

**NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER (NLACRC)  
9200 OAKDALE AVENUE, SUITE 100  
CHATSWORTH, CA 91311**

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
ZOOM  
JANUARY 14, 2026 6:00 P.M.**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

Sharmila Brunjes (President), Juan Hernandez (Vice President), Anna Hurst (Treasurer), Leticia Garcia (ARCA Rep), Alex Kopilevich (VAC Chair), George Alvarado, Cathy Blin, Nicholas Abrahms, Jason Taketa, Jeremy Sunderland, Laura Monge, Jennifer Koster

**ABSENT:**

Jacquie Colton, Curtis Wang

**STAFF:**

Angela Pao-Johnson - Executive Director, Evelyn McOmie – Deputy Director, Vini Montague – Chief Financial Officer, Silvia Renteria-Haro, Donna Rensch, Sarah Yap, Arezo Abedi, Lindsay Granger, Megan Mitchell, Sheila King

**GUESTS:**

Xochitl Gonzalez – DDS, Jacqueline Gaytan – DDS, Marianita, Jon Francis

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**1. INTRODUCTIONS AND CALL TO ORDER**

The Sharmila Brunjes, Board of Trustees President, shared the mission and vision of the NLACRC and reminded attendees of the Board of Trustees Civility Code. Also, board members and attendees were reminded to please use say their first and last names. Public input at the beginning of the meeting is reserved for agenda items only, and general public input will be taken, towards the end of the meeting.

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, the meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

**2. IMPACT STORY FROM INDIVIDUAL SERVED**

Angela Pao-Johnson shared a video individual served Jessica Gould, owner of J Gould Consulting.

**3. BOARD MEMBER ATTENDANCE/QUORUM**

Board members were confirmed in attendance on Zoom.

**4. AGENDA – APPROVAL**

Sharmila Brunjes announced one change to the agenda, adding an additional 15 minutes to the closed session for a personnel item (in addition to the 20 minutes already scheduled). Sharmila Brunjes reminded the Board that under Robert's Rules, once the agenda is approved, the listed times become binding, and any extension of discussion would require a motion, a second, and Board approval. Sharmila Brunjes also requested that Board members hold questions until presenters have finished to support efficient agenda flow.

**Absent objection, it was resolved to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.**  
The agenda was amended to address a motion regarding speaking time during discussion and debate.

## **5. PUBLIC INPUT & COMMENTS—RESERVED FOR AGENDA ITEMS**

Sharmila Brunjes explained that public comment during this period is reserved for agenda items only, and there will be a separate public comment period later in the meeting for topics not on the agenda.

Jon Francis provided public comment regarding Item 13 on the Self-Determination Program, noting concern that Governor Gavin Newsom's recent budget may indicate a potential reduction in program funding. Jon Francis stated an intent to propose at the next committee meeting that a letter be drafted to the Governor, with copies sent to NLACRC leadership, to oppose any changes that would slow or reverse the momentum and progress of the program. Jon Francis emphasized the program's demonstrated benefits for participants currently enrolled and those transitioning into the program, and thanked the Board and staff for their collaborative efforts. Sharmila Brunjes thanked Jon Francis for the update.

Jennifer Koster asked a clarifying question during public comment regarding the potential budget reductions discussed for the Self-Determination Program, specifically whether any changes would impact current participants, including Jennifer Koster. Sharmila Brunjes responded that no determinations had been made and the budget had not been cut, noting that the issue was still preliminary and there were no confirmed answers at that time.

Ismael Maldonado shared concerns about a day program that had reportedly been reviewed by DDS for missing employee documentation and also raised concerns related to an eviction from a group home with a 30-day notice. Sharmila Brunjes clarified that the comments were not related to the current agenda item, noting that general public comment would be taken later in the meeting. Sharmila Brunjes stated that Board Support would forward the concerns already mentioned to staff for awareness and follow-up.

