

WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT

P.O. BOX 100 IRRIGON, OREGON 97844
PHONE: (541) 922-3814 FAX: (541) 922-9775

June 15, 2023

Monthly Board Meeting

Chairperson Philippi called the Board meeting to order on June 15, 2023 at 9:05 a.m. at the Columbia Improvement District meeting room located at 501 E. Columbia Ave. in Boardman. Those in attendance were: Board members, Dalarie Philippi, Vern Frederickson, and Abe McNamee; Board Secretary/Manager, Bev Bridgewater; Administrative Services Manager, Lisa Baum; Field Superintendent, Ben de los Santos; Chet Sater, Manager of the Bureau of Reclamation Umatilla Field Office. Directors Bob Mueller and Von Studer were not able to attend.

AGENDA: Chairperson Philippi asked for additions to the agenda. Bridgewater requested to add a review of the District Background Checks Policy and Procedure and a contract from the City of Boardman under District Business.. Additionally, she would like to discuss the District's hiring policy under Other Business. Chair Philippi approved the agenda with the additions recommended by the Manager.

MONTHLY BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: McNamee moved to approve the minutes of the May Board meeting. Frederickson seconded. Discussion. Motion passed.

BILLS PAYABLE: Frederickson moved to approve the May accounts payable list in the amount of \$122,523.59. McNamee seconded. Motion passed.

FINANCIALS: The Board reviewed the preliminary financial reports for the current year through May 31, 2023. Discussion.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The Board reviewed the Manager's report. It is attached to and a part of the meeting minutes.

OPERATIONS: Ben reported that the crew is making progress on the work orders and small projects, many of which are carried over from last season. He stated they are starting to work as a team. He mentioned the last part of the Lateral 15 project – the pipeline from the alfalfa valve to Broadbent, was started. The old ditch has been removed. It will be a month or so before they can get back to it. He also mentioned the crew built and installed several rails. The walkway and handrails at the Lateral

15 screen are part of the federal piping project for Lateral 15. Some rails were installed at the endspill for safety purposes that benefit customers as well as crew.

Aquatic herbicide treatments started with an acrolein treatment on the main canal on May 24. This is six weeks earlier than in 2022. Assuming treatments continue through August, we will need to purchase additional product.

SPRAY PROGRAM: Dalarie would like to discuss the annual maintenance of the District laterals. Using the labor crew each year is costly, especially now that we no longer have a contract with Two River Inmate crew. Without a spray regime, we are repeating the same work each year. Ben confirmed that although we had spraying of the laterals on our list for water startup, it didn't happen. He is frustrated as well. Discussion. The Board would like more discussion at the July meeting and would like to have information about the time and costs of cleaning the laterals.

ADMINISTRATIVE: No report.

MANAGER REPORT: Reviewed the written report. Other comments:

- Umatilla River flow is below average. A dry year is anticipated.
- Conjunctive use started May 31, so earlier than average.
- Manager met with the City of Umatilla regarding Amazon water the District will receive from their new facilities on Powerline Road.
- Engineer from JUB has contacted the District about the inlet facility.
- Issues with the City of Irrigon's development practices continue.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

BACKGROUND CHECKS POLICY & PROCEDURES: A new policy outlining the rules and procedures for background checks, criminal records checks, employment history, and driving record checks was reviewed. This policy complies with State and federal laws and the recommendation of Special Districts of Oregon. It appoints a hiring authority who has the responsibility to review the information. Considerations can be allowed on a case-by case, need-by-need basis, so the policy is not "black and white. It also applies to current employees who will need to notify the District of any serious driving issues or criminal offenses. Frederickson commented that the State can monitor driving records for a small fee and it's likely a good idea to check regularly, due to potential liability.

Frederickson moved to adopt the Background Checks Policy & Procedures. McNamee seconded. Motion passed.

CITY OF BOARDMAN CONTRACT FOR USE OF COMMUNICATION TOWER: The City of Boardman sent a contract for the use of their tower to mount the District's antenna for its SCADA system. The cost is \$100 per month. Frederickson moved to approve the contract and authorize the Chairman to sign on behalf of the District. McNamee seconded. Motion passed.

