

# WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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May 23, 2019

## **Monthly Board Meeting**

Chairperson Philippi called the Board meeting to order on May 23, 2019 at 9:05 a.m. at the Irrigon Fire Hall located at 705 N. Main St. in Irrigon. Those in attendance were: Board members, Dalarie Philippi, Warren Kemper, Vern Frederickson and Bob Mueller; Board Secretary/Manager, Bev Bridgewater; Office Manager, Lisa Baum; Field Superintendent, Ben de los Santos; Employee, Adam Tompkins, Guests, Tamra Mabbott from the City of Umatilla and Sean Kimbrel from the Bureau of Reclamation. Director Abe McNamee was not able to attend the meeting.

**AGENDA:** An updated agenda was distributed. Mueller moved to approve the agenda as distributed. Frederickson seconded. Motion passed.

**INTRODUCTIONS WERE MADE.**

### MONTHLY BUSINESS

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Mueller moved to approve the minutes of the April Board meeting as presented. Frederickson seconded. Motion passed.

**BILLS PAYABLE:** After review, Mueller moved to approve the April accounts payable list in the amount of \$119,485.40. Frederickson seconded. Motion passed.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** The financial reports for the period ending March 31, 2019 were presented and reviewed.

### FLOOR BUSINESS

**CITY OF UMATILLA:** The District and Reclamation are working with the City for permits and agreements to receive industrial wastewater (from the VADATA facility in McNary) into the WEID canal. Tamra Mabbot gave an update. The DEQ permit is expected to be in any week now. The discharge has high content in salts and will be diluted with the river water where it enters the canal. This is for the first facility (at the Port). The second facility (Bonney Campus) will be added in a year or so. The City wants to go to bid for pipeline construction, but is waiting on permits and agreements from Reclamation. Discussion. Sean stated that the process is for Reclamation to negotiate the documents with the City, keeping the District informed. Once an agreement is reached, the WEID and City will sign with Reclamation being the last signer. Mabbott briefly discussed the financial part and gave Bridgewater the finance officer information. Mabbott left the meeting at 9:33 a.m.

Bridgewater explained to the Board that the three-way agreement allows the water to come into the Phase I canal and be pumped to the District canal. The agreement between the City and the District will be about the financial and liability part of the project. It was last at the City's attorney's office. She reminded the Board that the permits from DEQ need to be issued first as they are referred to in all the documents. Discussion. The Board will have time to review all documents before being asked to approve and sign.

## REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

**MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION:** Bridgewater and the Board discussed several areas of operational concern over the past few months. She stated at times she feels pressure from some Board members to respond a certain way. She appreciates input from the Board members and knows we have a crew that is growing in experience. We (her as well) just need to understand that we can't do it all and sometimes we need to rent equipment, bring in an electrician, an engineer, a contractor or hire a mechanic. She knows the Board has varying opinions on that and feels the pressure, especially with things moving quickly as they have this past five weeks.

Dalarie wondered about the Doherty/Corpus ditch, if she felt the Board was interfering with that? No. That matter came before the Board and the Board directed her and Ben to look at the ditch for a solution. Dalarie and Vern did look at the ditch and offer up a solution. It moved quickly and cost more than she thinks was authorized by the Board. But, they had discussion in open meeting after the work. She knows Dalarie did not like the letter she sent to the landowners and perhaps that part should have been discussed. It may open up problems in other areas down the road, knowing we paid for that private ditch repair without any agreement in place. That is the part she thinks we should have pushed on – an agreement for the ditch between the landowners. This keeps us consistent – solving problems and reaching solutions of benefit to the District.

Bev thinks that she made a wrong decision in trying to fix the Relocation Canal washout using our crew rather than a hiring contractor right away and that decision is costing the District extra money. Dalarie pointed out to Ben and Adam that they really have not been involved with a washout and it is much different than repairing the ditch. They know that now. A contractor has been hired and is doing the work. Discussion. The Board offered their support by understanding things come quickly. "Don't start a project if we don't have adequate crew," stated Dalarie. Mueller stated that sometimes we have to take time to make the right decisions, but don't always have the time. Bev should feel free to call an emergency Board meeting to get support from the whole Board when there are questions she needs help with.

