

ROCKWOOD WATER P.U.D.
MINUTES, REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD
July 26, 2006
Rockwood Water Boardroom

Board members present: Stephen McElroy, Sandra Ramaker, Herb Brown, Larry Dixon, Don McCarthy

Staff present: Harvey Barnes, District Manager (DM); Mike Baker, District Superintendent (DS); Sabrina Walyer, Administrative Secretary (AS)

Guests present: Fran Hyson, Pat Brown, Colleen Lisoski, Barbara Rempfer

President Stephen McElroy called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

President McElroy asked if there were any changes or additions to the agenda.

Don McCarthy moved to approve the agenda. **Herb Brown** seconded the motion. **The motion was approved; none opposed.**

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Herb Brown moved to approve the consent agenda. **Sandra Ramaker** seconded the motion. **The motioned was approved; none opposed.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Fran Hyson clarified her comments on page 2, saying that she is asking for the board to discontinue charging the expenses of relatives on the district's VISA card and she will be filing a complaint with the Ethics Commission.

Herb Brown moved to approve the minutes from the June 28th regular meeting as amended. **Don McCarthy** seconded the motion. **The motion was approved; none opposed.**

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS

Herb Brown moved to approve the bills. **Larry Dixon** seconded the motion. **The motion was approved; none opposed.**

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON AGENDA ITEMS

Fran Hyson began by saying that she resents the fact that the board has not reviewed the budget increases for the conferences and meetings. She is still upset that the board will not give the patrons at least a 1 % refund. Rate-payers are the ones putting the money into drilling the wells, she added, and were promised that their rates would be decreased. **Hyson** further remarked that the budget members should begin attending the regular meetings as well so that they can be informed of issues and board decisions.

Directing her comments to Larry Dixon, **Fran Hyson** said that it is the rate-payers who are paying the tab for the tapping team. She asked what benefits the ratepayers gain in relation to the tapping team. **Hyson** added that we are living in a low-income area and that the rate-payers deserve a piece of the pie.

Larry Dixon explained that he believes that when employees are happy, they enjoy their job more, and thus productivity goes up. **Pat Brown** approached and stated that she thinks the board is doing a great job. She further stated that, thanks to the way the money has been managed, the district has been able to replace and repair pipes, and drill the wells. **Sandra Ramaker** commented that there are some board members and employees who are also rate-payers. She reiterated that the reason the board has not had to raise rates in the last couple of years is due to the fact that they have been managing the money well, and *saving* money for emergencies, repairs, etc. *Saving* the money is what keeps the board from having to raise the rates, **Ramaker** added, and remarked that the board tries to be fair to the customers.

DM Barnes stated that a refund was never promised to the rate-payers. He outlined the various projects that the reserved money will be used for. The money is there for emergencies, equipment failures, projects, etc.. It is not that they are trying to hoard the money, **Barnes** said, but that they are trying to be prepared for those occurrences when they will need it.

ANNUAL POLICY MANUAL REVIEW

DM Barnes said that he did not have any changes or amendments that he needed the board to review. **President McElroy** asked if there were any members of the board who had suggestions for changes.

Sandra Ramaker stated that she had a few policy issues to discuss. The first policy she mentioned was Series 1000, Section 2.1.19. She explained that this policy says that the board of directors will participate in the hiring of exempt employees. Citing the hiring of the Administrative Secretary position as an example, **Ramaker** said that she does not remember the board ever taking part in this, and questioned whether it is even necessary. She suggested it be removed if it is not a process we have practiced. **Larry Dixon** remarked that this policy was originally instituted for a situation where the board has reservations or concerns about the district manager's hiring practices. He added that the board hasn't participated in the hiring process of exempt employees because they haven't needed to.

Secondly, **Sandra Ramaker** referred to a policy, located in Appendices IV (e) page 2, regarding the \$25 deposit required of customers to check out a video tape of the district board meetings. She said that there has only been one person she can think of that has had a problem in returning the tape/s. **Ramaker** said that she does not think it is fair that the customers should pay a \$25 deposit, and she would like to see that policy removed.