## **6. CONSENT ITEMS**

Sharmila Brunjes introduced Agenda Item 7, Consent Items, noting that all consent items would be approved in one motion unless a trustee or member of the public requested separate discussion. Sharmila Brunjes listed the consent items as approval of the Board of Trustees meeting minutes from November 12, 2025; approval of the Board of Trustees Special Meeting minutes from December 10, 2025; and approval of a conflict resolution plan from Melissa Sage included in the meeting packet. Sharmila Brunjes asked if any trustees wished to pull an item for separate discussion.

**M/S/C Absent objection, the board approved Consent Items A, B, and C as presented. Motion carried.**

## **7. ACTION ITEMS**

**7.1 Approval of POS CPP Startup Contract**  
a. Brilliant Corners – PL2495-999

Sharmila Brunjes introduced the action item to approve the POS CPP Startup Contract, noting that under the Lanterman Act (Section 4625.5), the Board must approve contracts over \$250,000. Chief Financial Officer Vini Montague presented the proposed startup funding contract with Brilliant Corners to develop a two-bedroom accessory dwelling unit on an existing property. Vini Montague stated the contract term would be 30 years, effective January 1, 2026 through the earlier of the provider no longer owning the property or December 31, 2055, with a maximum funding amount of \$500,000. Payments would be made on a reimbursement basis tied to milestone completion and DDS written guidance. Vini Montague confirmed the project was approved by DDS in October 2025 and requested Board approval to proceed.

Board Member Jeremy Sunderland asked for clarification on why Board approval was required if DDS had already approved the project. Vini Montague explained that DDS approval is required for the startup project itself, while Board approval is separately required for contracts exceeding \$250,000.

**M/S/C (Jennifer Koster/Alex Kopilevich) On a motion made by Jennifer Koster, seconded by Alex Kopilevich, it was resolved to approve POS CPP Startup Contract for Brilliant Corners PL2495-999. Motion carried.**

**7.2 Approval of Report on Personnel Classifications**  
a. Report on Personnel Classifications, Effective January 13, 2025

Sharmila Brunjes introduced Action Item B, approval of the updated report on personnel classifications, and noted that Angela Pao-Johnson and Sheila King would be presenting the January and February 2025 reports. Lindsay Granger clarified that separate motions and votes were required for each personnel classification report, and Sharmila Brunjes confirmed the approvals would need to be handled in three parts.

Sheila King presented the updated Personnel Classification Report for Fiscal Year 2024–2025, effective January 13, 2025. Sheila King explained that an internal audit was conducted to ensure employee salaries in each job role fell within the established minimum and maximum salary ranges, and adjustments were made as needed to bring salaries into compliance with those ranges.

**M/S/C (George Alvarado/Jennifer Koster) On a motion made by George Alvarado, seconded by Jennifer Koster, it was resolved to approve the Report on Personnel Classifications, Effective January 13, 2025. Motion carried.**

**b. Report on Personnel Classifications, Effective February 24, 2025**

Sheila King explained that the February personnel classification report reflected the same compliance review process as the January report, with additions and revisions, including newly added job roles, archived roles, and any necessary salary adjustments to ensure employees remained within the established minimum and maximum salary ranges.

Board Treasurer Anna Hurst asked whether the minimum-maximum salary ranges were based on statewide guidance or an internal standard. Sheila King clarified that the ranges are NLACRC's internal salary ranges, developed through market analysis and comparison with other regional centers, and updated annually. Sheila King noted that salary ranges typically

increase by 2% to reflect COLA adjustments, with management ranges shifting in January and hourly employee ranges shifting in February. Sheila King added that if COLA increases push long-tenured employees above the maximum range, adjustments are captured in the classification report for CalPERS audit purposes.

