

PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1
OF ASOTIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
MEETING MINUTES
March 26, 2019

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President Judy Ridge presiding, the Public Utility District No. 1 of Asotin County Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. at the PUD Office at 1500 Scenic Way.

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ROLL CALL: PRESENT Commissioners: Judy Ridge, Don Nuxoll. Greg McCall joined by phone.

Staff: Tim Simpson.

Members of the public were present.

MINUTES OF MEETING AND VOUCHER APPROVAL

MOTION by Commissioner Don Nuxoll and seconded by Commissioner Greg McCall to approve the consent agenda approving the minutes of the March 12, 2019 Regular Meeting and payment of the Electronic Transaction Vouchers #5067EFT – #5082EFT in the amount of \$34,974.78 and Blanket Transaction Voucher Approval Documents covering Electronic Transaction Vouchers #19032002 and #19032003 and vouchers #39329 – #39365 in the amount of \$78,436.70. The question was called for on the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Cross Connection Control and Backflow Prevention Program

The manager presented a report from the Washington State Department of Health which evaluates the effectiveness of our Cross-Connection Control (CCC) program. The report is generated annually and is based upon backflow prevention device testing and other information submitted to their CCC program staff. The manager stated that in most areas of the program we are in 100% compliance including the testing of devices on high-hazard premises but inspection and testing of medium to low-hazard backflow prevention devices, such as lawn irrigation systems, is only at 12% of the number of known assemblies in our data base. The Public Health performance goal, based on the Washington Administrative Code 246-290-490(7) is 100% testing.

The manager stated that in order for the PUD to reach the 100% Public Health Goal, a new staff member would need to be hired and dedicated fully to this program. He stated that after the program is ramped up to become effective that other duties, such as meter reading or the wellhead protection program could be added to the position. He stated that if the program is to be successful, policies that state that water service will be discontinued if devices aren't tested needs to be followed through with. He stated that in the past the Board was reluctant to discontinue service because of the low-hazard nature of the lawn irrigation systems. He stated that devices would continue to be tested by independent contractors who are certified to do so at the expense of the customer. The manager also provided the Board with CCC and Backflow Prevention policies along with the current CCC Plan.

Commissioners Nuxoll and Ridge stated that their preference is to not hire anyone at this time but start with notification and education of customers about backflow prevention and their responsibilities for having their devices tested through our newsletter and mailings and see if compliance increases.

The Board stated that they agree that the policies for shut-off of water service needs to be followed through with if customers do not comply with the regulations. In addition, they stated that the independent testers need to be contacted to let them know of our push to get customers to comply with the program regulations. Commissioner McCall asked if we could bid out the testing of devices to the lowest bidder and have them test all the devices and charge the customers the bid price. Commissioner Ridge and the manager stated that other PUDs have done this and it has been successful.

The manager stated that in 2016 a survey of commercial devices was conducted and that compliance with testing did increase. He stated a survey of homeowners could be conducted as well. He stated that he will work with staff to develop a letter that can be sent to customers along with the development of an educational brochure that could be included in our billing statements. The manager stated that his long-term goal would be to develop the meter reading position into one that would include the duties and responsibilities of the Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention program.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items presented under New Business.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Operations Activity – the manager reported that the electrical panel for the Bridge Street Lift Station has been delivered. The 2019 Budget designated \$50,000 for purchasing a new electrical panel and moving controls out of the current control pit providing for easier access and eliminating a confined space. Work on adding the panel and relocating the controls will begin soon. The operations crew has been working on meter box cleaning, mapping projects, pre-Department of Health Sanitary Survey inspections, annual tank inspections and ground kill spray was completed. The new seed plant in the Port of Clarkston tapped the PUD sewer system with a new 2-inch pressure line.

City of Clarkston Sewer System – the manager updated the Commissioners regarding discussions of contractually operating the City of Clarkston Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and sewer collection system. He reported that he spoke with PUD legal counsel, Steve DiJulio, last week to determine if he had heard from the City. Mr. DiJulio stated that he had not and did not anticipate any discussion happening until after their negotiations with the union. When asked about the development of a pro forma prior to meeting with the City after union negotiations, Mr. DiJulio stated that it would be in the economic interest of the PUD to wait due to the potential of a joint engagement agreement between the PUD and City for Foster Pepper's legal services in developing a contract. The manager reiterated that the Mayor and key City staff were all in agreement that it would be in the City's best interest to seek a joint engagement agreement. The City's attorney, Todd Richardson, stated that the City believes that such an agreement will allow both the City and PUD to minimize costs and to take advantage of the experience offered by Foster Pepper. The Board concurred with this proposal.

The manager reported that he spoke with the City Public Works Director, Kevin Poole, regarding the status of the Department of Commerce grant for the construction of a solar array at the WWTP. He stated that he has not heard about the grant award. The manager stated that the meeting with the union is on Thursday, April 11 and he anticipates the City Council going public with the process, both entities engaging Foster Pepper, the development of a pro forma followed by a joint meeting of PUD and City to begin the process of developing the Agreement for contract operation.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Nuxoll attended the Public Utility Risk Management System (PURMS) meetings with the Director of Finance and Administration, Bob Sischo, in Burien, Washington on March 20, 2019. He reported that the excess property carrier has decided to pull out of certain markets primarily due to the fires in California requiring PURMS to secure 100% excess coverage through multiple mutual insurance companies which has reduced overall cost. He reported that the \$30,000 assessment of our prescription program has netted an \$820,000 annual savings and that it was voted on to conduct an assessment of our First-Choice medical program to see if savings can be achieved. He spoke of a lawsuit from a property owner who purchased a piece of property recently where a small portion of the property was flooded in the 1950s due to the construction of a dam. He stated that attorney fees have amounted to \$35,000.

Commissioner McCall joined the Washington PUD Association meetings via conference call on March 14-15. He reported that the focus of the meetings was primarily regarding the legislative session and the bills impacting the PUD both positively and negatively. He stated the session is ramping down and the number of bills still alive has dwindled. He reported that the Governor's Clean Energy Bill has resulted in Investor-Owned Utilities (IOU) requesting language that would undermine the right of citizens to form public utility districts and utilize the legal condemnation process. The IOUs have called for inclusion of language that would allow them to include a variety of additional costs for compliance with the law in condemnation proceedings that would, if enacted, limit the ability of citizens to form or expand PUDs. Legislators have been urged to reject any language that would undermine the rights of citizens to choose their electricity provider under existing law.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.