

WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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

May 20, 2021

Monthly Board Meeting

Chairperson Philippi called the Board meeting to order on May 20, 2021 at 9:00 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, Bob Mueller and Whitney Coffman; Board Secretary/Manager, Bev Bridgewater; Administrative Services Manager, Lisa Baum; Field Supervisor, Ben de los Santos; Guest, Gary Moore with Rivertech Irrigation. Director Abe McNamee was unable to attend.

Introductions were made.

AGENDA: Mueller moved to approve the agenda as presented. Frederickson seconded. Motion passed.

Manager Bridgewater stated that we are in an emergency situation in two areas of the District:

- 1) The Irrigon Pump Station is having cavitation problems.
- 2) The telemetry program has crashed. It is over 20 years old and cannot be brought back with its current technology.

Chairman Philippi declared an operations emergency for the District and convened the Contract Review Board.

CONTRACT REVIEW BOARD

Chairman Philippi called the Contract Review Board to order at 9:05 am. Bridgewater explained that the District Board is authorized under ORS 279A.060 to serve as a Local Contracting Review Board. In this case, the Board intends to hire two independent contractors with professional expertise to assist with the emergency situations. Bridgewater and Vice Chairman Frederickson have done their due diligence in the selection of the two contractors.

- 1) The Irrigon Pump Station. These are the facts:

The 300 Hp pump is cavitating on a regular basis and requires constant monitoring and adjusting, using a second pump to help control the cavitation.

- a) The pump was purchased “used” in 1981. It has been rebuilt every six years. At the last rebuild, Layne Pumps let the District know that the pump may not be able to be rebuilt again.

- b) The pump has not worked at its specifications since the station and screens were rebuilt in 2016 and the pump was put in a “can”.

Garry Moore of Rivertech Irrigation was at the meeting to give history on the design of the “new” pump station and to answer questions about the pump and the new system. He explained there were problems with the initial installation; fins and crossbars were installed, the pump cans were too small. After questions and discussion, it was clear that our current 300 Hp pump is the wrong pump for the new system.

Timeline of the pump since the new installation:

2016 – new pump station; problems with the pump getting water. IRZ paid for fins and crossbars to be removed. Still problems getting water.

2017 – We had the pump shaft cut down by 12”, so it is now 16” from the bottom. We were able to run just the 300 Hp pump that year, but it did cavitate at higher flows, as shown by the meter.

2018 – silt problems caused the screens to plug. We became aware of the cavitation and started monitoring the hertz and turning on a 100 Hp pump to help slow down the 300 Hp.

2019 and 2020 – continued as above.

2021 – We tried keeping the hertz under a certain number, but that caused more problems and required more labor. We are back to running as we did in 2020.

Frederickson asked Moore if he thinks we are doing the best we can right now? Gary said “Yes.”

Moore explained the type of pump needed that will fit the parameters we have at the “new” pump station – low rpm, high volume, low pressure. He has found one. It will have a 24-inch diameter shaft instead of the 27.5” that we currently have. It will be built by Gould. He cannot quote a price or delivery schedule right now due to the fluctuating market. He estimates upward of \$40,000.

The Board discussed savings to be realized from manpower and energy efficiency plus there would be a rebate from BPA to help cover the cost. Frederickson made a motion for the Contract Review Board to recommend that Garry Moore and Rivertech Irrigation be approved as personal service contractor to the District for the purpose of supplying and installing a new pump at the Irrigon Pump Station and that a new pump be ordered. Mueller seconded. Motion passed.

Moore left the meeting at 9:25 am.

Cecil Rock of Rock Enterprises arrived at the meeting.

- 2) District Telemetry system: These are the facts:
 - a) failure of the telemetry computer occurred when the District upgraded its office computers to Windows 10.
 - b) When Windows 7 was reinstalled, there were problems reloading the operating program, Wonderware.
 - c) Aqua Systems 2000, the original vendor for the automated gates, radios and telemetry system were able to reload Wonderware, but communication with the radios was lost.
 - d) Aqua System stated they did all they can and we would have to find someone local, on the ground, to do the rest of the work. We would likely need new radios.
 - e) Rock Enterprises came in and spent several days recovering what they could, Communication between the existing radios and the computer is not working. Programming for that is lost and will need to be rewritten.

Cecil Rock of Rock Enterprises gave an overview of the work they have done. They have talked to Aqua and various vendors, researching our issues. He commented that, for its time, the Aqua System software and equipment we have is a “good system.” The hardware and PLC are in good order, for their age. He discussed options the District has, to move forward now. One option is to stay with the current radio system and rewrite a program. But, we would have old radios and a system not able to grow. The Board does not want that.

He presented a plan to upgrade the telemetry system in phases that would get it operational for now and continue upgrades and additions over the next few years. The plan is in six phases with total estimated cost \$75,000 to \$80,000.

The Board reviewed the Project Phases and Rock put estimated numbers on them. He presented a quote for Phases I and II of the upgrades, which would be new radios, fix the communication piece, install a new tower, replace the antenna and master radio. Cost is \$29,578. He has found the radios and reviewed them with the Board. He would require 50% down and can get started next week. It will take about two weeks to get the work done. Bridgewater assured the Board that there was money in this year’s budget for this cost,

Phase 3 would be upgrading or repairing field hardware, including solar panels, batteries, probes, and calibration. It would be a time and materials project. Hardware and PLC look to be in good shape, so the cost shouldn’t be too much; likely around \$10,000.

Phase 4 is a computer upgrade, ensuing a backup plan and a recovery disk.

Phase 5 would be to upgrade the software, fix any licensing issues, and assure we have compatible operating systems with Wonderware upgrades. This would be a

quoted task. Wonderware is a great program; it is the Cadillac, but very expensive. It is sold in modules. Ours is basic, but works for now. This part is 2-3 years out.

