

# WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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February 16, 2023

## **Monthly Board Meeting**

Chairperson Philippi called the Board meeting to order on February 16, 2023 at 9:03 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, Abe McNamee, and Von Studer; Board Secretary/Manager, Bev Bridgewater; Administrative Services Manager, Lisa Baum; Field Superintendent, Ben de los Santos. Director Bob Mueller was on the phone from 9:25 – 10:45.

**AGENDA:** Chairperson Philippi asked for additions to the agenda. There were none. Frederickson moved to accept the agenda. McNamee seconded. Motion passed.

### MONTHLY BUSINESS

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

**BILLS PAYABLE:** McNamee moved to approve the January accounts payable list in the amount of \$112,803.38. Frederickson seconded. Motion passed.

### REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

**OPERATIONS:** De los Santos reported that there is a lot of silt in the canal: more than he's seen. The excavator is cleaning from the endspill, which it hasn't done in many years. The crew is working nine (9) hour days and 5-8 hours on Saturdays now to prepare the canal and laterals for start-up. The Kenworth dump truck is still at Woodpecker, waiting for parts. Discussion. Board wondered about sand blow into the canal. Farmers understand that once the District has cleaned an area, if sand blows back in, the farmer is responsible to remove it.

Ben gave canal crossing updates and discussed several landowner issues. He said the 2023 pickup has been ordered and is at least two months out from order date (mid-March then). He stated the 1994 Chev pick-up, needing a transmission, hasn't run for a few years and the District won't need it.

**MOTION TO DECLARE SURPLUS:** Frederickson moved to declare the 1994 Chevrolet ½ ton ditchrider truck as surplus and to sell it via sealed bid to the highest bidder. McNamee seconded. Motion carried.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:** Baum gave updates on several administrative issues she is working on:

- Update from the Morrow County District Attorney regarding the Coffman theft case. Since she repaid the funds, they won't move ahead with a hearing for now, but will keep the information on file in case a similar incident is reported in the future.
- The SDAO conference provided a lot of worthwhile information on cybersecurity, customer relations, employee interaction, anticipated legislation, budget standards and purchasing. Bridgewater received the SDAO Manager recognition for her service to the community and the video was shown.
- The Best Practices for 2023 is about Emergency Planning. The District is up-to-date on its emergency plans. They are reviewed annually and copies will be provided to the Board after the 2023 review.
- The idea of employee orientation and employee onboarding was brought up at the conference. The District is doing orientation for new employees, but onboarding is a new concept. Basically, this is presenting various components of the District (facilities, water rights, customer service, safety, rights-of-way and so on) to new employees, so they learn more about the how the District works. It is an ongoing process. WEID plans to instigate this procedure.

### **MANAGER'S' REPORT:**

**JAMES CROSS WATER RIGHTS:** Cross attended the July 2022 Board meeting asking about his water rights and delivery. There is a delivery to his property and his line is broken. He asked about removing his water rights because he doesn't want to pay for what he can't use. The Board agreed to allow the removal and also remove the 2022 O&M fees if he gave up his water rights. A letter was sent to him with a relinquishment form. He called in August and did not want to give up his water rights. Now, he is calling again to give up his water rights. Bridgewater talked to Toms, who gets delivery off the irrigation line through the Cross property. They haven't received water for years and agreed to sell their water rights to the District for transfer elsewhere in the District. They paid the 2022 fee. Bridgewater recommends we give Cross the same choice and remind him that he has delivery to his property. The Board agreed. (Follow-up, Cross sold his water rights to the District and paid his 2022 fees).

**DISTRICT WATER REUSE POTENTIAL:** Bridgewater met with a farmer interested in picking up drainage or tailwater from the District that would return to the Columbia River. His attorney is working on ideas to use this water as mitigation for Columbia River water withdrawn upstream as part of the Central irrigation

project. Discussion. The District supports ways to provide water for agriculture and has no objections to exploring this concept, at the interested parties' cost.

**LATERAL 17 PROJECT:** Bridgewater presented the updated map for the Lateral 17/Paul Smith Road project. The federal easement is 50-feet (25' on either side of center). The centerline of the canal is the center of the quarter section, according to surveyor McKinnis. This means that the road is entirely constructed on the east side of the Morrow County ROW (is actually outside the ROW north of Kunze). She has talked with Morrow County Roadmaster and the City about moving the WEID canal over to the edge of its ROW, and allowing for underground utilities and sidewalks. Discussion. Abe suggested we pothole so we can see how deep the pipe can go. Landowners will need to be contacted to move their fences. What about utility poles?

There are a lot of moving parts involving the City of Boardman and Morrow County. They have had turnover recently and are discussing the nitrate issue. Bridgewater recommends that because of this, and the overall cost of the project, that we delay it another season – to the 2025 season. We have about \$250,000 left in our WaterSmart grant and need an estimated \$500,000 more. Finding additional funding is the priority. The Board agreed.

Director Mueller left the meeting via phone at this time.

## DISTRICT BUSINESS

**VANDALISM/TRESPASS CONCERNS:** No update for this meeting.

**ADULTS IN CUSTODY (AIC) vs LABOR CREW:** There was an issue with oversight of the AIC crew. The regular guard was on another assignment the week of occurrence and an instance occurred of incidental contact between an inmate and the WEID supervisor. There has also been at least one instance of sharing of food (peanuts). These were brought by the new guard to his boss at Two Rivers. The guards were pulled off and we haven't had the crew since then. We did our investigation and found no fault on our employee's part. However, the prison continues to investigate. Experience shows this takes a long time. Discussion.

De los Santos was able to get a crew from Independent. He anticipates needing them another month. The cost is twice what we pay the Oregon Dept. of Corrections for half the work (5 laborers versus 10 AIC). This will affect our budget.

**EAGLE CREST SUBDIVISION:** Joe Taylor filed the final plat for his subdivision in September, before completing the work needed by the District. The water rights weren't distributed, there is no shared water delivery agreement, the bridge is not built nor an assignment made to potential landowners in the subdivision, the District has not agreed to the irrigation system design or use of the currently oversized pump.

Discussion. County Planning had listed standards to meet WEID requirements in its final findings, but just didn't follow them. It seemed to be an oversight by the Director of Planning, and we discussed this with her. The Taylors, being the owner of the new properties, plan to continue the work to meet the District, standards which were provided to them in writing. Discussion.

**AL PHILLIPS PLANNED SUBDIVISION/IRRIGON:** Phillips has been working with the District for a planned subdivision across from Huke station in Irrigon. The District has a 15-foot easement on the property, originally obtained by Dennis Logan, for its 24-inch mainline. The easement is shared with Stahls. The actual pipeline appears to be much more than that, plus the fenceline is off a bit, according to the surveyor. Currently the property, formerly owned and irrigated by Pat McNamnee, has its own pump station off the IPS mainline. Phillips would like to add the subdivision to the District pressurized line. We will need to do research on the system design. Discussion. The board agreed to continue exploring options and report back at the next meeting.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Attorney, Spencer Rockwell of SDAO, would like to meet with the Board in executive session at the next meeting to discuss litigation.

### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairperson Philippi adjourned the meeting at 11:40 am.

Signed:

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Bev Bridgewater, Secretary

Attest:

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Dalarie Philippi, Chairperson