

WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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July 29, 2021

Monthly Board Meeting

Chairperson Philippi called the Board meeting to order on July 29, 2021 at 9:07 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 Abe McNamee; Board Secretary/Manager, Bev Bridgewater; Administrative Services Manager, Lisa Baum; Guest, Christi Davis-Kernan, acting Field Manager of the Bureau of Reclamation. Director Whitney Coffman was not unable to attend.

Introductions were made.

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

MONTHLY BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Frederickson moved to approve the minutes of the May and June 2021 Board meetings. Philippi seconded. Motion passed.

BILLS PAYABLE: Review and discussion. Mueller moved to approve the May accounts payable list in the amount of \$193,830.35 and the June accounts payable list in the amount of \$110,560.59. McNamee seconded. Motion passed.

FINANCIALS: The financials for the period ending May 31, 2021 were reviewed. Bridgewater reported that the major overage line items will be pumping and herbicide costs. She will have a proforma budget at the September meeting.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OPERATIONS: Operations are reported in the Manager's report. There was no further update.

RELOCATION CANAL: McNamee brought up his concern about the Relocation Canal. There is a lot of wasted water on this canal. Bridgewater stated, yes. The background is that there is a flowage easement onto the McNamee ground; the canal can run up to 12 cfs; there is one large farmer (Strebin) and approximately 18 smaller users, plus a District pump station. Water fluctuates a lot.

McNamee pointed out that Streb, who has most of the use on the canal, had an irrigator who managed the canal for many years. He has retired and, as a result, the endspill of the Relocation is much larger than past years. The District crews run the ditch three times per day this year which helps, but its not enough. Discussion on ways to improve system. The Board suggested we start looking for ways to pipe the canal. We could pipe in sections, but the water savings would only happen after it is fully piped. It is about 2.5 miles long.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: The 2020 audit report was distributed. Board members are asked to review it and either call Lisa with questions or bring them to the next meeting.

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.

TELEMETRY UPDATE: Vern talked with Cecil Rock, the vendor and has this update. The radios are all installed; there is a communication problem; the antennae are not able to communicate; we are waiting for a variance from the City for a tower to install a new antennae at the District office.

RECLAMATION REVIEWS: Reclamation has done two reviews this summer, as reported in the Manager’s report. Davis-Kernan stated there were no new recommendations and to keep “doing what we are doing.” She brought up some funding ideas; discussed lining projects such as ours; discussed a couple of spillway gates that need repair; and said there is a canal inspection review set for August 9.

LATERAL 31 and DOHERTY HEADGATES: Abe reviewed his proposal for putting in a new headgate for Doherty as their along the 31 dirt ditch have failed. Dalarie has talked to Jim Doherty and Ben has talked to Kelly Doherty. So far, no answer from them regarding this work. We are doing research to identify the owner of the right-of-way.

RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW) RESEARCH: The ROW research continues. This project is quite large and will take some time to complete.

CULTURAL WORK: The Board wondered if the cultural work is done on all the Boardman canal. Bridgewater stated that it is not. Davis-Kernan recommended we contact the Reclamation as soon as possible for work that we want done. Bridgewater said there are repairs to our spillways that we need to start planning for. The headgate at the Relocation Canal is failing and Spillways No. 1 and No. 2 need rebuilding. Abe discussed Spillway No. 1 (at the 4X4 building in Umatilla) and he had some ideas on how to repair it. Discussion. He pointed out that it could last ten more years or fail tomorrow.

WINDWAVE CROSSING: Windwave proposed to install fiber optics under the main canal at Miller Road in Boardman and at Paterson Ferry in Irrigon. They proposed underground crossings – boring under the canal. Abe wondered who has the liability from the boring. Davis-Kernan stated this is all outlined in the contract that Reclamation prepares for any crossings involving its assets (the main canal). Discussion. The Board agreed to the underground crossing of the main canal, but are concerned about any vaults within the federal easement.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

IRRIGON PUMP STATION UPDATE: Following up from the Manager’s report, the divers will be here tomorrow. Tommy, from Cascade Divers, remembers the pump station quite well because they did the installation. Here are the questions we need to answer about installing the cross-connection pipe:

- Can the pipe be installed through the stringers?
- Do we want the new pipe close to the bottom, or higher? Abe and Bob thought it should come in at the current height or above. Vern thought the lower we can get, the better the flow.
- Bob - The screen might be filling up with silt. We should check it.
- Vern – We are trying to get 9000 gpm through a 30-inch can. The suction needs to be bigger. Also, can we look at tying all the cans together?
- Abe – we can’t get 9000 gpm through a 30-inch pipe.

Bev’s note: The pipe can is 26-inches, not 30. She will investigate all concerns and report back to the Board.

JOB DESCRIPTION/LABORER & IRRIGATION SYSTEM OPERATOR: Bridgewater has updated the job descriptions. We would like to hire a laborer on who will be part of the Union. It was time to update the job descriptions so they clearly state the requirements to be considered for the job. The Board had these questions and comments:

- 1) Will the District require its operators to live within the District? It is written in our employment policy that employees must live within the District. Manger Bridgewater currently lives in Hermiston and we have hired an Operations Manager in the past that also lives in Hermiston. Bridgewater stated that the response time is the key. Because operators need to respond to emergencies, it is reasonable to have a response time in their description.
- 2) Could the Board waive this in the future. Yes, as long as it doesn’t affect other folks who applied for the same job.
- 3) Would this open us up to a lawsuit? As long as we apply our requirements evenly to all applicants, we are fine. Previous ditchriders have lived in the

District and we can show the importance of the need for a quick response time. A delay could cause a liability issue.

- 4) What if a vet has a handicap? For any worker, they will need to meet the physical requirements unless the District can reasonably accommodate them. For the Laborer or System Op job, accommodation for a physical disability may be difficult, but it could happen for a management job. An employee would ask for reasonable accommodation in their interview and it will be up to the District to study the requirement and determine whether than accommodation can be met. Davis-Kernan pointed out that “reasonable accommodation” can be subjective. Reclamation uses a term called “bonafide occupational qualifications.”

Bev’s Note: A bona fide occupational qualification is a characteristic or attribute required for a job that could be considered discrimination if it were not necessary to perform the job in question, or if the job were unsafe for one category of people but not in another. It would be good for the District to look at this.

Motion was made by Frederickson to adopt the new job descriptions and run them by SDAO and the Union for approval. Mueller seconded. Motion passed.

VETERANS PREFERENCE POLICY: The Board reviewed the WEID Veterans Preference Policy, which is in line with that required by the State of Oregon. Frederickson moved to adopt the Veterans policy as presented. Mueller seconded. Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board went into executive session at 10:30 a.m. to discuss employee matters and litigation. Executive session was closed at 10:49 a,m,

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Signed:

Bev Bridgewater, Secretary

Attest:

Dalarie Philippi, Chairperson