**M/S/C (Jennifer Koster/George Alvarado) On a motion made by Jennifer Koster, seconded by George Alvarado, it was resolved to approve the Report on Personnel Classifications, effective February 24, 2025. Motion carried.**

#### **7.3 Approval of Report on Personnel Classifications effective March 10, 2025**

Sharmila Brunjes asked Sheila King to provide any updates regarding the March 10, 2025 Personnel Classifications Report. Sheila King explained that the March 10, 2025 report had originally been submitted as a point-in-time report by the former HR Director, so no changes were made to the report itself; however, staff reviewed it to ensure all applicable employees were captured within the appropriate minimum and maximum salary ranges, consistent with the January and February review process.

Sharmila Brunjes asked if there were any questions and, hearing none, requested a motion to approve the March 10, 2025 report.

**M/S/C (Jennifer Koster/Jeremy Sunderland) On a motion made by Jennifer Koster, seconded by Jeremy Sunderland, it was resolved to approve the Report on Personnel Classifications Effective March 10, 2025. Motion carried.**

#### **7.4 Approval of New Format of Proposed Expenditure Data Report**

Sharmila Brunjes introduced Action Item D, approval of a new format for the proposed expenditure data report, and noted that Jeremy Sunderland was scheduled to present. Jeremy Sunderland deferred the presentation to Deputy Director Evelyn McOmie.

Evelyn McOmie explained that the Consumer Community Relations Committee recommended revisions to the expenditure data report that is presented every six months, with the goal of making the report more streamlined, easier to follow, and clearer for committee review. Evelyn McOmie noted that additional slides were added to show services in residential settings and other services broken down by ethnicity and living situation, consistent with committee requests, and confirmed this was the final draft being brought forward for Board approval as the format to be used moving forward.

During discussion, Lety Garcia, ARCA Delegate, asked whether Independent Living Skills (ILS) was included in the report and confirmed that the slides presented reflected the full draft previously reviewed by the Consumer Community Relations Committee. Evelyn McOmie clarified that the report content had not been altered beyond adding ethnicity breakdowns for living settings and explained that supported living is considered a residential setting, while ILS may be provided in independent living or in-home settings. Evelyn McOmie also referenced that the report reflects top five expenditures across settings.

Sharmila Brunjes confirmed the revised format was being brought forward as a committee recommendation and stated that Jennifer Koster had made the motion to approve the updated format. Anna Hurst asked whether the purpose of the report was to support tracking disparities over time across ethnic groups, and Evelyn McOmie confirmed the report was created to support the Board's Disparity Committee oversight and includes a two-year comparison that is updated annually.

**M/S/C (Jennifer Koster) On a motion made by Jennifer Koster, it was resolved to approve the new format of the proposed expenditure data report. As the agenda item was being brought forward as a committee recommendation, no second was required. Motion carried.**

## **8. BOARD BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Performance Contract FY24-25 Year-End Report**

Angela Pao-Johnson and Vini Montague presented the Performance Contract Year-End Report for FY 2024–2025, and Sharmila Brunjes reminded trustees to hold questions until the end of the presentation. Angela Pao-Johnson provided an overview of the DDS performance contract as an outcome-based plan reviewed annually and reported that NLACRC served approximately 37,990 individuals. Angela Pao-Johnson highlighted demographic and residential trends that remained consistent year over year, noting that most individuals live with family and that autism was the most prevalent diagnosis, increasing from 61% to 64%. Angela Pao-Johnson also noted NLACRC compares favorably to the state average for individuals living with families and in home settings and emphasized the goal of limiting facility settings to six or fewer individuals.

Vini Montague reviewed audit-related performance measures, including an independent audit finding related to untimely deposit of checks, which was addressed through corrective actions and additional internal controls. Vini Montague also summarized findings from the DDS financial audit, including an initially cited \$1 million overpayment related to transportation rate reform. Vini Montague reported that NLACRC appealed the finding and DDS overturned it, reducing the overpayment to zero. Vini Montague also noted additional rate reform-related findings, including a \$477,000 overpayment and approximately \$71,000 underpayment, and stated recovery efforts were underway. Vini Montague further noted a finding related to weaknesses in the bank reconciliation process that was being addressed.

