

## MANAGER'S REPORT - MARCH 2023

This report provides an overview of District issues and projects that we have been working on since the last board meeting.

**BUDGET:** As reported to the Board members via email on March 7, we have some budget overages identified, mainly due to completing our telemetry upgrade and use of the labor crew. Here is what was sent by the Manager to the Board:

*I have signed the purchase orders that will complete the needed upgrade on our telemetry and SCADA. The cost is significantly more than budgeted. I knew it, but also know how we all agreed that we need to have the sites working this year. Ben and I have already discussed where we can spend less money to cover the increased cost.*

*Here is what is going on and how we are handling this project.*

*1) Cecil Rock brought the estimate for the new tower behind the office by today. With equipment, installation and connection to the system, it is \$20,465. We had \$13,000 in the budget. It is in the improvement line item. There is \$7500 in improvements for shop equipment, We will not plan to spend that money this year, so both of these improvements totalling \$20,500 will go to the cost of the tower.*

*2) In 2016, we started updating the SCADA sites with hardware upgrades. We did two sites that year for a cost of \$9,050. The remaining sites need to be done and we will do four of the five - all four Boardman gate sites as they are all showing signs of failing. Today's cost for the sites, including travel and four days of work, is \$32,000. This is a total rebuild of the controllers, panels, HMI touchscreen interface, gate motors plus work on the software to read the new system. We have four days of vendor work built into this. Aqua Systems 2000 is our vendor for this and Bob from our crew will do the installation as he has done that at Roza, where he worked before. We are fortunate for his experience.*

*We budgeted \$12,000 for telemetry. I frankly, did not understand the full extent of the work needed and how the sites have failed, but Bob and Ben brought this to me, and we moved on it. Looking back, I realize that we planned for these replacements in 2017 and 2018, but with Ben coming onboard and changes at Aqua, plus the pandemic, we did not continue that upgrade. This is a different issue than the failure of the communication. In any case, Ben and I believe we can get \$10,000 from the main canal and weed control part of the budget. The other \$10,000 is not known yet, but we will hope for a good irrigation season without a lot of failure. If nothing else, we have \$20,000 in the budget for improvements scheduled to the Boardman pipe projects.*

*3) The third item I should mention is that we know we are paying significantly more for labor than using the AIC (inmate) crew. We have a 4 - 6 person labor crew from Independent plus two laborers from Express. In the budget, we had planned to bring another full-time person onboard in April. This would have been the operator position. We are in much better shape now*

*than we have been for a number of years with all of our crew being experienced. Right now, Ben plans to not bring in another full-time this year and use temps as needed. We are keeping a close eye on these costs.*

We will go over the budget at this March meeting.

**OPERATIONS:** We anticipate water start-up the day of the Board meeting, so Ben may not be at the meeting. Here is the update I emailed to the BOD on March 13<sup>th</sup>, notifying of blockage at Three Mile Dam.

*Three Mile Dam. On the 8th, Ben and I checked at Three Mile Dam. I had heard from the fish crews that logs had drifted in and settled in front of the dam. And we could see the logs hanging over the edge, which typically float over in high water. The one log that has been in front of our diversion since last spring remained, which we knew and were watching, waiting for a high water event to move it. IT IS VERY BIG. But, in the last three weeks, logs and silt have built up directly in front of the diversion extending out about 25-feet. This work is beyond what our equipment can do and we need to bring in a long-reach excavator. Wayne Reffett has one coming for us and will do the work at Three Mile once the equipment arrives. We understand it may be this week. We will also do some work at the endspill that we are not able to get to with our own excavator.*

The update to this email is that the excavator arrived on Friday, March 17. Reffett cleaned at Three Mile over the weekend, then to the endspill We can report on this at the BOD meeting.

Spraying along the canal should be complete Tuesday. This is the north side of canal and next to canal. More work will need to be done along the road. Burning started on Saturday. The last concrete pours will be on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. It has been extremely difficult to get concrete this season, so we've done a lot of patching. The canal is planned to flush on Thursday. Water will go into Boardman Saturday or Monday.

