



**Conflict of Interest Disclosures**

None

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Emailed public comment was received from Michael Harrington regarding Item 5C, expressing support for funding expanded scientific research and monitoring of desert wildlife species. A copy was provided to each Commissioner and made available to the public at the agenda table.

**3. COMMISSION CHAIR / DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

None

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

**IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEM FITZPATRICK TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS.**

- A. Approve the minutes of the November 13, 2025, meeting**
- B. Authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute an amendment to the Professional Services Contract with Dokken Engineering to add up to \$55,000 and extend the ending date to June 30, 2026, contingent on approval of the 30x30 grant amendment by California Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.**

<b>Mayor Pro Tem Ernesto Gutierrez</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Steven Hernandez</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Director Anthony Bianco</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Director Alex Cardenas</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Dana Reed</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Elaine Holmes</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Linda Evans</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Director Amber Duff</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Evan Trubee</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Grace Garner</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Ted Weill</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Stephanie Virgen</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Jan Harnik</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Supervisor V. Manuel Perez</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Councilmember Ben Guitron</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**4.1 ITEMS HELD OVER FROM CONSENT CALENDAR**

None

**5. DISCUSSION / ACTION**

**A. CVCC’s Audit for Fiscal Year 2024-25 and Related Reports**

CVAG Senior Accountant Jiajing Cheng provided an overview of the audit findings and unmodified opinion.

Brief member discussion ensued with Mayor Evans providing a recap of the Finance Committee’s review, and praise to the finance staff regarding the audit results during a transition time into the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

**IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY CHAIR GARNER TO RECEIVE AND FILE THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025, REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROLS OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING, AND THE AUDITOR’S COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES AND 3 MEMBERS ABSENT.**

<b>Mayor Pro Tem Ernesto Gutierrez</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Steven Hernandez</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Director Anthony Bianco</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Director Alex Cardenas</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Tem Dana Reed</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Elaine Holmes</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Linda Evans</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Director Amber Duff</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Evan Trubee</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Grace Garner</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Ted Weill</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Stephanie Virgen</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Jan Harnik</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Supervisor V. Manuel Perez</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Councilmember Ben Guitron</b>	<b>Aye</b>

Supervisor Perez joined the meeting as the vote was ending and noted to staff that he supported the item.

**B. Imperial Irrigation District Report on the Results of 2025 Western Burrowing Owl Study in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys**

Director of Conservation Kathleen Brundige offered an overview of the topic before introducing Jessica Humes, Imperial Irrigation District’s (IID) Supervisor for

Environmental Compliance, who presented a PowerPoint update to the Commission on the study's results.

A robust discussion followed, with Commissioners reviewing the data and noting how the findings align with CVCC's position on the burrowing owl's health in the Coachella Valley.

No action was taken as this was an informational item only. It was noted that CVCC staff would circulate the report to member jurisdictions' staff as well.

**C. Budgetary Impacts Related to Burrowing Owl Coordination and Research**

Ms. Brundige presented the staff report.

Member discussion ensued, with Ms. Brundige and Executive Director Tom Kirk responding to Commissioners' questions regarding strategies to broaden distribution of the CVCC Annual Report and better highlight the strong population numbers for owls and other species within the conservation areas.

**IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR HOLMES TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS RELATED TO THE BURROWING OWL AND PROVIDE ANY COORDINATION WITH WILDLIFE AGENCIES:**

- 1) AUTHORIZE A \$300,000 ADJUSTMENT TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 BUDGET TO ADDRESS IMMEDIATE RESEARCH NEEDS, ANTICIPATED LEGAL EXPENSES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES RELATED TO BURROWING OWL MANAGEMENT; AND**
- 2) APPROVE AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO THE SERVICES CONTRACT WITH DR. CONWAY'S LABORATORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, PROVIDING AN ADDITIONAL \$292,489.15 TO THE CONTRACT AND EXTENDING BURROWING OWL MONITORING ACTIVITIES THROUGH DECEMBER 2026**

**THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 16 AYES AND 1 MEMBER ABSENT.**

<b>Mayor Pro Tem Ernesto Gutierrez</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Steven Hernandez</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Director Anthony Bianco</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Director Alex Cardenas</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Tem Dana Reed</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Elaine Holmes</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Linda Evans</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Director Amber Duff</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Evan Trubee</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Grace Garner</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Ted Weill</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Stephanie Virgen</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen Fitzpatrick</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Councilmember Jan Harnik</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Supervisor V. Manuel Perez</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**6. INFORMATION**

- A. Attendance Record**
- B. Contracts under Executive Director’s signing authority**
- C. Acquisition Status Report**
- D. CVCC’s Quarterly Investment Report through September 30, 2025**
- E. CVCC’s Unaudited Financial Reports through September 30, 2025**
- F. Conflict of Interest Guidance**
- G. Continued Cleanup of Illegal Dumpsites and Encampments in Upper Mission Creek/ Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Areas**

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

A hand was raised on Zoom and the caller was asked to introduce themselves and provide their comment, but the connection ended prior to them doing so.

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next **Coachella Valley Conservation Commission** meeting will be held on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, 92260.

**12. ADJOURN**

Chair Gardner adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Elysia Regalado*  
*Deputy Clerk*