CITY OF IRRIGON/NEW DREAMS PROJECT: Chet Sater reported that he met with the City of Irrigon yesterday about the New Dreams project and the trespass. The City Manager reported that water and sewer were installed by the developer. They plan to lower the existing irrigation line by July 1. The City has not filed an application yet, nor has any modification of the exiting line been approved by WEID or Reclamation. Sater will follow up with a letter to the City and request drawings of their planned work..

Sater has full regional support to protect the federal ROW and pipeline. The “wheels are in motion,” and they have reviewed the historical information. Reclamation won’t support shutting down the system during the irrigation season, which is WEID’s policy as well. Discussion. Other thoughts:

- City development requirements include sidewalks to be installed adjacent to development. On Oregon Street, for instance, this would be right on a federal ROW and over the irrigation pipe.
- WEID could work with the City to develop new standards for irrigation lines such as HDPE, depths, distances.
- Bev still prefers a cooperative approach if we can get there.
- Move the irrigation lines onto landowner property, not City ROW
- Lines originally installed in County ROW, now being taken over by the City are not protected, so the District will work with the City. It is important to have a clear understanding of what that looks like.
- Can we turn the County permit to an actual ROW before City takes over?
- Chet told the City that BOR will work with them to protect federal easements.
- Does the City still want its patrons to have irrigation water? Previous City Administrator Patrick Reay came to a WEID Board meeting with the request to assure the District continued serving City patrons as the City did not have sufficient water. Manager Gerald Breazeale confirmed this.. There has been no discussion with the current City Manager. Perhaps there should be.

Direction to Manager Bridgewater:

- 1) Bridgewater to contact Palmquist and/or Mayor Patton to get their ideas about irrigation water and development.
- 2) She will also follow up with the contractor that pulled district lines, valves out of the ground and cut off service to two lots. These lots still have no service.
- 3) Bridgewater to ask surveyor to correct the subdivision plat off Oregon Street (Maple Grove) to show the federal ROW.

Bev reported that the District still has not gotten its permit for the communication tower even though it was approved by Planning last year. She will send a letter to the City asking them to consider deeding their small lot, adjacent to the District, to the District with the understanding they have a sewer line ROW. This would give more room for the District’s tower and for the planned records storage facility. Chet said that Aaron had mentioned this to him.

Abe wondered about putting the tower outside the city limits with a repeater to the office.

PROCTOR PROPERTY/SLAUGHTER SPILL: There is a federal drainage easement through the Proctor property, heading west south of Depot Lane and ending up to a pond on the west side of 8th Road W. Now that flood irrigation has been minimized in the area, with this being the last year, the drainage is drying up. There is some natural water, and it is an emergency spillway for the District. McNamees are purchasing this land and would like to know if they can move the drainage and pipe it so they can have better use of their property. Sater said they will need to file a relocation of easement application. They should send the application with plans to Reclamation Hermiston office with a copy to the District.

The Board has no objection to this. Manager Bev and Ben will come up with a maximum number that would need to flow.

Lisa Baum left the meeting at 10:35 am.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Board reviewed the District's hiring policy, specifically the section about hiring relatives of current employees. Seth Rhodes has applied to the District, has been interviewed and is one of the top two candidates for the job. He is Lisa Baum's son-in-law. Manager checked with SDAO and they confirmed that hiring him now is not an issue since Lisa is not his supervisor. If she were to become the District Manager or his supervisor in the future, the Board would need to change its policies at that time by making an exception and putting additional protections/separations in that part of the policy. Discussion.

The Board felt it is up to Ben and Bev to make the hiring decision. If Seth is the choice, then they can change and establish additional procedures if it is an issue in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairperson Philippi adjourned the meeting at 10:55 am.

Signed:

Bev Bridgewater, Secretary

Attest:

Dalarie Philippi, Chairperson