DM Barnes said that if we do not have a deposit, we can figure out another way to collect on damaged tapes. He added that it does encourage people to return the tapes, however, knowing they could lose their \$25. **Fran Hyson** said that she stopped checking out the tapes because she refuses to give the \$25 deposit. **Pat Brown** suggested that we have a policy where a person cannot check out a second tape until they return the first. **DM Barnes** shared the idea that we could only charge the \$25 deposit to an individual if we have had a problem with that specific person not returning the tapes properly. **Don McCarthy** said that he would support that plan.

Sandra Ramaker brought to light a third policy, Series 1000, Section 8.1.1, 4, & 5, which refers to the submission of receipts by the board for meal expenses during district-sponsored travel. Regarding policy 8.1.1, **Ramaker** stated that she would like to see the board change to per diem. She said she thinks it will be easier to keep track of expenses, it will be the same amount for each board member, and there will be less paperwork for the finance director. In addition to meals, **Ramaker** said she thinks that per diem should include additional fees for events or banquets they want to participate in.

In reviewing policy 8.1.4, which states that all family arrangements will be paid for in advance, **Ramaker** pointed out the she has not observed this being followed. She thinks it is ok to ask the administrative secretary to include a guest when booking the travel arrangements, but that they should pay Rockwood in advance.

Another issue **Ramaker** recalled as being a problem is the last-minute decisions to attend a conference or event. She acknowledged that she included, has not been able to forecast whether or not she could participate, but that she still feels they should be held responsible for any additional fees and difference in costs administered for that reason. **Don McCarthy** asked if they should pay the fee for travel insurance. **Ramaker** said yes, that could be considered. Aside from things such as AWWA memberships and benefits, the district should not pay for any travel permits or passports. She concluded by saying that she does not feel that Rockwood should pay for their emergencies.

DM Barnes said that given an emergency at very short notice, he has not charged the board members full fare. In some cases, he added, it could cost the district less money and the staff less time if the board changes to per diem. **President McElroy** asked if DM Barnes thought that it would save the staff time to do away with receipts. **DM Barnes** responded that he thought it would.

Pat Brown mentioned that she does not feel that a board member should have to pay for full conference costs if they fall ill. She also stated that it can be actually more expensive to be issued a per diem because people may not use the entire allowance. In addition, **Brown** said that she doesn't mind paying for her own ticket, but she does want to be on the same plane as her husband, Director Herb Brown.

Herb Brown remarked that he thought there should be some questions answered before they settle on this policy. **Larry Dixon** said that the board used to operate on per diem, and then they decided to change to a receipt method because the per diem was not enough for expensive cities, such as New York. **DM Barnes** said that there is an IRS determined per diem amount for all major cities now. **Fran Hyson** approached and said that it is too much work for the finance director to sort out individual expenses. She said it would be wise for each individual to use their own charge cards.

DM Barnes asked for some direction from the board on how they would like to proceed with these issues. **Herb Brown, Larry Dixon, and Don McCarthy** expressed that they would like to further consider the concepts of instituting a per diem, and no longer allowing cash advances. **DM Barnes** said that he would discuss the policies with Atty. Clark Balfour and also gather further information from him on the language to use in writing the policies. All agreed that they would add an item on the August agenda regarding a further review of the policy manual.

Sandra Ramaker asked DM Barnes if we had any plans or policies regarding safety programs. She mentioned that she remembers discussing the need to fix vault lids and the ladders so that they stand higher. **DM Barnes** answered that the vault lids and the ladders should be ok, as they were recently maintained. The shut-off valves on the bigger meters, **Barnes** added, are tough to retro-fit because they would have to install a longer series of valves inside the existing vault. The crew would need to replace the entire vault and disrupt the customer's service, said **Barnes**. **Ramaker** clarified that she was wondering if Rockwood has a policy or set of standards for the equipment used and/or safety requirements to protect the employees, specifically the field crew. **DM Barnes** replied yes, there is a safety program that was adopted by the board.

Larry Dixon asked if we provide assistance information for customers who cannot pay their water bill. **DM Barnes** answered that Rockwood does give out contact information for organizations that will help, including the program that we fund.

