Open Session Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 24, 2026
10:02 am – 10:54 am

Cannabis Control Appeals Panel
400 R Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

Members present:

- Dr. Diandra Bremond, Chairperson (in Sacramento County – In Person)
- Cathryn Rivera, J.D. (in Sacramento County – In Person)
- Jim Wood (in Sacramento County – In Person)
- Toni Atkins (in Sacramento County – In Person)

Staff present:

- Anne Hawley, Executive Director, Cannabis Control Appeals Panel
- Sarah M. Smith, Senior Staff Attorney, Cannabis Control Appeals Panel
- Brian Hwang, Senior Staff Attorney, Cannabis Control Appeals Panel
- Ruben Garza, Office Technician, Cannabis Control Appeals Panel

Summary:

1. **Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum.**

Chairperson Diandra Bremond called the teleconference meeting to order at 10:02 am.

Ruben Garza took the roll call vote. Panel Members Diandra Bremond, Cathryn Rivera, Jim Wood, and Toni Atkins were present. A quorum was established.

2. **Approval of the Minutes.**

Chairperson Bremond asked the Panel if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the August 20, 2026, meeting. There were no additions or corrections. No comments from the public.

Motion (Wood): Approve the minutes of the August 20, 2026, meeting as submitted. Seconded (Atkins). Ruben Garza took a roll call vote on the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

3. **Executive Management Report.**

Chairperson Bremond introduced Executive Director Anne Hawley to present her report.

First, Hawley discussed outreach and education. CCAP's first Quarterly Newsletter was sent out on September 1. It was sent out to the stakeholders on CCAP's distribution list which includes, for example, active annual licensees, law firms, affinity bar associations, and state agencies.

Second, Hawley shared some data regarding the Quarterly Newsletter. The newsletter was emailed to around 4,500 contacts. The newsletter had a 95% delivery rate with a bounce rate of 5%. From there, over 1,000 individuals clicked to open the newsletter email. However, the engagement rate fell after this point. Opening the newsletter did not convert to further clicks on internal links in the email.

Panel member Rivera inquired whether these newsletters could be more interactive—for example, providing readers with a way to share any feedback. Hawley replied it may be possible to embed the newsletter with a link to a Microsoft poll feature and will investigate that option.

Panel member Wood asked if other state agencies have similar newsletters and wondered what their response or engagement rates have been. He also commented that a user poll could be useful, but brevity will be key to garnering reader participation. Hawley responded she will look into other state agencies about requesting their newsletter data.

Panel member Atkins commented that it may be helpful to have email surveys ask readers what topics or issues are of interest to them. Hawley agreed it may be a useful exercise and will look into it, and follow up with the panel members.

Lastly, Hawley reported that the first quarter numbers for the current Fiscal Year (FY 2026-27) have not yet been finalized. Hawley then provided the final numbers for FY 2025-26, which closed a few months ago. For FY 2025-26, CCAP had a total budget of $3,318,000 and its total expenditure was $2,897,286—leaving a surplus of $420,714. In short, CCAP remains within its budgetary limits and projects to maintain operational stability through the upcoming year.

Hawley finished her presentation. No other comments from the Panel. No public comments.

4. **Presentation – Maintaining Impartiality.**

Chairperson Bremond introduced Senior Staff Attorney Brian Hwang to give a presentation to the Panel on maintaining impartiality as a quasi-judicial, decision-making agency. This is an informational item only.

Hwang's presentation covered the following topics: Avoiding both actual and the appearance of impropriety; Conducting Panel duties impartially; and Potential Scenarios to Consider. Hwang also distinguished his training from a previous Panel training on Recusal. He explained the two

trainings can be considered two sides of the same coin. Today's 'Maintaining Impartiality' training covers overarching ethical standards and best practices guiding public officials such as the Panel. The previous 'Recusal' training covered the specific legal mechanism used to enforce those standards when there is a potential or real conflict of interest.

Hwang finished his presentation by emphasizing the importance of public trust. He also encouraged panel members to contact legal staff for guidance if they ever have any questions. He then opened the floor for questions.

Bremond expressed interest in legal staff providing another Recusal training to the Panel. Hawley replied that legal staff will work on setting it up for the next Panel meeting.

No other comments from the Panel. No public comments.

5. **Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda.**

Chairperson Bremond warned any comment should not involve pending or future appeals, complaints, applications, or any disciplinary actions that may come before the Panel.

No comments from the public.

6. **Future Agenda Items.**

Bremond formally requested that a Recusal training be placed on the agenda for the next Panel meeting.

No other comments from the Panel. No comments from the public.

7. **Closed Session – Litigation Update.**

Open session suspended at 10:32 am in order for the Panel to discuss pending litigation before the Sixth District Court of Appeal in the matter of Euphoric Life, Inc. v. Department of Cannabis Control, et.al., Case No. H054602, in closed session—under the authority of Government Code section 11126(e)(1).

Open session resumed at 10:53 am. Chairperson Bremond thanked all those present and stated that the Panel has completed its discussion regarding the pending litigation.

8. **Adjournment.**

Motion (Rivera). Adjourn the meeting. Seconded (Wood). Meeting adjourned at 10:54 am.