## **OPERATIONS:**

Craig Coleman did not attend today's meeting, but wanted to get permission to flush his filters into the canal. This would be upstream from his chemicals, so just canal water. As long as there is no chemical or fertilizer in the system, it is fine.

**RECLAMATION CANAL WASHOUT UPDATE:** The rebuild by Wes Wise Construction will be done by the end of next week. We have been able to get water to some folks on the canal at times, and the rain has helped.

**IPS SCREEN PROBLEM:** The IPS screen were totally clogged on May 16 and divers had to be called in. Stahl have said they would install the air blast system, but we haven't heard anything yet. They will likely want us to pay a portion of the divers cost for cleaning the screen. Discussion. Herb Stahl will be invited to the next meeting.

**THREE MILE FALLS DIVERSION SCREEN:** BPA rebuilt the four large drum screens at Three Mile Dam this past winter, bringing them into current criteria. New screen material was added. With the tremendous amount of silt moving through the system this spring, there have been silting problems at the screens. The fine silt is entering the screen, the dropping off inside the screen, causing the bolts to shear. Representatives from the Yakima Fish Facility (where the screens were rebuilt) showed up last week and helped with ideas to decrease the silting problem. Local BPA crews want us to shut down the area in front of our forebay and remove the silt this summer. It's been many years since we've removed silt in front of our headgates and there is a lot of silt there now. Discussion.

**EXCAVATOR REPAIR:** Adam reported that the excavator has a leak in the back of it injection pump and we've had to "shut it down." Vern's mechanic looked at it and agrees that we need to take it to a shop. Ken Bailey out of Lexington is willing to work on it and we can haul the excavator to him. Adam said there are other parts that are worn out that we should fix those at the same time. Bailey said that the excavator was in good shape for its age. The motor is fine. Bailey can also do the pins and bushings and other work that we had Pape bid on. Discussion. Mueller moved to have the repairs done and to take the funds out of the equipment reserve. Kemper seconded. Discussion. Motion passed.

**OFFICE MANAGER:** Lisa gave a report on collection actions. One property that is in early stages of foreclosure (Lambson property off 13<sup>th</sup> Place) will need to go through an estate first. This would increase the cost of our work and there is no assurance that a judge would allow the legal costs of closing the estate to be claimed. Frederickson moved to write off the bill and legal costs thus far on the Lambson property, confiscate the water right to sell elsewhere in the District and cap off their delivery. Kemper seconded. Discussion and motion passed.

**RELOCATION CANAL COSTS:** The repair on the Relocation Canal is \$20,275. This includes our emergency action, the engineering and the first fix by the District. That fix failed, so we've hired a contractor to do the repair. The Board had questions:

- Our insurance covers any liability we have for an incident that is our fault. This is not our fault.
- If Strebin claims a loss against us, we will pass that on to the offending landowner.
- The landowner at the end (Tony Osborne) put a checkboard in the canal after the ditchriders had gone home, causing the canal to overtop. We have pictures and Tony does not deny this.
- It is common practice to bill back a customer for repairs due to damage caused by them.
- Our insurance company has sent a letter to Tony, notifying him to expect a bill from us.

The Board agreed that we should send the bill to the landowner for the repair that works – the engineer, the contractor and associated costs. They asked that a letter be sent to Osborne to let him know they will review the costs at the next meeting.

**MANAGER'S' REPORT:** A written report was distributed to the directors and is attached to and a part of the minutes. Discussion. Information about Reclamation's Directives and Standards (D&S) regarding notification and approval for repairs done by transferred work agencies was discussed. Sean left the meeting at 10:56 am.

