

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF THE
GREATER BAKERSFIELD SEPARATION OF GRADE DISTRICT

Held: January 12, 2026

A regular meeting of the Commission of the Greater Bakersfield Separation of Grade District was held on January 12, 2026, at 1518 Mill Rock Way, Suite 100, Bakersfield, California.

CALL TO ORDER:)
_____)

President Steven Ruetters called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. and presided thereat. Jeevan Muhar acted as secretary of the meeting.

ROLL CALL:)
_____)

The following Commissioners were present:

Steven M. Ruetters
Jeremy Tobias
Barry Hibbard
Jeevan Muhar

Also present were Sheila Plane, Assistant Secretary, and Vivian Bravo, Assistant Secretary; and Ben LeBeau, District Legal Counsel. Commissioner Jake Wood was absent from the meeting. John Schuler, the District Engineer, was also absent.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS)
& COMMENTS:)
_____)

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES,)
REGULAR MEETING OF)
NOVEMBER 10, 2025)
_____)

On motion of Commissioner Hibbard, seconded by Commissioner Tobias, and unanimously carried, the minutes of the regular meeting of November 10, 2025, were approved on the following vote of the Commissioners.

Ayes: Steven M. Ruetters
Jeremy Tobias
Barry Hibbard
Jeevan Muhar

Noes:	None
Absent:	Jake Wood
Abstain:	None

ATTORNEY OF DISTRICT)
REPORT:)
_____)

1. Mr. LeBeau reported that the Kern County Board of Supervisors voted to reappoint Commissioners Steven Ruetters and Jeremy Tobias each as at-large members to the Grader Bakersfield Separation of Grade District for an additional four year term expiring January 10, 2030.

2. Mr. LeBeau next reported on ethics training and financial training requirements. Local agency officials such as the Commissioners who receive any compensation or reimbursements from a special district are required to complete two hours of ethics training every two years. Based on Mr. LeBeau's understanding that the District does not pay compensation or reimbursements to its Commissioners, he advised that the ethics training requirements did not apply to them. Commissioner Ruetters informed Mr. LeBeau that the District has a reimbursement policy, though it has not been used in recent years, and questioned whether ethics training requirements apply if the Commissioners have the ability to be reimbursed for expenses even if they do not request reimbursements. Mr. LeBeau will research and provide an update at the next meeting.

3. Mr. LeBeau reported on a new training requirement effective as of January 1, 2026. SB 827, enacted in October 2025, requires all local agency officials to complete two hours of fiscal and financial training every two years. Unlike the ethics training requirement, this requirement applies to all Commissioners regardless of whether they receive compensation or reimbursements. The fiscal and financial training requirements also apply to individuals who are appointed by the governing body to make decisions or recommendations regarding financial administration, budgeting, or use of public resources, which likely includes an assistant secretary who assists in recommending annual budgets for the District. Commissioners or other agency officials who were serving their terms as of January 1, 2026 are required to complete the financial training and have until December 31, 2028, to complete the training; however, if the official's term expires prior to January 9, 2028, then he or she will not be required to complete the training. New Commissioners and other officials who are appointed on or after January 1, 2026 will be required to complete the two hours of fiscal and financial training within six months.

DISTRICT ENGINEER'S)
REPORT:)
_____)

Ms. Plane provided the engineer's report as follows:

1. Project Funding Sources: no change
 - a. Federal State Partnership (FSP) Inter-city Rail Program: NOFO released \$5 Billion, due January 7, 2026 (extended to Feb. 6, 2026).
 - b. CRISI and RCE NOFOs anticipated in 2026.
2. Intercity Federal State Partnership (FSP) Grant Program:
 - a. Cherry Ave/BNSF grant application: see number 11 below
3. CRISI and Rail Crossing Elimination Grant Programs 2025 and 2026:
 - a. No report
4. High Speed Rail Impacts/Santa Fe Way Corridor/Edison Highway Corridor:
 - a. No change
5. Renfro-Jenkins/BNSF:
 - a. No change
6. Kratzmeyer – Olive @ BNSF:
 - a. No change
7. Morning Drive @ UPRR:
 - a. No change
8. Baker E./Truxtun/Beale @ BNSF:
 - a. No change
9. Baker Street @ UPRR:
 - a. No change
10. Rosedale Highway @ Landco Branch SJVRR:
 - a. No change
11. Cherry Avenue & Los Angeles Street/Beech Avenue @ BNSF:
 - a. Request for Letter of Support for Kern County's Cherry Avenue Grade Separation Project Application for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (FSP) to Federal Rail Administration.

