

April 27, 2023 MINUTES
Special Board Meeting

The Special Board meeting of the Sutter-Yuba Mosquito & Vector Control District Board of Trustees was called to order by Board President David Schmidl at 4:30 P.M., Thursday, April 27, 2023.

PRESENT: President Schmidl, Secretary Sanbrook, Trustees Ghag, Link and Corazza

ABSENT: Trustees Kirchner and Guzman

ALSO PRESENT: Manager Abshier, General Foreman Hunt and District Counsel, Brant Bordsen

APPROVAL TO ELIMINATE THE DISTRICT'S NEPOTISM POLICY: Abshier noted eliminating the nepotism policy could result in the public trust being undermined, allowing for the appearance of unfair hiring practices and cronyism. Abshier referenced several reasons for having a nepotism policy in place. In 2014, Alameda County adopted a nepotism policy after a Grand Jury report criticized the county for not having a nepotism policy. The Grand Jury report said the county ought to implement written rules regarding hiring of relatives to avoid the appearance of favoritism and bias. The Sutter-Yuba MVCD adopted a nepotism policy in 2010, and re-affirmed and strengthened the policy in 2013. The manager at that time, Ronald McBride, was requesting the policy have no room interpretation or variance.

Abshier brought an amended policy to the Board, as there are areas not well defined in the existing policy and it did leave room for variance. Recently the District would not employ two relatives of permanent employees that were seeking employ with the District. Employment of relatives can lead to possible favoritism, preferential hiring, failure to discipline issues, and biased promotions. If a falling out occurs between relatives and strong tensions develop because of those relationships, claims of hostile work environment or discrimination could result. Due to the small size of the District there is little room to transfer employees to another department to resolve conflict. Abshier noted that Bordsen has advised the District is not required to have a nepotism policy, but he and Abshier think it is prudent to have a strong policy in place.

Sanbrook added he had done homework on the issue having found that Butte County MVCD and a number of the Southern California Districts have had a nepotism policy in place for years, and believes we should have a policy. He noted all the employees have a copy of the personnel rules, which clearing states the rules of the policy, so all employees are aware the policy. Sanbrook suggested carving out exemptions pertaining to the hiring of seasonal and summer employees. Sanbrook stated he thinks it would be a mistake to eliminate the policy. Link agreed with Sanbrook and supports keeping the existing nepotism policy. A motion was made by Link and seconded by Sanbrook to not eliminate the District's Nepotism Policy. Corazza questioned if it would be a Brown Act violation to make a motion to keep the nepotism policy, as the meeting agenda stated that the Board would be considering eliminating the nepotism policy. Bordsen advised it would not be a violation to vote to retain the nepotism policy, even though the agenda item was to eliminate the policy. Corazza asked for clarification as to exactly what the motion on the table was. Sanbrook noted the motion was to retain the District's Nepotism Policy. Sanbrook asked for a roll call vote. The motion to not eliminate the District's Nepotism Policy was approved with Sanbrook, Corazza, Link and Ghag voting in favor and Schmidl voting against.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

MANAGER COMMENTS: None

TRUSTEE COMMENTS: Corazza noted Abshier did a great job on the 93Q radio interview on Tuesday morning.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, a motion was made by Sanbrook and seconded by Link to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote. President Schmidl adjourned the meeting.

John Sanbrook, Board Secretary