

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

June 9, 2025

A meeting of the Public Affairs Committee of Vista Irrigation District was held on Monday, June 9, 2025 at the offices of the District at 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kuchinsky called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee members present: Kuchinsky and MacKenzie.

Staff present: Shallako Goodrick, Director of Administration and Brent Reyes, Management Analyst

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

No public comments were presented on items not appearing on the agenda.

5. COMPREHENSIVE COST OF SERVICE/WATER RATE STUDY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

See staff report attached hereto.

The Committee reviewed and discussed a draft postcard and webpage developed to inform customers on how to participate in the rate setting process. The Committee suggested that minor changes be made to the postcard and the webpage, which staff concurred with making. After discussion, the Committee approved the tentative public outreach timeline for the rate setting process.

7. COMMENTS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

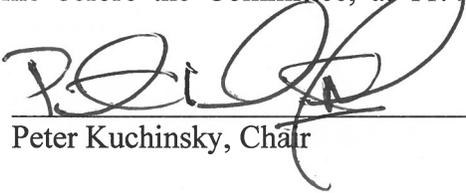
None

8. COMMENTS BY STAFF

None

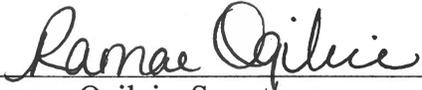
9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, at 11:48 a.m. Chair Kuchinsky adjourned the meeting.



Peter Kuchinsky, Chair

ATTEST:



Ranae Ogilvie, Secretary
Board of Directors
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date: June 9, 2025
Prepared By: Shallako Goodrick
Approved By: Brett Hodgkiss

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE COST OF SERVICE/WATER RATE STUDY PUBLIC OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

RECOMMENDATION: Review and provide feedback on the postcard, dedicated webpage and public outreach timeline.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION: At its January 15, 2025 meeting, the Board requested that the Public Affairs Committee work with staff and Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. (Raftelis) on various public outreach activities to educate and inform ratepayers about the comprehensive cost of service/water rate study (study), including why it is being prepared.

FISCAL IMPACT: The agreement with Raftelis for the study includes \$29,970 for various public outreach-related activities, as outlined in Raftelis's proposal plus first amendment; supplementary public outreach activities will be at an additional cost.

SUMMARY: Raftelis worked with staff to develop content for a dedicated webpage for the study as well as a postcard to provide information about how to participate in the rate setting process. It is anticipated that the postcard will be mailed in early July. Staff is requesting the Public Affairs Committee's feedback on the webpage, postcard and tentative public outreach timeline.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Excerpt from Raftelis Proposal – Public Relations
- Draft postcard
- Public Outreach timeline (tentative)

From Raftelis Proposal

Task 5: Public Relations

Community engagement and strategic communications planning increases community acceptance, enhances credibility with stakeholders and policymakers, and builds awareness of the value of the service and need for utility investments. Effective public participation acknowledges the desire for humans to participate in decisions that affect them; seeking public input will help drive thoughtful decision-making. Communicating early and often builds transparency and trust, as opposed to being told late in the process, after decisions are made, or when ratepayers receive a legally required rate adjustment notice in the mail.

Raftelis' in-house Strategic Communications team has assisted utility agencies and municipalities across California and the U.S., including some of the largest and most complex local governments in the nation. In the past year alone, the Raftelis communications team worked on strategic communications projects for more than 40 public sector clients. Most of our team members are accredited in public relations and hold certificates in public participation. We are often called upon to facilitate public and community meetings, Board and Council workshops, and advisory committees. We can support the District's rate study with guidance, structure, strategies, tools, and tactics to communicate clearly and broadly to your customers and key stakeholders.

Task 5.1 Community Engagement Events (Town Hall, Open House, or Workshop format)

To accommodate a proactive and transparent process and gather input from customers, Raftelis will help coordinate and present at two community engagement events ahead of the public hearing (Town Hall, Open House, or workshop format) to inform the public about the need to adjust rates. These would be separate from publicly noticed Board meetings, workshops, and hearings. We can support Town Halls, however, we recommend an Open House format that creates convenient, one-on-one conversations with customers in a low-conflict setting, ensuring that customers can get their questions answered and that District staff can benefit from community feedback. This process can be highly collaborative and iterative; the feedback we receive from key stakeholders can help guide the direction of the study and inform the methodologies and options ultimately selected for the final rate proposal. The presentation will be reviewed by our communications staff who are experts at developing clear, compelling, and consistent messages that build awareness and support from customers.

