

# WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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December 7, 2023

## **Monthly Board Meeting**

Chairperson Philippi called the Board meeting to order on December 7, 2023, at 9:10 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; Operations Superintendent, Ben De Los Santos; Director Bob Mueller was not able to attend.

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

### MONTHLY BUSINESS

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

**BILLS PAYABLE:** Frederickson moved to approve the November accounts payable list in the amount of \$147,545.24. McNamee seconded. Discussion. Motion passed.

**FINANCIALS:** The preliminary financial reports for the period ending November 30, 2023 were reviewed and discussed. One concern is the amount of funds spent to keep the KW dump truck running (truck No. 11). The board directed that if a major problem arises again, bring the issue to the Board before spending money to fix it. They also asked for a five-year look back on the vehicle and equipment repairs for the next meeting.

### REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

#### **OPERATIONS:**

De Los Santos reported:

- The excavator is back in service and new employee Don Schlosser started cleaning the main canal yesterday. Discussion.
- District has purchased seat covers and floor mats for all pickups and they are being installed. The Board noted the WEID decal is on the new truck.
- Discussion about the fuel pump issue for truck No. 9.

- He has reviewed the information and recommendations from the OSHA inspection but hasn't started addressing the issues yet. The costliest item will be the expanded metal for the pump station shafts. He has different crew assigned to areas of correction. He will meet the deadline of January 5, 2024 stated in the letter from OSHA.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE:**

Baum reported:

- Her attendance at the recent OWRC conference was very informative. She attended a meeting with Regional BOR Director, Carrington – joining other local irrigation district managers.
- She has collected funds from two of the folks authorized for legal collections procedures. The rest will go to the attorney soon.
- She will start working on power bills next week.
- The 2022 audit report was distributed to the Board. They will review it and take action at the January meeting.
- She has put out RFP for a three year contract for District audit for 2024 – 2026.
- The office copier needs to be replaced. She presented her research into options. The board agreed with Lisa's recommendation, and this will be included in the 2024 budget.

## **MANAGER REPORT:**

A written report was provided to the Board. It was reviewed and is attached to and part of these minutes.

**MEMO FROM CITY MANAGER:** The Board reviewed recent correspondence to the District from Irrigon City Manager, Aaron Palmquist. The Board discussed its concern wherein the City seems to believe it has jurisdiction over the WEID/BOR facilities and rights-of-way. Directors are concerned that past meetings (both WEID and BOR) with City officials are not being productive. The City continues to allow its contractors to tear up District facilities without consequence and installs its own facilities in federal ROW without proper authorization.

Past City Administrators have met with the WEID Board and clearly stated that they want the irrigation water to Irrigon patrons to continue. The entities have co-existed. Now, the City's current actions are jeopardizing delivery to customers, and the matter is becoming urgent. The Board directed Manager Bridgewater to attend a City Council meeting and state the problem directly to the Council.

Does this City Council and Administration want irrigation delivery in the City boundaries to cease and if so, are they willing to pay the costs of abandoning federal ROW, removing District and federal facilities and providing irrigation water to those that currently have that right? Or will they incorporate standards and actions into

their development code that will protect the irrigation facilities and those city patrons that have irrigation rights? What is the end game?

**WATER RIGHT ENFORCEMENT:** Some issues come up from time to time as ditchriders are on the canal or plats are being reviewed where we find land irrigated without a water right. Bridgewater stated that she addresses these as they come up. The crew can pay attention to the main canal, but over-irrigation in other parts of the District are difficult to identify. Philippi pointed out the federal ROW that we have moved folks off, which is true. Reclamation can't have a beneficial use on their fee-title ground without a federal permit, so we have to pay attention to fee title ground. Studer pointed out wind blow that moves the water. Discussion. The board agreed the current procedure is fine.

**WATER MARKETING:** Bridgewater reported that she has had the first request for a permanent water marketing customer for the reuse water. Currently, the water is in the main canal as supplemental to the rest of the District water. Wes and Mary Killion at 78852 Tom's Camp Road have requested irrigation water to replace their well. The rate for the water in 2024 is \$48 per acre foot. There may be a filing fee with the State. She will get the details and work on a contract for the water for the Board's review.

**TEMPORARY WATER RIGHT TRANSFERS:** Based on the fact that several of our larger landowners have standard water right transfers that they do each year, McNamee requested to find a way that the temporary transfer fee can be reduced. We use a statute that allows 13 Districts in the State to send their maps and information each season to the watermaster, and the transfer is effective immediately. There is a five-year temporary transfer for District water that goes through the standard State process that may save money. Or the District may be able to decrease its mapping fees for recurring transfers. Discussion. Bridgewater will bring the transfer policy and recommendations to the next meeting.

**CANAL WATER STUDY:** McNamee brought up a concern about groundwater coming under the canal from the Stahl's open ditch. Discussion about this and other areas of the canal. We will be sure the engineers look at this and include this area in the Canal water study. With a new Board member (Studer), staff briefly discussed what the purpose of the canal study is. Bridgewater explained it will become part of the District's Water Management and Conservation Plan, but the real purpose is to look at the future of the canal – what is the “dream plan” for the future of the canal – lining, piping, concrete? What areas need drainage. Frederickson stated it makes us “shovel ready” for getting big money down the road. More discussion. Staff will ask Reclamation's engineer to take a look at this area. Also, we will check for any agreements that address liability if the Stahl pond or canal fails and causes damage the WEID main canal.

## DISTRICT BUSINESS

**BUDGET 2024:** A draft budget for 2024 was presented to the Board, acting as a Budget Committee. Budget line items were reviewed and discussed. The District will use the 3.2% COL increase for 2023 for wages. The same number will be used for its annual O&M fees. This keeps the District wages and rates up with inflation.

The Board reviewed what the O&M Fees will be for 2024.

The Budget will come to the Board at the January meeting as a Resolution to be reviewed and adopted.

## OTHER BUSINESS

None.

## ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairperson Philippi adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Signed:

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Bev Bridgewater, Secretary

Attest:

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Dalarie Philippi, Chairperson