**DISTRICT CREW:** As stated above, we have four of the full-time position filled. When Ryan left in early January, we did not fill that position. For now, we plan to run as we are with four full-time, a part-time and temps as needed. Emma will be here this summer. She can help out anywhere, including on the ditch.

**CANAL & LATERAL WORK:** The canal cleaning took a long time this year, mainly due to the amount of silt in the bottom of the canal and the amount of overburden in many areas, The only excavator we could find to rent was a mid-size with a 4-foot bucket. We spent a month with this one in Boardman, plus another week with our own excavator. The lateral cleaning is complete. Laterals 17, 18, 29, 30 and 31 are planned to be sprayed. Crews rebuilt three headgates/deliveries in the Umatilla area and two other slidegates, also in Umatilla. These are all District-owned deliveries. Delivery 10 in Boardman was rebuilt by the landowners. Crews rebuilt the screen at Hamilton. Dylan Road project is still waiting for the crew to complete. They will come back to it after start-up. The debris is removed. We have several critical leaks to repair at start-up: two on lateral 15 and two in Irrigon.

**TELEMETRY SYSTEM UPDATE:** Rock Enterprise has started the work to build the tower. The location schematic is attached. We have a verbal agreement with the city to place the tower on their property behind the office. We have agreed to complete fencing around the area as part of this agreement, which will be in writing. The tower itself will have safety fencing around it. Unfortunately, the cost of fencing has not been considered within our budget, so that will be something added to the budget discussion.

Aqua Systems will be in the District the week of March 20 to do the work on the SCADA. This will prepare them to do remote work once water gets in the canal and the new equipment that we need arrives. Did I state that of the four upgrades we ordered, only one was in stock and we are “backordered.” We will know soon how many gates we have that are operational and definitely will prioritize where the working components go.

**CANAL CROSSINGS:** We had several canal crossings that were completed in the last couple months – Windwave over the main canal at the siphon, Port of Morrow south of the railroad tracks, Zayo along Rippee Road. Windwave hopes for a crossing off Miller Road, to the west and a company called Metro Duct will bore under the river, railroad and main canal off Bensel Road this spring. They will wait until we go on exchange for that work. We do not have an update for Windwave crossing east of Miller Road.

**PARTITIONS/SUBDIVISIONS:** We are monitoring several:

- 1) **EAGLE CREST ESTATES:** We have not yet approved the irrigation system due to size of the pump and design. The lots need to have the Shared Water Delivery agreements filed with the County. The LLC for the bridge ownership is being reviewed by Reclamation.
- 2) **AL PHILLIPS SUBDIVISION OFF COLUMBIA LANE:** Al is planning a subdivision. The District pipeline is 80-feet onto his property. He would like to bring pressurized water to this subdivision. Our engineers will review the Huke design to be sure we have capacity before we get too far down this road.
- 3) **NEW DREAMS:** This is an 8.5 acre area that is being turned in to city lots. Water rights have been removed, but we have a pipeline through the subdivision. There has been a lot of activity this summer. We are waiting for the City to get the permit to cross our RL2 federal line with their sewer and new roadway (they are relocating Idaho and building a new road). They also planned to relocate the District mainline, but that hasn’t been approved yet. So, we will see when water starts if the District line has been damaged.
- 4) **BARQUIST PARTITION:** The partition is very basic, but the irrigation delivery to the area is complicated. This area is north of Tony Osborne, off 4<sup>th</sup> and Wyoming. As the land is being developed, not all lots have access to the RL4 line. I would like to discuss a plan for this area at the Board meeting so we know where we are heading.

**COLLECTIONS:** As of March 17, we had \$61,858 receivables over 90 days, which represents 5% of the total accounts receivable. Lisa is working on collections, including shut-off and lien notices for those who owe all of 2022 (49 landowners). Foreclosure notices will go out to 20 of these who owe from 2021. Because of the 30-day “Notice to Proceed” for foreclosures, the Board won’t see

the foreclosure list until the May meeting and, hopefully, there will be just a few remaining. Shut-off notices will go out to an additional 30 folks that still owe the second half of 2021.