Task 5.2 Development of Multimedia Outreach Materials

Key messages developed as part of the strategic communications framework come to life when woven together into powerful communications pieces by Raftelis' strategic communicators and professional graphic designers. Visual representation of proposed changes in an easy-to-understand and accessible format significantly improves customer understanding of rate structure changes that may impact customer bills. Raftelis will develop a suite of communications pieces to assist with communicating rate and rate structure changes in print, online, or in person. This task can include the development of a mix of infographics, fact sheets, bill stuffers, presentation slide decks, FAQs, talking points, website copy, social media content, explainer videos, news releases, etc., all in one or more languages. As priced, deliverables include FAQs, a bill stuffer, website and newsletter content, press releases, social media content, a 2-minute custom animated explainer video, direct mail postcard, and design of infographics.

Task 5.3 Proposition 218 Public Notice Preparation

While requirements of the Proposition 218 Public Hearing Notice are easy to satisfy, too many utilities and municipalities miss the opportunity to educate and inform the public of the need for rate

increases that support these essential services. Over the years, Raftelis has designed countless Proposition 218 notices that go beyond the minimum dictated by statute to deliver visually appealing pieces that customers want to read. We can draft the content and match the District's established brand guidelines to design custom graphics that support clear, positive messaging in the Notice. Once these arrive in mailboxes, customers will not only be properly notified, but will understand the District's needs and be more likely to support rate adjustments.

PLANNED MEETINGS:

- One virtual communications kickoff meeting
- Four virtual meetings to discuss communications, events, and materials
- Two in-person community engagement events (Town Hall, Open House, or Workshop format)

DELIVERABLES:

- Draft community event presentation in Microsoft PowerPoint with two rounds of edits
- Community event promotional materials including digital, print, and social media event notices and content
- Community event logistical coordination and on-site facilitation
- Design and development of FAQs, a bill stuffer, website and newsletter content, two press releases, social media content, a 2-minute custom animated explainer video, direct mail postcard, and infographics
- Draft Proposition 218 notice content for the District's legal review and approval
- Design and layout of the Proposition 218 notice with two rounds of revisions and final press-ready PDF in English. As proposed, Raftelis will provide the Notice in other languages with certified translation provided by the District. Raftelis can also recommend certified language translation services.



Vista Irrigation District
1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081

Responsible Investment for a Reliable Water Future



vidwater.org/water-rate-study

Email: RateStudy@vidwater.org

Phone: (760) 597-3100



DRAFT



Vista Irrigation District Water Cost-of-Service Rate Study

Responsible Investment for a Reliable Water Future

The **Vista Irrigation District** is making long-term investments to ensure a reliable water future. Water operations are primarily funded through customer rates—not tax dollars. These rate revenues are reinvested into maintaining, upgrading, and operating the water system. Current rates are no longer sufficient to cover increasing costs of operations and critical system improvements planned over the next five to 10 years.

The District has enlisted utility finance experts to analyze our rates and costs to purchase water and operate the water system. Meetings with the District Board of Directors and the community will ensure that customers have several opportunities to learn more and provide feedback about the rate study process and proposed rates before any formal action is considered in late fall 2025.

How You Can Stay Informed and Help Us Ensure a Reliable Water Future!

Visit the Website



Check out information like FAQs, videos, and calendar of upcoming public and community meetings.

Attend Board Meetings



Public opinion may be voiced directly to the Board during the public comment period. For meeting information, go to www.vidwater.org/meetings.

Attend a Community Information Session



Vista Irrigation District Admin
1391 Engineer Street, Vista

 Sat., Sept. 13, 10:30 a.m. to noon

 Thurs., Sept. 18, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Comprehensive Cost of Service/Water Rate Study
Tentative Public Outreach Timeline

Description	Tentative Date
Public Affairs Committee Meeting - review webpage and postcard	Mid June
Public Affairs Committee Meeting - review draft Proposition 218 Notice	Early July
Mail postcard	July
Board Meeting - consider authorizing issuance Proposition 218 Notice	August 6
Mail Proposition 218 Notice	Late August
Open House (Saturday 10:30 AM - noon)	September 13
Open House/Town Hall (Thursday 5:30 - 7pm)	September 18
Board Meeting - consider objections to proposed rate adjustments	November 5
Board Meeting - public hearing on proposed rate adjustments	November 19