



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-25-109
Meeting 25-21
August 20, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 3

AGENDA ITEM

Second Reading and Adoption of the Board Compensation Ordinance

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Waive reading and adopt Ordinance 25-01 increasing Board compensation from \$121.28 to \$127.34 per meeting day, pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 5536; the maximum of six compensable meetings per month remains unchanged.
2. Amend Board Policy 6.06 to reflect the increase in compensation resulting from the Board compensation ordinance.

SUMMARY

State law allows the Board of Directors (Board) to increase the per meeting compensation for Board members by up to 5% annually, by ordinance. The last increase was adopted by the Board in April 2024. One year has elapsed since the last increase. This item consists of the second reading of an ordinance to increase the per meeting compensation by 5%, from \$121.28 to \$127.34.

The ordinance was reviewed by the Board during the first reading and public hearing on July 23, 2025 with no changes requested by the Board or the public. Attachment 1 contains the ordinance proposed for adoption. Attachment 2 reflects the increase in per meeting compensation in Board Policy 6.06, *Meeting Compensation*, which allows Board members to be compensated for up to six compensable meetings per month. The proposed increase is expected to fall within the Board-approved Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget.

DISCUSSION

Prior to January 1, 2019, California Public Resources Code section 5536 set the compensation for Board members at \$100 per meeting with a maximum of \$500 or five meeting days per month. This level of Board compensation had not changed since 1984. Based on US inflation calculators, the cumulative rate of inflation during this timeframe had been approximately 150%. Meanwhile, the scope of Board member responsibilities and the complexity of policy oversight substantially increased during that period of time.

- Since 1984, the District's annual budget has grown from \$13.9 million to \$94.4 million
- The District secured a substantial second funding source for capital projects in the form of a \$300 million general obligation bond passed by voters in 2014.

- Acres of land preserved by the District has grown from 18,300 acres to over 70,000 acres.
- The District's jurisdiction has expanded into three counties, including the coastal areas of San Mateo County, while in 1984 it operated in two counties and was limited in San Mateo County to the southern bayside area.
- The District's constituent population has grown from 570,000 to 770,000.

In June 2018, the District supported AB 2329 (Obernolte), to provide Board members with additional latitude in increasing the number of compensable meetings and the per meeting compensation amount.

The latest update to Board compensation law, which went into effect on January 1, 2019, increased the number of compensable meetings from five to six per month and enables Board members to increase the per meeting compensation by up to 5% annually by ordinance. The ordinance must be adopted pursuant to the procedure used by water districts (Water Code section 20200 *et seq*), which includes multiple opportunities for the public to provide input through a public hearing and a petition process. The procedure for adopting a compensation increase is:

- Publish a notice of the public hearing in the local newspaper once per week for two consecutive weeks.
- Hold a public hearing (first reading), and adopt the ordinance at a subsequent meeting (second reading)
- Within 60 days after adoption, the public may petition for reconsideration of the ordinance. In this case, the Board must reconsider the ordinance before enacting it.

The Board has adopted 5% increases annually pursuant to this legislation, beginning in 2021.

Elected official compensation for local agencies varies, as not all local agencies are subject to the same statutory scheme for compensation. By way of example, the City of Palo Alto's city charter and ordinances allow for monthly compensation of \$1,600. In 2024, Valley Water's enabling legislation allowed Board members to receive \$387.16 per meeting. In 2024, East Bay Regional Park District increased its Board compensation to \$133.69 per compensable meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Fiscal Year 2025-26 (FY26) budget includes \$51,900 for Board meeting compensation. Board Policy 6.06, *Meeting Compensation*, allows Board members to be compensated for up to six meeting days per month. If the per-meeting compensation is increased by 5%, the approved budget should be sufficient to compensate Board members for the remainder of the fiscal year and is contingent upon the number of compensable meetings held per month. If it is later determined that additional funds are required, a budget adjustment may be requested.

PRIOR BOARD OR COMMITTEE REVIEW

The item previously came before the full Board of Directors at the July 23, 2025 meeting for the First Reading of the Board Compensation Ordinance ([R-25-106](#)).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of the Public Hearing on this proposed ordinance was published in the newspaper once a week for two weeks leading up to the July 23, 2025 first reading in accordance with Public Resources Code section 5536 and Water Code section 20203. If adopted, the ordinance will be published in accordance with Public Resources Code section 5547.

Public notice was also provided pursuant to the Brown Act.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

This item is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

NEXT STEPS

If adopted upon second reading, the Ordinance will go into effect 60 days after adoption, which is October 19, 2025.