Angela Pao-Johnson highlighted additional performance areas where standards were met, including required vendor audits, maintaining operations within budget, and participation in the federal waiver for CDERS and ESRs. Angela Pao-Johnson noted marginal declines being monitored for intake assessment timelines and IFSP timelines, potentially related to staffing shortages, and reported improvement in IPP metrics. Angela Pao-Johnson also reported that NLACRC slightly exceeded the state average for the percentage of consumers ages 16–64 with earned income, with increasing average annual wages, and highlighted positive outcomes in paid internship and competitive integrated employment pathways.

During questions, Jennifer Koster asked how the \$1 million overpayment and other rate reform-related findings occurred. Vini Montague explained that the issue stemmed from DDS-provided transportation rate implementation spreadsheets that allowed vendors to report multiple trips per day and that auditors later questioned the practice; DDS ultimately upheld NLACRC's appeal due to no statutory basis for limiting transportation to two trips per day. Jennifer Koster also suggested exploring the use of AI tools, in coordination with Mustafa (IT support), to support spot-checking and reduce errors.

Anna Hurst asked whether rate reform implementation would continue to be a challenge in the coming months. Evelyn McOmie responded that rate reform implementation was ongoing, with continued work on remaining service codes and preparation for out-of-area rates, noting that late guidance from DDS created implementation lag. Vini Montague added that additional rate increases would take effect in January 2026.

Lety Garcia asked for the number of individuals in competitive integrated employment. Angela Pao-Johnson reported 337 individuals during the reporting period and 503 currently, noting NLACRC ranked second among regional centers and emphasizing continued goals for growth. Lety Garcia also asked about the observed discrepancy between population percentages and expenditure percentages for certain age and ethnicity groups and requested a deeper dive into potential contributing factors, including whether awareness of Independent Living Skills services may impact disparities. Angela Pao-Johnson acknowledged education and information access could be contributing factors and agreed to consider the request and consult with the team on additional analysis.

Jeremy Sunderland asked whether the \$1 million transportation issue resulted in any penalties and sought clarification on whether the “multiple trips per day” interpretation was resolved for future audits. Vini Montague confirmed it was an audit finding that NLACRC successfully appealed, and noted that while the appeal response found no legal basis for limiting trips, future practice would be guided by current DDS guidance.

Anna Hurst noted that performance contract reports are public documents and suggested comparing NLACRC results with other regional centers. Sharmila Brunjes thanked the presenters and trustees for the discussion, noted time constraints, and expressed appreciation for the questions and observations.

## **9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Sharmila Brunjes transitioned from Board business to the Executive Director’s Report and advised Angela Pao-Johnson there were 10 minutes for the report. Angela Pao-Johnson provided highlights of recent organizational updates, including the return of the New Employee Roundtable to support retention by engaging new staff around the three-month mark. Angela Pao-Johnson reported positive feedback from recent cohorts, with employees rating their relationship with supervisors, onboarding, and training at 8/10 and rating culture and ongoing support at 9/10, describing the workplace culture as friendly, supportive, collaborative, and “like family.”

Angela Pao-Johnson reported results from the 2025 Individual and Family Satisfaction Survey conducted by Kinetic Flow. Angela Pao-Johnson stated approximately 38,000 active consumers were polled and 5,075 families responded (about 13%), with increases in 18 of 23 core metrics compared to 2023 and the remaining changes described as statistically insignificant. Angela Pao-Johnson noted Kinetic Flow would be invited to present findings to the Board at a future meeting.