Ms. Plane requested that the District issue a letter of support for the Cherry Ave/BNSF crossing grant application. On motion by Commissioner Tobias, seconded by Commissioner Muhar, and unanimously carried, the Commissioners approved the delivery of a letter of support for Cherry Ave/BNSF grant application to be signed by Commissioner Ruettgers on behalf of the District.

Ayes: Steven M. Ruettgers
Jeremy Tobias
Barry Hibbard
Jeevan Muhar

Noes: None

Absent: Jake Wood

Abstain: None

12. Nominations – CPUC Order Instituting Investigation (OII) 2026-2027, 2027-2028:

- a. Nominations are currently in review at the CPUC and the hearing will be near the end of March 2026.

13. Agency Communications – Materials and Strategies:

- a. Commissioner Hibbard is to reach out to Marketing Specialist for development of a one-page handout regarding the District.

FINANCIAL REPORT:)
_____)

The Secretary then presented the Financial Report for November 2025, in the form attached as **Exhibit “A”**. Following discussion, on motion of Commissioner Muhar, seconded by Commissioner Hibbard, and unanimously carried, the report was approved and ordered filed on the following vote of the Commissioners.

Ayes: Steven M. Ruettgers
Jeremy Tobias
Barry Hibbard
Jeevan Muhar

Noes: None

Absent: Jake Wood

Abstain: None

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:)
_____)

1. Electronic Record Keeping/Document Back-up and Disposal – Sheila Plane reported that CSDA offers a virtual workshop concerning electronic records management and requested authorization for Sheila Plane and Vivian Bravo to attend. On motion made by Commissioner Muhar and seconded by Commissioner Tobias, the Commissioners approved and authorized the virtual webinar attendance by Ms. Plane and Ms. Bravo on the following vote:

Ayes: Steven M. Ruettgers
Jeremy Tobias
Barry Hibbard
Jeevan Muhar

Noes: None

Absent: Jake Wood

Abstain: None

2. District Mission, Function and Continuity – No report

AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORT) _____)

1. Landowner Support for Separation Projects in Northwest: (Hibbard/Ruettgers) – Commissioner Hibbard reported that he and Commissioner Ruettgers met with J. Gwynn from the Wonderful Company. This was an introductory meeting where the Commissioners educated Mr. Gwynn on the existence and role of the Grade District in identifying and managing road and rail separation projects.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:) _____)

1. Right of Way: (Hibbard/Muhar) None
2. Advance Planning: (Ruettgers/Tobias) None
3. Budget: (Hibbard/Wood) None
4. Regulatory & Audit: (Ruettgers/Muhar) None
5. Government Relations: (Tobias/Wood) None

CORRESPONDENCE:)
_____)

None.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:)
_____)

None.

NEXT MEETING AND)
ADJOURNMENT:)
_____)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the President declared the meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.



Jeevan Muhar
Secretary of the Commission

APPROVED: 

Steven M. Ruettgers
President

Exhibit A

MONTHLY MEETING JANUARY 2026

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

DISTRICT EXPENSE FUND:

LeBeau Thelen	Professional Services - October & November 2025	\$ 7,042.50
Provost & Pritchard	Engineering Services - 11/1/2025 thru 12/31/2025	\$ 14,908.80
Daniells Phillips Vaughn & Bock	Professional Services - 1/2025 thru 6-30-2025	<u>\$ 2,825.00</u>
		<u>\$ 24,776.30</u>