



**AGENDA**  
**MEETING OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025 – 2:00 P.M.**  
**1391 Engineer Street, Vista, CA 92081**  
**Phone: (760) 597-3100 [www.vidwater.org](http://www.vidwater.org)**

**NOTICE FOR PARTICIPATION**

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if special assistance is needed to participate in the Board meeting telephonically, please contact the Board Secretary during regular business hours at (760) 597-3128. Notification received 48 hours before the meeting will assist Vista Irrigation District in making reasonable accommodations.*

The public may participate in this meeting in-person and by teleconference. To join this meeting via telephone, please dial (877) 873-8018; the Pass Code is 474698#.

Public Participation/Comment: Members of the public can also participate in the meeting by emailing your comments on an agenda item to the Board Secretary at [BoardSecretary@vidwater.org](mailto:BoardSecretary@vidwater.org); such email should include the agenda item number in the subject line and must be received before the time the meeting commences. Members of the public, whether participating in-person or telephonically, may address the Board of Directors in real-time during the public comment period and when specific agenda items are being considered. Please announce your attendance if participating telephonically or fill out a speaker slip if participating in-person if you would like to provide real-time public comment.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

In the case of an emergency, items may be added to the Agenda by a majority vote of the Committee. An emergency is defined as a work stoppage, a crippling disaster, or other activity that severely imperils public health, safety, or both. Also, items that arise after the posting of the Agenda may be added by a unanimous vote of the Committee.

**4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Members of the public may address the Committee on items not appearing on the posted agenda, which are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee. Speakers are asked to limit their comments to five (5) minutes; the total time allowable for all public comment on items not appearing on the agenda at any one meeting may be limited. Comments on items listed on the agenda will be taken before or during discussion of the agenda item. Members of the public desiring to address the Committee are asked to complete a speaker's slip available on the table near the entrance of the Boardroom and present it to the Board Secretary prior to the meeting.

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

*Recommendation: Discuss public outreach activities to be used to engage ratepayers during the comprehensive cost of service/water rate study process.*

**6. COMMENTS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*This item is placed on the agenda to enable individual Committee members to convey information not requiring discussion or action.*

**7. COMMENTS BY GENERAL MANAGER**

*Informational report by the General Manager on items not requiring discussion or action.*

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

*NOTE: ITEMS ON THE AGENDA MAY BE TAKEN OUT OF SEQUENTIAL ORDER AS  
THEIR PRIORITY IS DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE*

- *The agenda package and materials related to an agenda item submitted after the packet's distribution to the Committee are available for public review in the lobby of the District office during normal business hours.*
- *Agendas and minutes are available at [www.vidwater.org](http://www.vidwater.org).*
- *VID Committee meetings are held on an as needed basis.*

**AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

I, Ranae Ogilvie, Board Secretary of the Vista Irrigation District, hereby certify that I posted a copy of the foregoing agenda outside the lobby of the District office at 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, California at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, in accordance with Govt. Code Sec. 54954.2(a).

Date: January 30, 2025

  
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Ranae Ogilvie, Board Secretary



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
STAFF REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** February 3, 2025  
**Prepared By:** Shallako Goodrick  
**Approved By:** Brett Hodgkiss

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

**RECOMMENDATION:** Discuss public outreach activities to be used to engage ratepayers during the comprehensive cost of service/water rate study process.

**PRIOR BOARD ACTION:** At its January 15, 2025 meeting, the Board requested that the Public Affairs Committee schedule a meeting to discuss the various public outreach activities to use 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 Financial Consultants, Inc. (Raftelis) for the study includes \$27,605 for public outreach-related activities outlined in Raftelis's proposal (attached); public outreach activities outside those described in the proposal will be at an additional cost.

**SUMMARY:** During the January 15, 2025 Board meeting, Gina DePinto from Raftelis provided an overview of various public outreach activities that can be deployed to engage ratepayers during the study process. After hearing from Ms. DePinto and briefly discussing a number of potential outreach methods, the Board requested that the Public Affairs Committee schedule a meeting with staff and Ms. DePinto to discuss various public outreach methods that the District could use to educate and inform ratepayers about the study and why it is being prepared. Topics to be covered include, but are not limited to, the development of an outreach plan, communication and education methods (e.g. mailings, news releases, short educational videos, infographics and open houses/town halls, etc.) and study outreach budget/costs.

**ATTACHMENT:** Excerpt from Raftelis Proposal – Public Relations

## **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:**

- 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.