Angela Pao-Johnson also reported that the DEIB outreach group received special recognition from Senator Caroline Menjabar for outreach work with Filipino, Armenian, and Farsi communities. Angela Pao-Johnson stated DDS requested NLACRC’s Self-Determination Program budget tool as a model for statewide funding guidelines and noted NLACRC received top marks on regional center performance measures, with anticipated additional incentive funding tied to these measures.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided DDS updates, including an extension of the behavioral day program certification deadline to the end of February, statewide minimum wage increasing to \$16.90, and mileage reimbursement increasing to \$0.725. Angela Pao-Johnson noted transportation billing transitioned to consistent vehicle mile rate billing in November and DDS was still evaluating potential adjustments. Angela Pao-Johnson also provided legislative and budget context, including DDS funding projected at \$21.1 billion (an increase of \$2.4 billion) and service spending projected to increase by \$2.3 billion primarily due to anticipated caseload growth and staffing needs, with no new programs. Angela Pao-Johnson noted the budget

assumes strong federal Medicaid funding but may be optimistic due to potential Medicaid cuts. Angela Pao-Johnson also shared an IHSS outlook, noting FY 2026–27 funding levels but potential reductions beginning in FY 2027–28, including elimination of the backup provider system and other changes.

Additional center updates included 927 positions filled, serving approximately 41,100 individuals, completion of 187 residential visits, and four corrective action plans. Angela Pao-Johnson reported MEGI financial management services was fully staffed and could enter complete social recreation referrals within one week, with processing remaining at a two-week standard, and noted referral volume trends and ongoing tracking to ensure referrals were not left unattended. Angela Pao-Johnson highlighted outreach efforts, including DEIB team participation at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles to connect physicians and families to Early Start and early intervention information, and referenced upcoming events.

During questions, Jennifer Koster asked when the IHSS backup provider system would be eliminated and why. Angela Pao-Johnson stated elimination was anticipated in FY 2027–28 and attributed it to state budget deficit-related cost reductions, noting advocacy would be important. Jeremy Sunderland asked why incentive funding is needed if regional centers are “fully funded.” Anna Hurst and Sharmila Brunjes explained that operations funding is based on an outdated core staffing formula and that operations budgets are limited, making additional funds helpful for staffing and infrastructure needs. Vini Montague clarified that purchase of services (POS) is an entitlement and can be backfilled by DDS, but operations funding is not automatically backfilled; performance incentives apply to operations, not POS.

Lety Garcia asked whether the performance incentives were related to a projected POS deficit. Vini Montague clarified incentives were not related to POS and that POS projections for the current fiscal year were not yet complete, noting prior-year POS deficits are addressed by DDS under entitlement requirements and an additional allocation was anticipated but not yet received. Jennifer Koster asked about handling potential year-end surplus funds. Anna Hurst explained that operations surplus is strategically applied, including funding employee retirement-related obligations, while POS must balance to actual expenditures and any surplus cannot be retained and would revert to DDS.

## **10. PUBLIC INPUT & COMMENTS**

Sharmila Brunjes opened the final public comment period, noting nine minutes were available for up to three speakers and advising participants to raise a hand if they wished to speak. Arezo Abedi and Lindsay Granger confirmed a speaker queue.

Christina Cannarella requested to turn on a camera to show a regional center consumer, Johnny Hatch. Anna Hurst stated camera access could not be enabled from the Board’s side. Christina Cannarella introduced Johnny Hatch, who stated Johnny Hatch had been a regional center consumer for 22 years and asked for help maintaining supports and protecting rights. Christina Cannarella then shared concerns related to a day program operated with Holly Korea, including alleged retaliation and the removal of Johnny Hatch from the program without following stated exit criteria and termination protocols. Christina Cannarella reported sending formal complaints and follow-up emails to multiple staff, including Angela Pao-Johnson, and stated that no acknowledgement was received, with the exception of the Office of Client Rights Services. Christina Cannarella stated Johnny Hatch had been without services for several days and thanked Arezo Abedi for responding to the situation. Lindsay Granger advised Christina Cannarella that the three-minute public comment limit had been exceeded. Sharmila Brunjes thanked Christina Cannarella and stated the concerns would be forwarded to staff for follow-up, noting Arezo Abedi was present and aware of additional details.

