

MBCA BOARD MEETING **APPROVED** MINUTES

Thursday, January 8, 2026 / 4:00 – 6:00 PM on Zoom

Black Bold Italics = Board vote *Blue Italics = action commitment*

<input type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Doolittle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joani Tremblay (new)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erin Flanagan (new)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Wold

Steve called the regular meeting to order at 4:03 PM

• Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Steve welcomed and thanked guests Helen Jeong and Ted Stimpfel for attending, and introduced Board nominees Erin Flanagan and Joani Tremblay.

• Agenda approval

Pat moved to approve the agenda as amended by Pat (added the 29 Palms solar project). Sarah seconded, and all were in favor. (10-0).

• Approve Minutes from December 13, 2025, BOD meeting

Sarah moved to approve the December minutes. Janet seconded, and all were in favor. (10-0)

• Treasurer's Report – Budgeting

Bob reported our bank accounts total about \$40K, still split between the two banks. Once all automatic payments are changed from US Bank, we will be totally in Banc of California, where we also have \$51.1K in a CD. There were 39 membership donations in December from the membership campaign, plus additional donations, totaling \$4033. We had no major expenses. Bob is working with Golden State Water on their Desert-Wise Living programs donation. The Board accepted the Treasurer's report by consensus.

Outreach and Organizational Issues

1. Vote on nominations of new board members.

Steve moved to approve the December nominations of Erin Flanagan Gatlin and Joanie Tremblay as new members of the Board of Directors.

Arch seconded and all were in favor (10-0). Congratulations Erin and Joani! (Side note – Steve will plan to schedule an in-person Board meeting in March.)

2. Nominate and elect officers for 2026

Stacy nominated Erin as Vice President. Laraine seconded, Erin was willing, and all were in favor. Laraine moved to approve the slate of officers as: President, Steve Bardwell; Vice President, Erin Flanagan; Treasurer, Bob Wold; Secretary, Laraine Turk; Directors Stacy Doolittle, David Fick, Pat Flanagan, Brian Hammer, Janet Johnston, Sarah Kennington, Arch McCulloch, and Joani Tremblay. Steve seconded and all were in favor (12-0). Laraine would like to hand over secretary duties in 2027. *Arch will handle new and replacement name tag production – contact him if you need a new one.*

3. Retainer of Chris Carrillo for legal advice

Via an online vote on December 19, Brian moved to have Steve Bardwell as President of MBCA sign an engagement agreement with Carrillo Law, to provide legal advice and insight for MBCA from time to time at a (reduced) fee of \$175 per hour.

Brian accepted an amendment by Laraine (as finalized above). Arch seconded and online votes were as follows:

Brian moved – Yes	Janet - Yes
Arch seconded – Yes	Bob - Yes
Laraine - Yes	Stacy - Yes
David - Yes	Steve - Yes
Pat - Yes	Sarah – Yes

Motion passed unanimously on December 22, 10-0.

4. Cliffhanger RRR 1-9/1-10-26 in 29 Palms
Laraine recommends we staff an information table at this local event which is a combined bouldering competition and conservation event. *Laraine will organize table coverage and Pat, Erin, Arch and Janet will help.*
5. MDLT [Advocacy 101/102](#) course
There are two sessions for each course. Arch, Pat, Erin, and Joani attended 101 yesterday. The target is especially to get more people attending Rep. Obernolte’s Town Halls and effectively speak.

Committee Reports:

Finance Committee

BW

1. 2026 Budget – Bob thanked us for the submissions of mission and budget requests. The Committee hopes by next meeting to provide an overall organizational budget for 2026 including committee-specific budgets. Bob will contact the chair of each committee if they have questions.

Land Use Conservation

AM

1. [Renewable Energy](#)
 - a. Sienna Solar project appeal – Review/Discuss PPT presentation
Steve said Sarah, Erin, Brian, and Pat have been working on a response and presentation on the Sienna II project for January 27 (Jan. 21 deadline). Steve has communicated with Paul Gonzalez, the latest Planning Chief at LUS. Discussion focused on strategizing about which points to put forward and when. Steve and Brian showed some of the draft PowerPoint slides and got lots of suggestions. *Steve and Brian will present and Sarah, Erin and Pat will be present.* Having many people in person will be important.
 - b. Soda Mountain (See the Desert Report via this [link](#))
Brian noted that water is an issue for this project, and MWA won’t provide it. Developer says they will use wells on the property. The EIR

says negative effects on bighorn sheep can't be mitigated.

- c. EPS project "E-group PS" project in 29 Palms.
This is the proposed solar project near Harmony Acres. There is serious concern about dust; per Pat, "soils will blow like crazy," and will affect the City. The developer has proposed to give \$100K per year to the City before the project has been approved. They say it will be 50 MW, but the acreage implies only about 36, although installing tracking panels may make 50 possible, per David. Battery storage is required under state law but not included in the proposal. MBCA comments are being worked on.

