaller size of our county. Regardless, it was good to review the items in the Act that still apply to our meetings.

Under our correspondence, we reviewed a letter from the Monterey Bay Air Resources Board of Directors, which was reducing our penalty for a methane violation. The penalty went from \$147,264.00 down to \$15,000 with the acknowledgement that we'd be working to achieve long-term compliance and system resilience by investing in a backup generator dedicated to the landfill gas blower and flare, along with purchasing and using a surface emissions monitoring device. Collectively, this equipment will cost us over \$275,000, which is well above the initial penalty, but it will help us to never have another violation, and it ultimately benefits our environment.

Lastly, we had the election of new officers for next year. I'm grateful and humbled by the fact that the ad hoc committee nominated me to board chair again, along with Mayor Delgado as vice chair. This will be my third and final year, and I look forward to serving and working so closely with this agency that I admire so much!

Tuesday, December 2nd- Ribbon Cutting for Monterey One Water Co-Digester- I was honored to be invited to attend the ribbon cutting of Monterey One Water's (M1W) co-digester, which was funded through CalRecycle. This digester will be accepting food waste and using some of its biosolids to produce methane, which will then be converted to renewable natural gas. Producing renewable natural gas has a greater financial payback as compared to producing electricity from the methane, so this is a way for M1W to use their bio-solids in a way that will not only protect the environment from methane gas, but also provide them with greater financial rewards.

Monday, December 8th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Board Meeting- Please see the MST board highlights in our agenda packet.