Board Policy 6.06, *Meeting Compensation*, will be amended to reflect the increase in per meeting compensation to \$127.34.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Ordinance
2. Board Policy 6.06, *Meeting Compensation, Reimbursement of Authorized Necessary Expenses for Performance of Official Duties, and Adoption of Ethics Training Requirements Pursuant to Government Code Section 53232 et seq. (AB 1234)*

Responsible Department Head:
Ana Ruiz, General Manager

Prepared by/contact person:
Hilary Stevenson, General Counsel

ORDINANCE NO. 25-XX**ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT INCREASING
THE COMPENSATION AMOUNT FOR BOARD MEMBER MEETING
ATTENDANCE TO \$127.34 PER DAY**

WHEREAS, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (“District”) is a special district duly organized and existing under and pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 5500 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, California Public Resources Code section 5536 sets forth the authority for establishing compensation for members of the District’s Board of Directors (Board); and

WHEREAS, the current Board member compensation is one hundred and twenty-one dollars and twenty-eight cents (\$121.28) per day for attendance at a meeting of the Board, up to a maximum of six (6) days per calendar month; and

WHEREAS, the per meeting compensation was last increased in 2024 and may be increased up to five percent for each calendar year since the last increase; and

WHEREAS, the Board wishes to increase the compensation by 5% to one hundred twenty-seven dollars and thirty-four cents (\$127.34); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with California Water Code section 20203 and California Government Code section 6066, a public hearing was held on July 23, 2025, at 7:00 pm, and a notice of said hearing was duly published in the newspaper once a week for two weeks prior to the public hearing.

NOW THEREFORE, The Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District does ordain as follows:

SECTION 1.

- A. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District desires to compensate members of the Board of Directors for attendance at its meetings, in accordance with California law and Board policy.
- B. The amount of compensation to be received by the Board of Directors for each day’s attendance at a meeting of the Board shall be increased five percent (5%) from one hundred twenty-one dollars and twenty-eight cents (\$121.28) to one hundred twenty-seven dollars and thirty-four cents (\$127.34).

SECTION 2. Upon adoption of this Ordinance, Board Policy 6.06 (*Meeting Compensation, Reimbursement of Authorized Necessary Expenses for Performance of Official Duties, and Adoption of Ethics Training Requirements Pursuant to Government Code Section 53232 et seq. (AB 1234)*) shall be amended to reflect this increase.

SECTION 3. This Ordinance shall be published once within thirty (30) days after adoption in a newspaper of general circulation printed, published, and circulated in the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

SECTION 4. Pursuant to Water Code section 20204, this Ordinance shall become effective 60 days from the date of its adoption.

* * * * *

Adopted by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors on August 20, 2025, at a special meeting thereof, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN
ABSENT:

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Zoe Kersteen-Tucker, Secretary
Board of Directors

Jed Cyr, President
Board of Directors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Hilary Stevenson, General Counsel

I, the District Clerk of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of an ordinance duly adopted by the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District by the above vote at a meeting thereof duly held and called on the above day.

Maria Soria, District Clerk

Board Policy Manual

<p>Meeting Compensation, Reimbursement of Authorized Necessary Expenses for Performance of Official Duties, and Adoption of Ethics Training Requirements Pursuant to Government Code Section 53232 et seq. (AB 1234)</p>	<p>Policy 6.06 Chapter 6 – General</p>
Effective Date: 1/30/08	Revised Date: 4/10/24 8/20/2025
Prior Versions: 11/13/13, 8/9/17, 1/9/19, 1/13/21	

A. COMPENSATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

1. Meeting per diem. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 5536 and 5536.5, members of the Board shall receive one hundred and twenty-~~one~~-~~seven~~ ~~dollars and~~ ~~twenty-eight~~~~thirty-four~~ cents (\$~~121.28~~~~127.34~~) for each attendance at a Board meeting. This amount shall be the maximum compensation allowable to a board member on any given day. Board members may be compensated for up to six meetings in a calendar month.
2. Meetings of the Board or occurrences for which compensation is allowed are those attended for purposes of carrying out District business or policy related objectives and shall include:
 - a. Meetings of the Board of Directors including, but not limited to, regular, special, and emergency meetings
 - b. Committee meetings of the Board for standing and ad hoc committees, when attended as a member of the committee or authorized substitutes appointed by the presiding officer,
 - c. field trips to district project locations,
 - d. district public hearings,
 - e. trainings required by State law, and ribbon cuttings for projects on district lands.
 - f. One-on-one meetings with the District's General Manager involving operations of the District.
 - g. New Board member orientation meetings with the General Manager and his/her designees.
 - h. Meetings of other governmental entities, associations, or duly recognized committees on which the District is officially represented including, but not limited to, park and open space advisory committees, and joint agency and liaison committee meetings.
 - i. Attendance at community or public outreach events held by, supported by, or sponsored by the District
 - j. Attendance at meetings, events, or functions, including meetings of civic, business, and non-profit organizations as well as meetings of local, regional,

