

Skamania County Public Utility District #1
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

April 19th, 2010

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by President Curt Esch at 9:00 a.m. at the PUD office in Carson, WA. The following persons were present: Commissioner Curt Esch; Commissioner Clyde Leach; Commissioner Dennis Gale; Manager, Bob Wittenberg; Auditor, Chris Iobst; Attorney, Ken Woodrich; Public Members, Gene Caudill and Ryan and Rani Douglass

Commissioner Gale made a **motion** to approve corrected Minutes of the April 5, 2010 Meeting. Commissioner Leach **seconded** the motion, and the minutes were **approved** by a 3-0 vote.

GUESTS

- **Ryan and Rani Douglass** – The Douglasses discussed the water connection on their vacant lot and their desire to possibly sell their connection back to the District. Rani noted that they have been paying a basic charge for water since their service was connected in February of 2007. The Board noted that the District may not be interested in purchasing the connection back from the Douglasses, and considerations are made on a case by case basis. Commissioner Gale made a **motion** to refund their water billings from the beginning of their service due to a misunderstanding of the District's policies. Commissioner Leach **seconded**, and the motion was **approved unanimously**.

- **Gene Caudill** – Caudill asked if the Board had given any more consideration to doing a solar project at the District's headquarters and volunteered his engineering services to help with a project. Esch noted concern for available space at the headquarters and Wittenberg discussed the District's current focus on attaining credits with BPA's conservation program.

The Meeting recessed for Break at 10:00 a.m., reconvening in Regular Session at 10:05

OLD BUSINESS

- **Resolution #2341- Open Door Policy** – The Board and Staff reviewed the revised Resolution #2341, Open Door Policy. Commissioner Esch noted he felt the resolution was in conflict with the existing Whistle Blower Policy and in violation of First Amendment rights. Woodrich discussed the relationship between First Amendment rights and public employees and supported the fit of the resolution with the Whistle Blower Policy. Commissioner Esch stated that he had obtained an independent legal opinion stating that a gag order would be illegal. He also stated that he was opposed to Gale's resolution since, in his opinion, it does not provide adequate protection for disclosing employees and it did not address the fact of the gag order illegality. Esch requested the District's attorney to contact his attorney, Brad Andersen to discuss this issue. Commissioner Gale made a **motion** to adopt Resolution #2341. Commissioner Leach **seconded**, and the motion was **carried by a 2-1 vote**, Commissioner Esch casting the opposing vote.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Connie Reservoir Dedication** – Wittenberg discussed having a dedication ceremony for the Connie Reservoir and inviting legislators to attend. Esch noted an off-site ceremony might work best due to limited access to the reservoir.
- **PUD Picnic** – Wittenberg announced that the employee funded PUD picnic will be on June 27th at 1:00 p.m. at the Home Valley Park.
- **NWPPA Voluntary Assessment** – Wittenberg reviewed NWPPA’s request for a voluntary contribution of \$700 to fund Bob Therleksen’s consulting services to support NWPPA’s position in cap and trade conditions in the Western Climate Initiative. Commissioner Leach made a motion to pay the \$700 assessment. Commissioner Gale seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.
- **Credit Card Payments** – Iobst reviewed the current credit card process and fees incurred by the District. He noted that many customers use credit cards each month and recommended accepting automatic, recurring credit card payments to avoid having staff process each payment individually. Commissioner Leach made a **motion** to accept recurring credit card payments. Commissioner Gale **seconded**, and the motion was **carried unanimously**.

MANAGER’S REPORT

- **Carson Water Plan Update** - Wittenberg reviewed the water plan update process, noting the need for an additional water source on the Carson Water System for the 20 year plan. Wittenberg and Falkenberg will review options for additional water and rights at the first Meeting in May.
- **Flagging on Highway 14** - Wittenberg and Work Order Specialist, Shonna Taylor, noted the intent to use contract flaggers on Highway 14 with the new regulations that require a certified Traffic Control Supervisor to supervise all flagging on state highways.
- **Underwood Community Garden** - Wittenberg relayed a request from 12 Underwood residents asking the District to donate water for the Underwood Community Garden. Woodrich noted that would constitute a gift of public funds and advised against the donation. The Board agreed not to donate water to the community garden.

- **Radio Repeater** - Wittenberg noted that Bob Callahan had approached him to discuss a possible partnership to install a radio repeater on his property. Wittenberg was unsure of the added radio coverage for the District at that location.
- **March Outage Report** - Wittenberg announced that the underground replacement project on Miller Rd. had been completed. Leach asked what was causing temporary interruptions in power in Underwood, and Wittenberg noted he will investigate.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

- **Bad Debt Write-Offs** - Senior Accounting Clerk, Lisa Allen, presented a list of customers with bad debt totaling \$2,358.39 to write-off and turn over to Columbia Credit for collection. Commissioner Leach made a **motion** to approve the bad debt write-off. Commissioner Gale **seconded**, and the motion was **carried unanimously**.
- **VEBA Resolution for Retiree** - Iobst noted he will be bringing forth a resolution to transfer an annual leave payout to the VEBA account of a retiring employee. He is currently working with the Union and VEBA for their approval of the resolution before presenting it to the Board.
- **PCS Cahier Module** - Iobst noted that PCS staff was onsite to convert to their new cashier module. He noted the new program is Windows formatted and replaces the old DOS based module.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

- **WSAMA Meeting** - Woodrich noted his intent to attend the upcoming Washington State Association of Municipal Attorneys meeting in Vancouver, WA. He will split his travel expenses between the four municipalities he represents, including the District.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

- **WAPUDA Meeting** – Gale reported on his attendance at the meeting and noted topics including the hiring of a new Executive Director, proposed legislation and climate legislation.
- **Commissioner Leach** – Esch noted conversations with County Commissioners discussing the proposal to change the designation of land around Mt. St. Helens and Swift Creek, removing it from local control and local taxes.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

The following vouchers were approved for payment by a **motion** made by Commissioner Gale.

Voucher	Number	Amount
Electric System	44785-44847	\$ 233,700.75
Carson Water	5592-5596	\$ 1,511.85
Underwood Water	3323-3327	\$ 45,067.00

Commissioner Leach **seconded**, and the motion was **carried unanimously**.

The Meeting Adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Curt C. Esch, President

Clyde D. Leach, Secretary

The next regular scheduled Board of Commissioner's Meeting will be:
Monday, May 3rd, 2010 at 9:00 a.m..