**RECLAMATION TITLE TRANSFER LEGISLATION:** Congress has passed title transfer legislation that sets a path for transferring title of Reclamation facilities to the operator (such as the District). This is for single use facilities. Bridgewater pointed out that when our contract is paid out, Reclamation retains title to all facilities. Over the years, this has been discussed and the Board was not interested. We would need to pay off our contract first. This would get the District out of RRA regulations, easement issues, and Reclamation oversight on the canal. The Dam would not be considered eligible for transfer as it is a multi-use facility. The Board would like more information.

## **DISTRICT BUSINESS**

**REVIEW OF STANARD OPERATION PROCEDURES FOR BOARDS LEFT IN THE CANAL:** Bev is working on a Ditchrider Manual that will have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in place that are fairly specific. This will be helpful, not only to our current crew, but to those ditchriders in the future. She will bring SOP to the Board from time to time as they are being written. The Board went over the policy and asked questions. It looks good.

**CITY OF UMATILLA PERMIT:** As discussed above, we are waiting on Reclamation and DEQ for the next steps.

**SUTER PARTITION:** A partition has been filed with Morrow County by Pat Suter to partition his property into two lots – one north and one south of the main canal. The property is located along Toms Camp Road and the main canal bisects it. Due to a lawsuit settlement several years ago, there is an agreement pertaining to the property about fence location and maintenance of the easement area on the east side of Lateral 29. The following recommendations were given regarding the partition:

1. District recommends that everything be removed within the federal right-of-way. The surveyor is stating the property boundaries are the north and south boundary of the right-of-way, leaving the canal for federal use.
2. We should require fencing along the right-of-way, which is common for partitions and subdivisions along the canal. We have fencing standards.
3. The former agreement should be cancelled as it is no longer relevant.
4. The location and right-of-way for Lateral 29 should be marked on the plat.

**PROJECT FUNDING:** Discussion on how the cost of Boardman piping projects can be met. The budget has \$50,000 dedicated annually. If we save pumping costs, that should be able to make the payment. The problem is that not all of our pumping costs are budgeted as we often exceed. How can we make this work?

We do not have the manpower or equipment to do large projects, such as Laterals 15 and 17. Bridgewater stated that hiring contractors for a portion of the work is in those budgets. However, the prices do keep going up. She wants to consider using HDPE on Lateral 17 since the pipe is along Paul Smith Road, which is a heavily travelled road. Discussion.

Irrigon mainline. We need to look at replacing the steel line from 4<sup>th</sup> Street W to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street W – approximately 1400 feet of 12-inch line. Vern suggested we look at mortar lining this pipe.

**DUMP TRUCK:** A used dump truck from Wes Wise Construction is available for purchase. Dalarie pointed out that if we are only running the District, one dump truck will do. But, with the projects, we need two to haul in the fill and remove the concrete. Discussion. Frederickson moved to purchase the used dump truck from Wes Wise for \$18,000. Mueller seconded. Motion passed.

**CITY OF IRRIGON BUILDING PERMIT:** We are in the process of working towards getting the building permit. We are still waiting for engineering on the building. Apparently, plans have not caught up the new wind load specifications. The Board reviewed the permit letter from the City.

**GROUNDWATER APPLICATION \_ BOMBING RANGE ROAD:** The Port would like to get this permit filed. Mueller thought 2000-4000 gpm would be available. The Board asked about primary and supplemental water rights, thinking some new land could be found. Bridgewater explained that once the permit is filed, it is set. You can move a primary to supplemental, but not supplemental to primary. There were more questions and the board is not ready to make a decision.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board went into executive session at 12:02 p.m. in accordance with ORS 192.660 to discuss the lawsuit filed by a former prison inmate. The Board came out of Executive Session at 12:28 p.m.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Manager Bridgewater will be moving to Medicare insurance within the next few months. She laid out the cost for the District and there will be savings. Lisa said this would be 1099 income. The Board said as long as it doesn't cost them more, it's fine and they will reimburse her costs with allowance for dental, chiropractic and vision, as she has indicated. This keeps her with the coverage she currently has with a cost savings to the District.

## ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chairperson Philippi adjourned the meeting at 12:42 p.m.

Signed:

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Bev Bridgewater, Secretary

Attest:

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Dalarie Philippi, Chairperson