Sharmila Brunjes called on the next speaker and reminded speakers to provide first and last names. Spencer McNish stated concerns about being terminated from the Workability LA day program and requested a clear written explanation. Spencer McNish asked for clarification on: the reason for termination, who made and approved the decision, why there was no direct notification, why an interdisciplinary team meeting was not held, why consumer rights were not explained, and why Spencer McNish was currently without services prior to an SDP transition. Spencer McNish stated there had been no prior notice of performance or behavioral concerns and referenced an incident involving being struck by Joel Korea, stating Spencer McNish was later told the removal was due to "restructuring" without further explanation. Sharmila Brunjes thanked Spencer McNish, stated the concerns would be documented and forwarded to staff, and noted that staff would follow up. Angela Pao-Johnson stated staff were aware and actively working on both issues. Sharmila Brunjes acknowledged the update and proceeded to identify the final speaker for public comment.

Stephanie Jacks provided public comment on behalf of Spencer McNish and shared background that Spencer McNish's mother passed away, Spencer McNish and Spencer McNish's father experienced homelessness, and Stephanie Jacks has been caring for Spencer McNish for the past three and a half years. Stephanie Jacks stated that Spencer McNish joined the Workability LA day program in 2023 and that Stephanie Jacks was hired by Workability LA approximately 21 months ago to support HR.

Stephanie Jacks reported observing alleged contract and compliance concerns, including unethical practices and retaliation involving staff and consumers, and referenced an incident in which Spencer McNish was reportedly assaulted by Holly Korea's son. Stephanie Jacks also raised concerns about being reclassified from a W-2 employee to an independent contractor and asked who oversees vendor contract compliance. Stephanie Jacks requested clarification on the Regional Center's protocol when consumers and employees are harmed by a vendor and asked whether these issues could be raised at a future Board meeting.

Sharmila Brunjes thanked Stephanie Jacks for the comments and stated that the Board does not manage day-to-day Regional Center operations or vendor oversight. Sharmila Brunjes confirmed the concerns were being recorded, noted, and would be forwarded to staff for review and follow-up.

Sharmila Brunjes thanked members of the public for their comments and announced that the period for public input has concluded.

## **11. CLOSED SESSION**

Sharmila Brunjes announced the Board would move into closed session and noted that an additional closed session personnel item had been added at the beginning of the meeting, estimated to take 15 minutes, and that the total closed session was expected to last approximately 35 minutes.

**Absent objection the board entered closed session at 7:46 p.m. Motion carried.**

Closed session was entered to discuss real estate negotiations and personnel. No motions were made.

**Absent objection the board exited closed session at 8:23 p.m. Motion carried.**

## **12. SELF-DETERMINATION PROGRAM (SDP) REPORT**

Sharmila Brunjes reported there was no SDLVAC liaison meeting this month, and therefore no liaison report. Sharmila Brunjes announced the next SDLVAC liaison meeting would be held on Thursday, January 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Silvia Renteria-Haro provided the Self-Determination Program (SDP) implementation report. Silvia Renteria-Haro reported that, effective January 1, there were 686 participants enrolled in SDP, with 43 transitions occurring between December and January, and 197 total transitions completed in 2025. Silvia Renteria-Haro shared that the co-employer model remained the most utilized Financial Management Services (FMS) option with 489 participants, followed by sole employer with 139 participants, and fiscal agent/bill payer with 58 participants. Silvia Renteria-Haro also announced that the Local Volunteer Advisory Committee meeting would be held virtually the following day from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and noted that applications were currently being accepted for committee members.

**13. ITEMS 14-20**

The Board received the following committee reports for information:

- Association of Regional Center Agencies presented by Lety Garcia.