CONVENE AS THE CONTRACT REVIEW BOARD- PICKUP TRUCK

DM Barnes announced that he needed the board's approval in order to purchase a new pickup truck and exclude it from the bid process. He would like to buy an end-of-the-year model, **Barnes** said, which should cost the district less money.

Herb Brown moved to adopt the findings presented to the board. **Don McCarthy** seconded the motion. The motion was approved; none opposed.

RESOLUTION 06/07-001- EXEMPT PURCHASE OF PICKUP TRUCK

Sandra Ramaker moved to adopt Resolution 06/07-001. **Herb Brown** seconded the motion. The motion was approved; none opposed.

AWWA MEETING REIMBURSEMENT

DM Barnes stated that there is a Fall Trustee's Meeting approaching in September. **Sandra Ramaker** said that she only plans to spend one night in Seaside, OR for the meeting, and will only need reimbursement for transportation and meals. **DM Barnes** said that he needs permission from the board to reimburse Ramaker for these expenses. **President McElroy** asked if there were any comments from the board or the public.

Herb Brown moved to approve the reimbursement of travel expenses for the Fall Trustee's Meeting in September. **Don McCarthy** seconded the motion. The motion was approved; none opposed.

EMPLOYEE DINNER

DM Barnes reminded the board that we had revived the idea of an employee dinner last year. He said that if they would like to hold another banquet this year, then the planning would need to begin fairly soon, especially if they wish it to be held during the holidays. **Sandra Ramaker** voiced that she remembers the dinner being an "employee appreciation" celebration vs. a holiday party. She said that if it will remain so, then we should continue to have it *after* the holidays and not during. **Larry Dixon** echoed that he would also like to see it held after the holidays, and preferably on the east side of the river. **Don McCarthy** and **President McElroy** agreed that post-holidays would be a good time to schedule the dinner. **McCarthy** added that he would really like to see it continue as thanks to the employees.

Don McCarthy moved that the board continue the tradition of having an employee appreciation dinner and that it should be scheduled after the holidays. **Herb Brown** seconded the motion. The motion was approved; none opposed.

PROJECT UPDATE

DM Barnes began by relaying to the board that the bids for the shop building were entirely too high to move forward with the project at this time. The three bids that were turned in were all nearly twice the amount they had budgeted for, he said. It will be put on the shelf for now and may possibly continue in the future if it becomes affordable. **DM Barnes** continued by saying that the 30-inch pipe project is going along well, and in the next couple of weeks they hope to connect up to the new vault at 202nd and Division which will give us new access to the Belle Vista reservoir.

DM Barnes said that next week, they will receive the pump cans for the pump station project. In September it will be shut-down and renovated. Regarding the ground water wells, **Barnes** stated that one of the motors stopped working. It is possible that it may be the electrical wiring. **GeoTech** will be here next week to pull out the pump so they can take a close look, he added. If it looks like

we need to send the pump out to have it repaired, **DM Barnes** concluded, then we will be relying on a temporary pump.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

DM Barnes announced that this will be the last board meeting for AS Walyer, as she is headed off to Boston College. **Don McCarthy** said that he was sorry to see AS Walyer go; he apologized for missing the last meeting. **McCarthy** added that he wanted to thank the patrons for the opportunity to attend the National Conference, as it was a great experience. **Herb Brown** mentioned that he thought the district is being managed very well, and that he too is sorry to see AS Walyer leave, as she has been an effective administrative secretary. **Sandra Ramaker** wished AS Walyer well. She added that at the next employee appreciation dinner she would like to see DM Barnes and DS Baker say something positive about each of their employees.

AS Walyer stated that it has been a pleasure working for everyone, and that she is thankful for the opportunities that the position has given her. **Larry Dixon** said that they will miss her. **President McElroy** said that she has done a great job. **President McElroy** noted Fran Hyson's concerns about the handicapped parking spot out in front of the building. **Hyson** asked if there were any plans to add another spot. **DM Barnes** replied that they might be able to put another handicapped parking space on the other side of the parking lot, and keep the space that is closer to the building for a larger handicapped vehicle, such as a van.

President McElroy reminded everyone that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 23rd at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Herb Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. **Don McCarthy** seconded the motion. **The motion was approved; none opposed.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Secretary