

Carey Casciola

From: julie Tacker <jmtacker@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 8, 2025 2:25 AM
To: Peter Brown
Cc: Carey Casciola
Subject: Agenda Item 10-A & 7-A
Attachments: Is Oceano Community Services District acting recklessly_.pdf

Good morning Peter,

Please provide this email and the attached opinion piece to the Board and the public for tonight's meeting. This correspondence relates to the Legal Review of the District's Ability to Reduce Connection Fees and the draft minutes for the subject item before the board on August 13, 2025.

Dear Board of Directors,

I'm sorry I cannot be in attendance at tonight's meeting.

My opinion of your action to waive needed connection fees remains. You had every right to collect those fees and as a disadvantaged community that continues to receive subsidies through grants, you missed an important possibility to wholly (as your legal counsel states in his memo)(Item 10-A) *"recover the cost of connecting infrastructure and assets required to facilitate new development"*. You had the right, and responsibility to your ratepayers, to require those fees be paid in full.

Additionally, the minutes from August 13th **incorrectly** state that Director Austin **"abstained"** from the vote, when in fact she **recused herself due to a potential conflict of interest**. There is an important distinction.

Further, Director Austin failed to state the reason for her conflict and legal counsel (Minnery) made a partially correct statement on her behalf. He said she was the owner of a parcel some 500+ feet away from the project, when in fact, she is part-owner of the "Triangle Park" parcel **directly across the street** from the subject parcel.

For your information, recusing oneself during the item is not enough to avoid violating conflict of interest laws. Even before the request for waiver was brought to the board, Director Austin, **should** have avoided contact with the property owner, his representative, and/or any one of you on the board regarding the requested waiver prior to the board meeting where your decision was made. The staff report for the item reflects that Director Austin was included in July 10, 2025 correspondence by the applicant, in which no other board members were copied. It is unclear how involved Director Austin was in this matter, and her potential influence in the matter cannot be quantified without further analysis.

Perhaps the next memo from legal counsel to the board should cover conflict of interest.

Thank you for your time,
Julie Tacker



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Is Oceano Community Services District acting recklessly?

August 22, 2025

By JULIE TACKER



Julie Tacker

Oceano is designated as a disadvantaged community. And while the Oceano Community Services District recently increases its sewer rates by 274% and its water rates by 50% over the next five years to tackle millions of dollars in deferred maintenance, it is failing to act financially responsibly.

The district needs every penny it can get. As a disadvantaged community, Oceano has consistently tapped into millions of dollars in grant assistance both by the county, and the district, to upgrade and repair its infrastructure.

This backdrop includes a \$600,000 Proposition 1 grant awarded to Oceano for waterline replacements, construction crews and equipment at work in neighborhoods today.

Last week, the Oceano CSD Board of Directors granted a private property owner's request to waive approximately \$35,000 of \$95,000 in water and sewer connection fees. If an owner wishes to develop a property that is already served by streets and services, which this property is, the district uses connection fees to reimburse itself for the costs of infrastructure previously constructed and maintenance in the future.

The development in question is for a 9,500 square foot vehicle storage building, to be used as private storage for restored classic Mercedes Benz and presumably other classic cars. The project proponent called it his "showroom." One of the cars the project proponent is selling out of his private garage, is listed on his website at \$385,000; yet he needs a gift of ratepayer funds?

The 1.5-acre parcel of land is at the southern end of Front Street, across from Deltina's Coffee shop, backing up to the railroad tracks. In my opinion, this project doesn't benefit Oceano at all, as few, if any residents will ever visit the private garage and likely no one, will afford a car that may be for sale or auctioned out of the "showroom."

Concurrently, with the water and sewer rate increases and giveaways, the district manager, who was hired just last year at \$196,867 annually, has received a 3% cost-of-living increase (to \$202,773) on July 1st and now is seeking a merit raise.

This manager downplayed the significant water and sewer rate increases when interviewed by the local television station in July as "8% or 9% over the next five-year period."

What he neglected to present to the community is that each year, over the next five years, those 8% or 9% increases to both the water and the sewer rates are compounded. He completely failed to mention the sewer rate increase, which goes from \$19.49 to \$72.83, is a 273.68% increase.

It's mind boggling how the district can cry poor (seeking millions of dollars in grants) yet be so reckless and stupid (waive eligible fees) with ratepayer funds and negotiating a raise for its general manager.

They say, "You can't fix stupid."

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