Lety Garcia encouraged Board members to attend ARCA Grassroots Day in Sacramento on March 2–3, noting it is a two-day opportunity to meet with legislators and discuss regional center priorities. Jennifer Koster asked for clarification on the dates and travel logistics. Lindsay Granger confirmed the event falls on Monday and Tuesday, and Lety Garcia clarified attendees would travel Monday and return Tuesday. Sharmila Brunjes noted travel details would be coordinated with Lindsay Granger closer to the event and would include one overnight stay in Sacramento.

- Consumer Advisory Committee presented by Juan Hernandez

Sharmila Brunjes called on Board Vice President Juan Hernandez to provide the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) report. Juan Hernandez shared that the CAC did not hold a virtual meeting in December, but members did gather informally for a holiday potluck to reconnect. The next CAC meeting was confirmed for February 5, 2026.

- Executive Finance Committee presented by Sharmila Brunjes and Anna Hurst.

Sharmila Brunjes provided an update on the Executive Finance Committee (EFC), noting the Committee last met on November 20, 2025, prior to the holidays. Sharmila Brunjes reported the Committee reviewed six priorities, including improving caseload ratios, increasing consumer and family satisfaction, maintaining strong board governance, completing the strategic plan with staff and the community, overseeing crisis mode operations as the funder of last resort, and maintaining service quality while implementing PRA requirements. Sharmila Brunjes shared that the priorities are still being finalized and therefore were not included in the current meeting packet, but the first draft was available in the EFC materials linked to the November meeting calendar. Sharmila Brunjes also reported the Committee reviewed financial reports related to budget allocations and outstanding authorizations, received updates on audits and human resources, and heard a whistleblower update. Sharmila Brunjes stated the November meeting minutes would be reviewed at the next EFC meeting on January 29, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., and would be posted to the website following review.

- Community Relations Committee presented by Jeremy Sunderland.

Sharmila Brunjes introduced the Community Relations Committee report, and Co-Chair Jeremy Sunderland deferred to Co-Chair Cathy Blin to provide the update. Cathy Blin reported the Committee last met in November and focused on streamlining and consolidating legislative goals with Consumer Services priorities, narrowing them to four succinct priorities aligned with special contract language.

Cathy Blin also reviewed upcoming legislative and outreach events for the year, including ARCA Grassroots on March 2–3, continued in-person legislative meetings with local legislators throughout spring through fall, an upcoming legislative breakfast (date to be finalized, typically April/May), and a fall candidates forum. The Committee discussed increasing opportunities for Board engagement and public relations by identifying regular community events for Board participation, exploring “Meet the Board” breakout sessions at existing forums, and increasing Board presence at vendor meetings. Cathy Blin noted feedback supporting more mainstream community events for teens and adults. Cathy Blin reminded the Board that nominations for the Jynny Retzinger Award for Outstanding Achievement are open through March 1 and encouraged members to share the opportunity. The next Community Relations Committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 21 at 5:00 p.m.

- Nominating Committee presented by Curtis Wang.

Sharmila Brunjes noted that Curtis Wang was not present to provide the Nominating Committee report and asked Lety Garcia, Co-Chair, to share an update. Lety Garcia reported that the Nominating Committee is actively interviewing individuals who have expressed interest in joining the Board, scheduling additional interviews, and anticipates bringing recommendations to the Board within the next few months. Sharmila Brunjes thanked Lety Garcia for providing the update on short notice and reminded Board members that upcoming elections are approaching, encouraging members to begin considering whether they would like to serve in board officer roles.

- Post-Retirement Medical Trust Committee presented by Sharmila Brunjes.

Sharmila Brunjes reported that the last meeting was postponed.

The next PRMT Committee meeting is scheduled for February 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

- Vendor Advisory Committee presented by Alex Kopilevich.