Brian strongly recommends listening to the [podcast](#) about Australian solar he sent us, where they give away 3 hours of electricity every day.

2. Development Proposals

Steve will go over all the projects at the Annual Meeting, possibly using a wall map to emphasize cumulative effects.

- a. Joshua Tree Rezoning/Joshua Tree Resort
David said the resort is the main driver for the County planning to create a JT sewer authority, allegedly for "protection of the aquifer." This is an incursion into the Joshua Basin Water District. Stacy was in a meeting with Supervisor Rowe and the District, and during that meeting Rowe stated: "We can't afford to have a MAC up here." When asked why the District wasn't alerted to the sewer planning, the response was that Special Districts was supposed to tell them.
- b. Sunfair - Rural Sports Recreation lights/dust/noise/water!
Lights at the facility are super bright, undoubtedly illegal. They are operating during County's review of their request for a minor use permit that should be a conditional use permit. They are running a water truck from a well all week to keep down dust.
- c. Compass Yacht Club recap of community meeting
The website hasn't been unlocked as they said at the Town Hall. They have changed from finding old boats to building them as hotel rooms. Their project is not as destructive to the landscape as several others, although David says there are some Joshua trees. Arch is worried about their reference to it being "easily scalable." *Laraine will send a link to the [Z107.7 news story on the meeting](#).* Erin said that she and Pat informed the developers of a better vendor for their tortoise survey (Ed LaRue's group, [Circle Mountain Biological Consultants](#)).
- d. [Santorini](#) (EB-5 visa)
At a meeting of the Copper Mountain Mesa Community Center, Kate Collins reported the project is being marketed to buy EB-5 visas. ("The EB5 Visa program allows foreign investors to obtain a US green cards by investing in a US business that creates at least 10 jobs for American workers." -per Bing Copilot search). Joani offered assistance

if needed on that topic based on her own visa experience.

3. Water

a. MWA

Brian noted that in the recent storm, Wrightwood received 10 inches in 10 hours and had significant flooding. It was determined to be a “1-in-10,000-year flood. The aqueduct was damaged in 6 spots, undercut. Flow reached Afton Canyon near Baker, an unusual event.

b. JBWD – See earlier comments in 2.a..

4. WJT conservation Plan [FAQs](#) [Early bloom of JTs](#)

Early wildflowers have been in the news and studied across southern California. Arch reported the cottonwoods at Morongo are not losing leaves. Joshua tree blooming is out of phase with the moths necessary for reproduction by seed.

5. Wildlife – Crossing vs [Mountain Lion listing](#)

Arch reported there are concerns about separate populations and evolutionary isolation. There are 6 distinct populations in So Cal. In the San Bernardino/San Gorgonio region the population is more genetically isolated. The highest crossing priority is on the I-15 but a crossing over Hwy. 62 is also mentioned.

Board/Volunteer Recruitment

SK

Housing and Community

JJ

1. Authorize legal counsel expenditure

Janet wishes to ask our new legal adviser Chris Carrillo for an estimate on time needed to pursue some housing-related issues. We discussed whether Janet’s request for Chris’s time needs a vote, but decided such a request is assumed under the terms of the agreement and is not decision-making or specifically expenditure-related. Steve is the official contact.

Janet also hopes we’ll ask Chris in the future to investigate land use representation for the Planning Commission, where representatives are all from heavily incorporated districts, whereas it is unincorporated areas that should be - and need to be - represented.

2. Working group expenditures

[Janet will put together the information and give to Steve.](#)

3. Point in Time Count ([PITC](#)) 1-22-26

Janet encourages others to sign up on the website to get the training and participate.

DWL

SD

1. Annual Meeting **1-24-26** Topic Greywater
Stacy and Steve are working with Nicholas to connect his presentation with the grant intention and our audience. *Laraine will put out an invitation for non-profits and water agencies to have information tables.* Jennifer Cusack of HDWD is eager to publicize it. There has been good traction on social media. *Janet will work with a CMC student who has a tortoise project at CMC.* Janet reported that Wayne Hamilton has set up a non-profit for local funding that could be used immediately and he could publicize at our meeting. *Sarah will contact Cathy Zarakov to organize volunteers for registration and Erin will help.* It will not be broadcast on Zoom, but Bob Stephenson will do a video.
2. Spring Landscape Tour planning update SK, BW
Making progress.

Web, Social Media Communications SD

Joani will help but will need to get up to speed on content and style etc.

Education LT

Laraine will get the approved Scholarship press release out by February.
Janet will send an email update about field trips when there is more to know.

Partnership Advocacy SB

Nothing new.

Director's Comments

- Arch put some links in Chat. *Get your name to Arch if you need a name badge.*
- *Steve will work with Martha to order more business cards.*
- Pat commented about the extensive mustard bloom and suggests getting people together to pull. *Stacy suggested that Erin take a video of Pat pulling it and we can post on social media.* You can just clip out the growing stems but put any flowers in secured plastic bags.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, February 12, 2026, 4:00 – 6:00 PM Zoom