



AGENDA ITEM: 12
MEETING DATE: February 20, 2025

Staff Reports

February 20, 2025

TO: BCSD Board of Directors

FROM: Elaine Cervantes

RE: Staff Report

Cc: Marisol Camacho, Morelia Avila, Alfredo Soliz

Board Members,

CSDA - California Special Districts Association

On February 12, 2025, I met with Erasmo Viveros, our District representative from CSDA. CSDA oversees 150 associations in rural community areas. During the meeting, Erasmo provided dates for the upcoming training courses for board members, as well as information on On-Demand Webinars.

We discussed several key topics, including Advocacy Priorities, Achieving District Goals, and the Special District Laws and Reference Guide. We also reviewed a list of business affiliates that serve special districts.

Erasmo recommended the following Leadership Academy Conferences for new board members. These conferences focus on core governance training for elected and appointed officials. Some of the topics covered include:

- How to work as a team
- The roles of the board and staff
- Attributes and characteristics of highly effective boards
- The influence of culture, norms, values, and operating style on the district
- How individual values, skills, and knowledge shape effective board operations
- The board's role in setting direction for the district and ensuring fiscal accountability
- The importance of transitioning from "I" to "we" as a governance team

The upcoming conference dates are as follows:

- **La Quinta:** April 21-24, 2025 (Early-bird registration discount ends March 21, 2025)
- **Redding:** October 5-8, 2025 (Early-bird registration discount ends September 5, 2025)
- **Monterey:** November 16-19, 2025 (Early-bird registration discount ends October 10, 2025)

Biola Pershing Elementary and Fresno County Wellness Center

The grand opening of the Biola Pershing Elementary and Fresno County Wellness Center took place on February 4, 2025. The center's hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and walk-ins are welcome. This All4Youth Wellness Center is open to all students and their families. For more information, please refer to the attached flyer.

FCRTA Fresno County Rural Transit Agency

We have been informed that the last day of service for the Microtransit service in the Biola community will be Friday, February 28, 2025. According to Moses Stites, this project was deemed unsustainable due to the costs and usage of the vehicle.

However, Moses suggested that the district may want to consider purchasing a used electric vehicle, which typically costs between \$7,000 and \$9,000, especially since the charging port will remain with the district.

FCRTA also provided alternative transportation options, including Senior Taxi Scrips and Measure C Carpool. For more details on these options and how to register, please refer to the attached flyer.

ARPA Project / Fresno County ATP Cycle 5 Sidewalk Project

As the Fresno County ATP Cycle 5 Sidewalk Project is completed, it is important to note that when the project was initially approved, it did not include lighting along Biola Avenue. At the time, the plan was to install the sidewalk without provisions for future lighting or pull boxes.

However, after discussing the situation with our engineer Alfonso Manrique with AM Consulting, we were informed that there would be leftover funds from the ARPA Storm Drainage Project. These funds, though limited, were enough to cover the cost of pull boxes and conduit for the lighting, which could be installed during the sidewalk project. While this amount was not sufficient to cover the full scope of the originally planned 13 lamp posts, we are grateful for the contribution, as it saved the district considerable future expenses.

On February 12, 2025, we met again with our engineer, who shared that approximately \$100,000 in funds would be left over from the ARPA Project. He plans to allocate these funds towards lighting for Biola Avenue. Although he is unsure whether the amount will be enough to cover all 13 lamp posts, he will follow up in the next week with more detailed information. It is possible that we may only be able to install six lamp posts initially, but any installation would be a step forward.

If necessary, we may consider fundraising through the Biola Chamber of Commerce to cover the remaining costs for the other seven lamp posts. We will keep everyone updated as we receive more concrete figures and a clearer picture of how many lamp posts will be installed.

This is an exciting and rewarding development for the community, and we are deeply grateful to AM Consulting for their continued support and dedication to the best interests of Biola.

Water System Upgrade Project

As you know, the district lost the Water System Upgrade Project that was originally scheduled for completion in February 2023. This project, initiated in 2018, aimed to provide Biola with a 500,000-gallon water storage tank, smart meters throughout the community, and booster pump replacements. Estimated at \$4 million, the project was crucial for Biola's water infrastructure.

On May 24, 2024, the State Water Board sent a denial letter citing a lack of communication between the Engineer and the District back in 2021-2022. This project is vital for Biola, especially considering the \$200,000 in losses from leaks over the past year. While the current Board and staff were not involved during the initial stages, they fully recognize the importance of moving this project forward.

Since then, the current team has taken significant steps, including numerous emails, phone calls, and outreach to politicians for assistance. With support from our current engineer, AM Consulting (led by Alfonso Manrique), he arranged a meeting on Friday, November 15, 2024, with Assemblymember Esmeralda Soria's representative, District Director Gilbert Felix, and five members of the State Water Board. During this meeting, we emphasized the significance of this project for Biola and its residents.

While we are uncertain whether this will be enough to overturn the State Water Board's decision, we are committed to continuing the fight. We will explore every avenue, whether through the State Water Board or alternative funding sources, to ensure this critical project becomes a reality for Biola. As of February 13, 2025 still waiting for a response from the State as to their decision. **In the meantime, our engineer, Alfonso Manrique from AM Consulting, has applied for a grant through Water Smart in the amount of \$3 to \$4 million to cover the costs of the 500,000-gallon water tank. He anticipates that we should receive a response by next month.**

Biola Chamber of Commerce Wine & Dine

The Biola Chamber's annual Wine & Dine event will take place on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at Ziveli Winery from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM. Proceeds from this event will go toward funding community improvements and supporting future generations. Please see flyer for more information.

Food Distribution drive-thru Protocol

At the November Board meeting, the Board recommended reintroducing the drive-thru process for food distributions. However, for January's distribution, the representatives decided to continue with the walk-thru process instead. The protocol for drive-thru distributions remains available should any of the food representatives choose to implement it in the future. For now, the decision to maintain walk-up distributions prioritizes the safety and well-being of all participants. Update for last month and this month the food distributions

***Biola Food Distribution Schedule and Important Information**

The Biola Food Distributions are held three times a month:

- **1st Thursday of the Month** at 8:00 AM
- **2nd Wednesday of the Month** at 8:00 AM
- **4th Wednesday of the Month** at 4:00 PM (No distribution on Christmas Day-cancelled)

On the 2nd Wednesday of the month, United Health will be present to provide free health screenings to residents and anyone interested, at no cost.

Please be mindful that all participants are volunteers, especially during these cold months. We also want to remind everyone that the quantity of food we receive from the Fresno Food Bank can vary—sometimes there's plenty, and other times, there isn't enough. Unfortunately, this is beyond our control, and we appreciate your patience and understanding

Jakara Movement and UC Merced

The Jakara Movement and UC Merced have scheduled the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the mural unveiling on Saturday, March 8, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Please see the flyer for more details. Jakara has also provided us with (Red Cards) they are available in the office.

In addition to the mural unveiling, this event will feature a resource fair for all residents, including the following activities:

- Health Clinic
- Face Painting
- Immigration Seminar
- Know Your Rights session at 11:00 AM
- And many more activities

We hope to see you there!

***BOARD PACKETS** – Agendas and Board Packets will be sent by email effective August 1, 2023. If a hard copy is needed copies will be available at the office for pickup at your convenience, every Friday before the scheduled Board Meeting of every month. Thank you for your patience as we try and be a little more efficient with staff time and safety.

As a reminder the office hours are as follows:

Monday – office closed

Tuesday – 8:00am –5:00pm

Wednesday – 8:00am –5:00pm

Thursday – 8:00am – 5:00pm

Friday – 8:00am – 2:00pm