Sharmila Brunjes invited Alex Kopilevich, VAC Chair, to provide an update on the Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC). Alex Kopilevich reported that the VAC held its first meeting of the calendar year on January 8 and noted the meeting was robust and completed efficiently. Alex Kopilevich shared that applications for new VAC members were due January 15 and that four positions were currently open, including the VAC Chair position after June 30. Alex Kopilevich stated the VAC will follow a similar process to the Nominating Committee, including reviewing applicants at the February 12 meeting and then moving forward with in-person or Zoom interviews through a panel process. The next VAC meeting was confirmed for February 12 and will be held as a hybrid meeting in Santa Clarita.

Lety Garcia asked whether candidate discussions and recommendations would occur in a public meeting format similar to the Nominating Committee. Alex Kopilevich confirmed that the VAC plans to mirror the Nominating Committee process, including reviewing applicant materials in advance, discussing applicants during the February

meeting, selecting candidates for a three-person interview panel, and bringing recommended candidates back to the full Board for public discussion and approval.

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. at the Santa Clarita Valley Office or on Zoom.

As reports were presented, no observations or comments were noted.

#### **14. OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS**

Sharmila Brunjes moved the Board into Old Business and New Business, noting that the Board and Committee meeting attendance sheets and time reports were included in the packet for review. Sharmila Brunjes also referenced an updated acronyms list and noted there was no meeting evaluation survey link available.

During NLACRC announcements, Sharmila Brunjes asked if there were any internal announcements and briefly referenced prior discussion regarding ARCA Grassroots. Sharmila Brunjes reminded all Trustees to use their official NLACRC Board email addresses and advised anyone who needed assistance setting up their account to contact Board Support so the Board could fully transition away from using personal email accounts.

#### **15. ANNOUNCEMENTS / INFORMATION**

During NLACRC announcements, Sharmila Brunjes reminded all Trustees to use their official NLACRC Board email addresses and to contact Board Support if assistance was needed. Anna Hurst shared that emails had not yet been received at the NLACRC address and asked when outreach communications would transition. Lindsay Granger advised the transition would begin after the meeting, with all emails routed to NLACRC accounts by the following day, and noted that meeting invitations would be sent to Trustees' NLACRC emails going forward, which may result in cancellation notifications on Trustees' personal calendars.

Evelyn McOmie provided outreach announcements, including a SoCal Edison Emergency Preparedness workshop on January 20 at 10:00 a.m. in English at the Chatsworth office and 11:00 a.m. in Spanish, and a "Quake Heroes" Emergency Preparedness film screening with sessions planned in the Antelope Valley and San Fernando. Evelyn McOmie noted the information would be shared in the chat and sent via email to those interested.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided an update on implementation of the Public Records Act effective January 1<sup>st</sup> and reviewed how to submit a records request through the NLACRC website by selecting the yellow "Transparency" button and using the Public Records Portal. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that document retention and file structure systems are still being strengthened, and locating records may take time as infrastructure is developed. Angela Pao-Johnson also emphasized being mindful of the scope of requests to avoid overwhelming staff resources, as the same staff supporting records requests are also responsible for case management duties.

Alex Kopilevich raised a concern related to the new NLACRC email addresses, noting that staff email auto-population may cause messages to be inadvertently sent to Trustees' NLACRC emails, including emails intended for other recipients. Alex Kopilevich advised Trustees to regularly monitor their NLACRC inboxes to avoid missing misdirected communications.

George Alvarado suggested providing a training for Board members on the Public Records Act request process. Sharmila Brunjes acknowledged the suggestion and noted it for follow-up.

**16. NEXT MEETING**

The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., to be held a hybrid meeting at the Antelope Valley Office and Zoom.

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

Sharmila Brunjes noted there were no further items and offered closing remarks in recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, reflecting on the Civil Rights Movement and First Amendment freedoms, including free speech, peaceful assembly, and petitioning elected leaders. Sharmila Brunjes shared a quote from Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and extended well wishes for January and 2026.

**Absent objection the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.**

**DISCLAIMER**

The above document should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.