

SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Loch Dreizler, General Manager
John D'Ornellas, Recruitment Consultant
DATE: March 18, 2026
SUBJECT: General Manager Recruitment Update

Recommendation

- Receive an update on the status of the General Manager recruitment.
- Provide staff with directions on scheduling a special meeting during the week of April 13, 2026, for interviews with top candidates.

Policy Implications On February 11, 2026, the Ad Hoc General Manager Recruitment Committee met to discuss qualifications, compensation, recruitment methods, and application requirements. All recommendations were presented to the full Board at the February 18, 2026 meeting for review and final approval of the recruitment package.

California Government Code Section 61050(a) requires the Board of Directors to appoint a General Manager. Section 61051 details the General Manager's responsibilities, including:

1. Implementing Board-approved policies for district operations.
2. Appointing, supervising, disciplining, and dismissing employees in accordance with the Board's employee relations system
3. Overseeing district facilities and services; and
4. Supervising district finances.

Discussion: The General Manager recruitment opened on February 23, 2026. Required submission materials include a completed SYCSD job application, a cover letter, a resume (with salary requirements), and responses to the additional questionnaire.

Recruitment efforts included:

- Print advertisements in local newspapers (Santa Maria Times, Santa Barbara Independent, San Luis Obispo Tribune).
- Web postings on the SYCSD website, California Special Districts Association, California Rural Water Association, and other wastewater/special district sites.
- Notification to the Santa Ynez Chamber of Commerce.
- Direct outreach to members of the Sanitary Agency Managers Association of Santa Barbara County; and
- Targeted phone calls and emails to dozens of potential candidates currently or recently employed at neighboring wastewater agencies.
- The recruitment closes on March 23, 2026. As of March 18, [X / several / the number received] submittals have been received. Additional applications are expected prior to the deadline, as is common in such processes.

Key Upcoming Dates in the Recruitment Timeline (planning purposes):

- **March 24–27, 2026:** Ad Hoc Committee reviews submittals, ranks candidates, and selects the top 3–5 for Board interviews.
- **By March 30, 2026:** Phone and written invitations sent to top candidates with reasonable advance notice to facilitate attendance; Zoom interviews may be offered if distance poses an issue.
- **Week of April 13, 2026:** Special Board meeting for candidate interviews. Full Board attendance is strongly encouraged. At this meeting, the Board may reach consensus on the preferred candidate and extend a tentative/conditional job offer (subject to a successful background investigation and negotiation of an employment agreement).
- **April 20–May 8, 2026:** Background investigation and contract negotiations (using the standard employment agreement drafted by District legal counsel). Negotiations typically focus on compensation, work hours, and any severance provisions.
- **May 20, 2026:** Final employment agreement presented for Board approval at the regular meeting and executed by both parties.
- **July 6, 2026:** Target start date for the new General Manager (flexible based on the selected candidate's relocation or current employment obligations).

This timeline assumes successful recruitment of at least one top-qualified candidate and subsequent approval of the agreement. Staff is confident that qualified candidates will be received by the deadline.

If insufficient qualified candidates emerge, the Board may consider the following options:

1. Amend job requirements and/or compensation, then re-advertise (with an extended deadline or open-until-filled approach).
2. Engage a professional recruitment firm for a broader search.
3. Appoint an Interim General Manager (temporary, can be hired quickly using a standard employment agreement).

Staff will provide a full update on the applications received and next steps at the March 18 meeting and welcome any Board direction.