**WATER RIGHT TRANSFERS:** I have started on mapping and preparing the transfers. There is nothing out of the ordinary to report this year.

**GRANT/CANAL STUDY:** JUB did the survey work needed for the canal study. We are looking for LIDAR info on our canal that will help assess seepage.. I think the rest can be done with the information we have and lots of written material. The State approved the extension to the deadline for the updated Water Management and Conservation Plan, knowing the canal study will be part of that updated plan.

**NON-WORKING METERS:** We have contacted several folks, including some larger water users, who had non-working meters at the end of last season. We let them know the meters should be working “No Meter, No Water” and I plan to stay with that. As long as they are working on repairing their meter, if it needs repair, we are very flexible as they can log their irrigation time until the meter is repaired. Several folks including Philippi, Stiffler, and Bellinger have done that as well as many smaller irrigators. You can see that I am anticipating a pushback, so just getting prepared for this. I think in most cases, they just need to clean out their meter. I hope to have the letters out to all the meter folks by the Board meeting, reminding them to check their meters at startup. Meter postcards did not go out this past fall, so there is that to do.

**OFFICE STORAGE ISSUE:** Anyone entering the office can see that we definitely have more paperwork than we have space to put it. Our storage shed is full. Lisa and I have talked about what to do and I’ve asked her to work on a plan for storage. This will include what we put on “the cloud”, store on-site and store off-site. Our storage building is 20 years old and is not set up for historic storage of documents. We have landowner documents, contracts and so forth to consider. Now that we have or are building the communication tower at the office site, it indicates that we have made a decision to stay at this site for the foreseeable future (as opposed to moving the office). I believe we need to plan for a permanent storage building behind our office where the file cabinets, storage shelves, maps and so on can be safely stored. It will need a work table for pulling and researching documents. I don’t plan any discussion today, but hope to have information later in the year so we can make a plan to address this issue.

**STEPPING UP OUR GIS SYSTEM:** Last year we were able to get our water order and ditchrider runs on-line. We are using the I-pads and Microsoft 365 for this. It has helped quite a bit. The next step is to put our work orders on-line. Time sheets and pickup tracking are all a possibility. In looking at this, I realize that I’d like to take the next steps that will send our GIS mapping and water rights that we have at JUB to the I-pads, using ArcGIS. We can easily add landowners and turnouts to this system. Once this is done, a software compatible with ArcGIS is used by many counties and special districts to track work orders, mileage, employees time and so forth. I think this is the way to go. Anything we get accomplished will be within our current budget and Emma will be very helpful to us this summer to see if we can get a good start..

**HB 3231: WATER REUSE:** I am very excited to let you know that Oregon finally has a bill before it that will authorize DEQ and WRD to develop recommendations to make Reuse projects in Oregon less cumbersome. And, there is funding for the bill! DEQ has been dragging their feet on this for years. From what I hear from my colleagues in Klamath and Bend areas, their DEQ contacts don't seem to be aware that such a project exist or how to authorize it. The work we all did hosting the South Suburban Sanitary District last year, and answering questions from around the state is finally paying off for others. Susie Smith from the Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies contacted me last summer about our project and talked with the City of Hermiston as well. She has moved this project forward by getting a broad range of support, as you can see on the letterhead. They made a presentation to the House Committee on, well, you can see from her email below:

*Greetings Bev!*

*I'm circling back with you to let you know that our presentation on water reuse to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water, which featured the West Extension/City of Hermiston reuse project as a case example, was very well received and it resulted in a bill sponsored by Representatives Owens and Helm to direct DEQ (and provide funding) to work with us to evaluate the reuse rules and guides from the perspective of removing regulatory barriers. This is a big deal as we hope to focus a priority on greater access to the partnership type projects your district has with Hermiston.*

Bobby Levy became a co-sponsor of the bill and a hearing was held on March 7. I have included information and letters from several entities, but know there were more. This bill has gotten steam, as it should.

It has passed the Committee with a "do Pass" recommendation. The committee added the funding on March 16. So, we will keep an eye on this and do what we can to make it pass. Once it clears the House, it will go to the Senate. I am not sure which sponsors they have lined up there.