Phase 6 would be ancillary device upgrades, additions, calibrations. With the new radios, we can add monitoring or control without adding a PLC. We can build a network without needing repeaters. They will not control the gates, but offer flexibility for reporting flows, wind speeds, and so forth.

Discussion and comments. Right now, we have a safety issue as we are running blind on the canal. Ditchriders are out 3 times daily on each of 5 key sites. With the telemetry working, the water can be watched and gates directed from the office computer or company phones.

Frederickson made a motion for the Contract Review Board to recommend that Rock Enterprises be approved as personal service contractor to the District for the purpose of upgrading, repairing and maintain the District's telemetry system and to spend \$30,000 for Phases 1 and 2 in the WEID SCADA UPGRADE PLAN presented by Rock. Mueller seconded. Motion passed.

Cecil Rock left the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Chairman Philippi closed the meeting of the Contract Review Board at 10:20 am and reconvened the regular meeting of the Board of Directors.

Frederickson moved to adopt the recommendations of the Contract Review Board and to authorize an advance payment of \$15,000 to Rock Enterprises for his work. Mueller seconded. Discussion. The motion passed.

MONTHLY BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mueller moved to approve the minutes of the April 2021 Board meeting. Coffman seconded. Motion passed.

BILLS PAYABLE: Review and discussion. Philippi asked about the work done by Wise on the canal road. Bridgewater said it isn't complete. Wise was a third the cost of Reffett on the bid, but planned less rock. There is more work to do and rock to be added. She will talk with Ben and make sure the rest of the work gets done, Frederickson moved to approve the April accounts payable list in the amount of \$113,421.86. Coffman seconded. Motion passed.

FINANCIALS: The financials for the period ending March 31, 2021 were reviewed. In order to pay for the telemetry, the water measurement line will need to be increased from \$13,500 to \$36,000 (\$6,000 in costs already accrued for programming). Bridgewater recommends the District NOT purchase a new pickup this year and the

\$10,000 budgeted for the pickup be moved to telemetry. The balance of \$12,500 will be drawn from fund balance. Frederickson made a motion to move the funds, as recommended by Bridgewater, to not purchase a new pickup for 2021, and to change the water measurement line item to include “telemetry”. Coffman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OPERATIONS: Operations are reported in the Manager’s report. The crew has started to wind down on overtime hours, as there are fewer outages now.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: Baum reported that Casey Kroske won the hearing to get unemployment benefits. Brief discussion. The Board, while disappointed in how this all went, agreed to move on. Baum reported that the Martinez water rights have been quitclaimed to the District. Proceeds from selling the 3.5 acres of water rights will be used to pay her bill since the last bankruptcy filing. She still owes the amount to be collected under the bankruptcy.

MANAGER’S’ REPORT: A written report was distributed to the Directors and is attached to and a part of the minutes. It was reviewed and discussed.

CREW UPDATE: Bridgewater further added that the crew is on Covid protocol now with one leased worker testing positive and three workers undergoing testing and isolation protocol.

She stated we are looking for a permanent employee that can help Ben. Dalarie brought up some issues, which showed that without Ben around, the temp crews are lost. Bev said we had problems on the Lateral 12 project because Ben couldn’t be there to oversee the work and we relied on temps to remove the ditch and install the pipe. We had to hire Wise for some repairs in Irrigon. We just don’t have sufficient trained staff and we need to “step up our game” in who we hire. We need to find a level of employee that can help Ben, such as pump experience, an equipment maintenance/operator, CDL, plus we need solid decision-making. Vern pointed out that it doesn’t matter the organization, these conversations happen every day. Dalarie wants to be sure Ben knows how much the District appreciates him.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

REVIEW UPDATED ENFORCEMENT/FINE POLICY: The Board reviewed the policy and asked questions. This is a rewrite of the former policy. The emergency and drought provision has been added. The Board agreed with the policy rewrite. Bridgewater pointed out the fines usually help stop problems and she often waives them if a matter is resolved quickly.

RESOLUTION NO. 21-009 – DECLARATION OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY:

Morrow and Umatilla Counties have declared a drought emergency. The Governor has declared a drought in Morrow County. By having a drought declared, possible other waters become available to the District, such as groundwater or water from other pump stations along the Columbia River. Bridgewater thinks we should keep that possibility open, but the real reason for the District is implement conservation practices in the District, as needed. The Board reviewed the WEID Drought Plan. The District usually runs water to mid-October for Irrigon, although it's been the 3rd week the last few years, and to the end of October on the main canal. Frederickson commented that WEID runs water longer than the other Districts in the Basin. Philippi pointed out that one year, McCarty paid for the extra week of water. Bridgewater reminded, we can get the water, we just have to pay for the pumping costs and that becomes a budget concern.

She discussed the use of “big guns” on smaller lots, a practice she wants discontinued. Especially in a water-logged area like Donovan Meadows, this practice is putting too much water into the ground and causing problems with neighbors. The Board agreed.

She pointed out that the WEID pumping costs will be higher this year, even without the drought, because Maxwell Diversion will be ON. It has been OFF the past two year due to spring floods, which washed out the diversion. WEID benefitted from the foregone diversion in 2019 and 2020, Hermiston Irrigation District has repaired it and they will take water starting down the Maxwell in June. Discussion.

Motion was made by Frederickson to adopt Resolution No. 21-009 and was seconded by Mueller. With no further discussion, a vote was taken and the motion passed.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairperson Philippi adjourned the meeting at 10:50 am.

Signed:

Bev Bridgewater, Secretary

Attest:

Dalarie Philippi, Chairperson