



# Santa Clara Valley Water District

---

**File No.:** 22-0108

**Agenda Date:** 1/11/2022

**Item No.:**

---

## SUPPLEMENTAL BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

### **SUBJECT:**

Board Confirmation of the Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds.

### **REASON FOR SUPPLEMENTAL MEMORANDUM:**

This supplemental board agenda memorandum conveys additional information received after the initial board memorandum was released, consistent with Executive Limitations Policy EL-7-10-5.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

\*Confirm the appointment of Rechelle Blank as the Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds for the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

### **SUMMARY:**

Board Governance Policy Executive Limitation 3.8 states that a “Board Appointed Officer (BAO) shall present an appointment of a Chief-level position to the Board for Confirmation.”

Following a competitive open recruitment process, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has selected Rechelle Blank for the position of Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds and recommends that the Board confirm the appointment.

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

The Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds is a key member of the executive leadership team and has oversight over the Watersheds Stewardship and Planning Division, the Watersheds Operations and Maintenance Division, and the Watersheds Design and Construction Division. The Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds provides leadership, oversight and strategic direction for Valley Water’s flood protection and environmental stewardship programs, projects, and policies. Full details for the position can be found in the Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds recruitment brochure.

The Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds reports to the Assistant Chief Executive Officer (ACEO), serves at the will of the CEO, and is accordingly employed in Valley Water’s unclassified service.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

The Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds position was a competitive opportunity that included internal and external candidates. Qualified candidates were evaluated in multiple rounds by interview panels consisting of Valley Water staff, labor union representatives, mid-managers, and executives from across the organization, as well as a final interview with the CEO and ACEO. Diversity in race, gender, work area, and classification were all considered in the makeup of each of the interview panels.

### CANDIDATE

The selected candidate is Rechelle Blank, who has been serving as Deputy Operating Officer of Valley Water's Watersheds Design and Construction Division since June 2020. She previously served as Assistant Officer for the Dam Safety and Capital Delivery Division since October 2019, as well as interim Assistant Officer in the Watershed Stewardship and Planning Division in 2018. Ms. Blank started her career at Valley Water in 1992 as an Assistant Engineer II in Watersheds Design and Construction and was promoted to Associate Civil Engineer and then to Capital Engineering Manager in 2013.

With nearly 30 years of experience, Ms. Blank has demonstrated the requisite expertise, professional judgment, leadership acumen, and effective interpersonal skills required to succeed as the Chief Operating Officer of Watersheds. Notable among her design and construction projects, Rechelle worked on the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project for over nine years and was responsible for leading the multi-objective, multi-partner federal project located along Santa Clara County's shoreline area-for which she received a special commendation from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Her experience working on this long-term project required many years of collaboration with local and permitting agencies, and coordination with members of local, state, federal, and special interest groups. Ms. Blank holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Santa Clara University and is a Registered Professional Engineer in the State of California. Additionally, she had four years of private consulting experience prior to joining Valley Water.

Ms. Blank has a proven track record of project completion and collaborative problem solving, is a strong communicator, and displays great passion and enthusiasm for her work at Valley Water. Her extensive knowledge and understanding of the organization and her established relationships with Valley Water employees, Board members, major partners and stakeholders, government officials, and elected leaders uniquely qualify her for the role of Chief Operating Officer of Watersheds.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACT:**

There are no Environmental Justice impacts associated with this item.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Rechelle Blank will assume the position of Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds on January 12, 2022 with an annual starting salary of \$317,220.80. The salary has been budgeted for in the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Watersheds, Project Number 62061001.

**CEQA:**

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have the potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None.

**UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:**

Rick Callender, 408-630-2017

This page intentionally left blank.