statewide, or federal public officials, public agencies, or regulatory bodies by the Board President as may be required by his or her role as a Board officer, or by a Board member who may be designated in writing by the Board President to attend such a meeting on his or her behalf, on topics related to parks, open-space, recreation, natural and cultural resources, or other issues that could impact the District (excluding purely social occasions).

- k. Attendance at meetings located in the State of California of the following agencies and organizations and their committees on topics related to parks, open-space, recreation, natural and cultural resources, or other issues that could impact the District.

- California Special Districts Association
- California Park and Recreation Society
- Santa Clara County and San Mateo County Special Districts Association
- Santa Clara Valley Water District Water Commission
- Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and Commission/Committee/Advisory Council Meetings
- San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and Commission/Committee/Advisory Council Meetings
- Local City and Town Council and Commission/Committee Meetings
- San Mateo County Farm Bureau Meetings

3. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 5536, the Board may adopt an ordinance to increase the amount of compensation received for attendance at a Board meeting. The increase may not exceed an amount equal to five percent for each calendar year following the operative date of the last adjustment of the compensation which is received when the ordinance is adopted. Adoption of such an ordinance must comply with the procedure set forth in California Water Code section 20200 *et seq.*

B. TRAVEL AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES INCURRED WHILE PERFORMING AUTHORIZED DISTRICT BUSINESS

1. Types of Occurrences and Meetings that Qualify for Expense Reimbursement. Board Members are eligible for reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their authorized official duties as provided in Public Resources Code Sections 5536 and 5536.5 and AB 1234 as follows:

- a. Attendance at conferences in accordance with the Board's "Budget Guidelines for Conference Attendance", or if the Board, on a case-by-case basis, approves other conference attendance in advance, due to specific business needs of the District.
- b. Board authorized or General Manager requested, attendance at meetings with nonprofit organizations, joint powers agencies, other government agencies such as grant-funding agencies, District legislators or their staff, local, state or federal representatives, and similar meetings, when such

attendance is necessary in order to effectively represent the District's position on a matter of District concern.

2. Government and Group Rates. Airlines, hotels, rental car companies, and other businesses often make special rates available to government agencies or groups. These rates are presumed to be the most economical and reasonable rates for the purposes of this Policy and shall be obtained whenever available.
3. Transportation. Generally, travel to Board-authorized conferences or other authorized travel between points within 150 miles of the District's Administrative Office by the Board Member's private vehicle shall be at the current rate established by the Internal Revenue Service. Travel exceeding 150 miles shall be at rates not exceeding the most economical rates of a public carrier. Specific types of transportation expenses shall be reimbursed as follows:
 - a. Air Travel. Board Members may be reimbursed for the cost of a roundtrip economy-class ticket, provided the amount of reimbursement does not exceed the least expensive airfare that is consistent with the Board Member's reasonable scheduling constraints.
 - b. Personal Vehicle Travel. Board Members may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in traveling by personal vehicle at the current Internal Revenue Service mileage rate.
 - c. Car Rental Reimbursement. Where necessary when attending a conference or other authorized travel, Board Members may be reimbursed for the expense of a rental car, provided the amount of reimbursement does not exceed the most economical and reasonable rates available. When more than one Board Member attends the event, Board Members shall share the rental car where feasible.

Conference and Travel Meals. Board Members may be reimbursed for meal expenses on a per diem basis for meals consumed in conjunction with conference attendance or authorized travel. The per diem rate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner shall be the daily per diem rate established by the Federal Government General Services Administration (GSA) (www.gsa.gov/perdiem) for the region where the conference/training is located. Where the conference/training site or hotel includes meals in the cost of the registration, such meals shall not be included in the per diem allowance unless dietary restrictions require obtaining meals from other sources. A breakdown of allowable rates for breakfast, lunch, and dinner may be found on the GSA web page (www.gsa.gov/mie).

The above limitations do not apply to meals at conferences or authorized travel at which a fixed price meal is served as part of or during the event. In such a case, the actual cost of the meal will be reimbursed.

