

Santa Ynez Community Services District Board Memorandum

To: Board of Directors

From: Loch Dreizler, General Manager

Date: February 18, 2026

Subject: General Manager Recruitment – Discuss Ad-Hoc Compensation Recommendation.

Recommendation for Board Action: Discuss and adopt (or adjust) the Ad-Hoc recommended base salary range of \$165,000 – \$200,000 annually (DOQ), along with direction on total compensation elements.

Purpose. The original intent of the Ad Hoc Committee was to make these decisions at the committee level, with the understanding that any final candidate would likely negotiate a salary as part of the process, and that the committee or the board would likely counteroffer. Late Friday, February 13, Director Kelleher requested that this be made a Board Discussion, even though the committee had initially approved the range.

Approve the range for inclusion in recruitment materials (flyer, posting). This memorandum updates the Board on the General Manager (GM) recruitment, with a primary focus on compensation. As previously discussed, my retirement is planned for July 3, 2026, following a part-time transition beginning March 9, 2026.

The District must establish a competitive compensation package to attract qualified candidates for our small special district (~800 connections, a small operating budget, a wastewater collection focus, non-CalPERS participation, and regional housing challenges).

Compensation Recommendation: To ensure a robust applicant pool, compensation must be competitive with comparable small-to-mid-sized California special districts (particularly those in wastewater or similar services on the Central Coast). Key factors include:

- District size and scope (small agency, limited staff of 6, contract-based treatment, modest capital projects).
- Non-participation in CalPERS, which reduces long-term retirement appeal compared to many peers.
- High Santa Barbara County housing costs and rural location, which may deter candidates unless offset by salary/benefits.
- Market data from recent/ongoing recruitments and public sources, e.g., Transparent California, district postings, comparability studies.

Ad-hoc Committee Recommended a Salary Range: \$165,000 – \$200,000 base annually (DOQ – dependent on qualifications).

- **Rationale:** This positions SYCSD competitively against peer Central Coast wastewater-focused districts (e.g., Nipomo/Los Osos ~\$200,00) while accounting for our smaller scale and non-CalPERS status. It starts above many smaller/rural comparables but remains fiscally responsible (~\$1.1M budget). A top range of ~\$200,000 aligns with market trends for experienced candidates in similar roles.
- **Negotiation Flexibility:** Individual negotiation allowed within range, with emphasis on total package (e.g., benefits, potential severance of 3–6 months, flexible work arrangements to address housing / relocation).
- **Benefits Package:** Standard public-sector elements (health, dental, vision; paid leave; retirement). Explore partial remote/hybrid options to widen the pool. No CalPERS, but consider supplemental retirement contributions if needed for competitiveness

Current/Recent Comparables (2024–2026 data):

- Nipomo CSD: ~\$202,429 (effective July 2025, by contract).
- Los Osos CSD: \$196,691–\$214,200 (current recruitment range, 2026).
- Cambria CSD: ~\$182,245 (recent).
- Cayucos Sanitary District: ~\$228,692 (higher due to specific factors).
- South San Luis Obispo County Sanitation District (SSLOCSD): ~\$177,872.
- Vandenberg Village CSD: ~\$187,174.
- Templeton CSD: ~\$193,808.
- Heritage Ranch CSD: ~\$180,628
- Oceano CSD listed its own current GM salary at \$206,71