If a meal is provided by a conference or included in the payment of the registration fee, Board Members may not be reimbursed for meals purchased in lieu of or in addition to the provided meal, unless it is infeasible for the Board Member to attend the meal due to the need to conduct other District business.

1. Conference and Travel Lodging. The District will reimburse lodging expenses when conference or other authorized travel reasonably requires an overnight stay, provided the amount of the reimbursement does not exceed economical and reasonable rates for lodging that meets the Board Member's reasonable scheduling and official business needs. For lodging in connection with a conference, such lodging costs shall not exceed the maximum group rate available through the conference or event sponsor, provided that the lodging at the group rate is available to the Board Member at the time of booking. If the conference rate is not available, the Board Member shall use comparable lodging and may be reimbursed at a nightly rate not to exceed the maximum group rate available through the conference.
2. Incidental Expense Reimbursement. Board Members may be reimbursed for actual and necessary incidental expenses incurred in connection with authorized conferences or travel. Such expenses may include reasonable and customary gratuities, parking fees, taxi fares, public transportation costs, tolls, telephone calls, internet, postage, facsimile charges, and similar incidental expense.
3. Conference Registration Fee Reimbursement. Board Members may be reimbursed for the expense of an authorized conference registration fee as set out in the Board's "Budget Guidelines for Board Conference Attendance" or as authorized by the Board on a case by case basis.
4. Other Expenses. All other actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official duties that are not listed in this Policy shall not be reimbursed unless reimbursement is approved by the Board in advance of incurring the expense.
5. Prohibited Expense Reimbursements. Board Members shall not be reimbursed for expenses such as alcoholic beverages; spouse, domestic partner, or family member expenses; entertainment expenses such as movie, theatre, or sporting event fees; nor for fines for vehicle citations or damage to personal vehicles used in the course of District business. Exceptions can be approved by the Board when necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act or other applicable law, such as the payment for a necessary caregiver or companion to accompany a Board Member due to a qualifying disability.

C. CELL PHONE REIMBURSEMENT

The District shall reimburse Board Members for the use of their personal cellular phone to conduct Board business, receive or make calls with constituents and communicate with District management. The reimbursement shall be \$32.50 per month. To be eligible for this reimbursement, the Board Member shall need to submit a completed Cell Phone Reimbursement Form to the District Clerk for processing.

Whether or not an employee's cell phone charges are reimbursed by the District, any records of District business conducted on a personal cell phone or other device (including photos,

voicemail, text, and electronic mail) must be made available to the District upon request, including but not limited to when needed to comply with a Public Records Act request.

D. DOCUMENTATION FOR COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

1. Documentation Requirements. The District shall provide Board Members with expense report forms to be filed by the Member for reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses which are authorized to be reimbursed under this Policy. The form shall be used to document the expenses for which reimbursement is sought is proper under this Policy. The District shall also provide a separate form to document compensable meetings.
 - a. Time for Filing Forms. Board Members must file expense report forms by the end of the calendar month following the calendar month when the expense was incurred in order to receive reimbursement. The expense report forms shall be accompanied by itemized receipts for items documenting each expense. Compensation forms shall also be filed by the end of the following calendar month of the meeting for which compensation is sought. In the event a Board Member is unable to file such forms by the end of the following calendar month due to extenuating circumstances, such as his or her absence from home or illness, the Board Member shall file such forms as soon as feasible. In no event shall such forms be filed later than ninety (90) days from the compensable meeting or incurring of the expense. If a Board Members fails to file a timely reimbursement or compensation form, the Board Members shall be ineligible to receive the requested payment.
 - b. Offset of Amounts Due the District. If a Board Member has reimbursable expenses or compensation due from the District, and that Member owes any amounts to the District, such amounts due shall be deducted from the reimbursement or compensation otherwise due to the Board Member.
 - c. Public Records. All documents related to reimbursable expenses are considered public records subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.
2. Report to Board Regarding Compensable Activities. Board Members shall provide brief reports on meetings attended for which compensation is provided by this Policy at the next regular Board meeting attended by the Board Member. The report may be made orally during Board Informational Reports, or in writing. If provided in writing, the Board Member shall state at the meeting that he or she is submitting to the District Clerk a written report of compensable meetings attended.

E. ETHICS TRAINING PURSUANT TO AB 1234

Each Board Member shall receive at least two hours of training in general ethics principles and laws relevant to his or her public service every two years. The District shall annually provide information on training alternatives available to Board Members to meet the requirements of

AB 1234. The District shall maintain documentation of the dates that Board Members received this training and the entity that provided the training.