

PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1
OF ASOTIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2021

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President Greg McCall 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, Clarkston, Washington.
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ROLL CALL: PRESENT Commissioners: Greg McCall, Don Nuxoll and Judy Ridge.
Staff: Tim Simpson and Bob Sischo.

MINUTES OF MEETING AND VOUCHER APPROVAL

MOTION by Commissioner Judy Ridge and seconded by Commissioner Don Nuxoll to approve the consent agenda approving the minutes of the September 14, 2021 Redistricting Plan Hearing and Regular Meeting and payment of Payroll Voucher #2077 and Electronic Payroll Vouchers #6101EFT – #6117EFT in the amount of \$41,742.76 and Electronic Accounts Payable Vouchers #21092001, #21092002, #21092003 and #21092201 and Accounts Payable Vouchers #42152 – #42178 in the amount of \$88,646.16. The question was called for on the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no items presented under Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 21-493 – Adopting the Redistricting Plan Revising Commissioner District Boundaries

The manager presented Resolution 21-493 which provides for the adoption of the Commissioner Redistricting Plan developed by Sammamish Data Systems based on the 2020 federal decennial census data. The Resolution details the process undertaken to review and realign Commissioner Districts, the “Meets and Bounds” or legal descriptions of Commissioner District boundaries, details the population data within each District and repeals Resolution 11-375 which provided for the 2010 federal decennial census Commissioner Redistricting.

The manager stated that the 2020 Census database was published Thursday, August 12 and redistricting began immediately. From the data, a Redistricting Plan was developed, Commissioner District boundaries were realigned, with preference to current precincts, and population was distributed to a sub 1% per RCW 29A.76.010. Population within the District boundaries was amended to 6,628 for Commissioner District No. 1; 6,677 for Commissioner District No. 2 and 6,644 for Commissioner District No. 3 for a total population of 19,949.

The process continued with the development of legal descriptions of each District boundary. Asotin County staff verified that the precincts, legal descriptions, population distribution and boundary map were accurate. A Public Hearing was held on Tuesday, September 14 where registered voters were provided an opportunity to comment on the Redistricting Plan. The registered voter in attendance stated that the proposed Redistricting Plan looked good.

MOTION by Commissioner Don Nuxoll and seconded by Commissioner Judy Ridge to approve Resolution 21-493 adopting the Redistricting Plan and revising Commissioner District boundaries based on the 2020 federal decennial census data. The question was called for on the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Delinquent Account Arrearage Collection and Payment Arrangement Plan

The manager reported the state-imposed moratorium, which prohibits the disconnection of customers due to nonpayment and the charging of late fees, is scheduled to terminate on September 30, 2021. The original proclamation was enacted in March 2020. During that time our PUD has seen a reduction in revenue in the amount of \$150,000 and account delinquencies nearly triple in dollar amount over that period. With the ending of the moratorium in sight, a letter was sent to 140 customers on September 15th, whose accounts are over 61 days delinquent. There is \$56,400 in arrearages 61 days past due.

He stated that funding from the state, through the newly formed Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), will assist with utility arrearages. Funding will be available October 1, 2021 and will go directly to the Community Action Partnership (CAP) for distribution to the PUD for water and wastewater account arrearages. For a customer to qualify, household income has to be at 150% of the Federal, regional poverty level. Up to \$2,500 is available for those who qualify. Some customers will not qualify for the LIHWAP funding due to the income requirements therefore, a payment plan will need to be established with them.

Staff and the manager are recommending a payment plan of up to 12 months depending on the amount of the customers arrearage. Customers will still be obligated to pay their current bill while paying of their delinquency. As a part of the process of addressing arrearages, a collection and payment plan has been developed to assist customers in accessing funding and working with the PUD for payment arrangements and provide direction to PUD Customer Service Representatives in working with customers regarding their delinquent accounts. The manager and Director Bob Sischo reviewed the Arrearage Collection and Payment Arrangement Plan with the Board and requested approval.

MOTION by Commissioner Don Nuxoll and seconded by Commissioner Judy Ridge to approve Delinquent Account Arrearage Collection and Payment Arrangement Plan allowing for a payment plan up to twelve (12) months. The question was called for on the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Operations Activity – Staff continues to work on repair options for the Heights Reservoirs drain line.

Capital Improvement Projects – The operations crew continues to work on the replacement of customer service lines on Libby Street from 13th to 15th Streets. 22 of the 36 services have been replaced. Staff is working on a booster pump installation project for the River's Bend Reservoir. The reservoir is currently fed by gravity through a valve. A booster pump will greatly aid operation of the reservoir during the peak flow season. 2022 Capital Improvement Project planning is underway.

Delinquent Accounts and Collections Update – The total dollar amount of accounts currently past due is \$122,000. Accounts that are over 120 days past due are at \$56,400. 103 door tags for cycles 1-3 were generated on September 8th and 50 payments have been received. 185 door tags for billing cycles 4-6 were September 23rd and are be distributed this week. 19 customers have responded to the 140 letters sent notifying them that the disconnect moratorium will end and that normal collection activities will commence in October. Several who responded paid their bills in full.

Development Activity – The 4th Avenue Legacy Estates Development installation of the water and sewer main lines is complete along with installation of sewer laterals. Water service lines have been stubbed out and the contractor is currently installing the meter sets. Final inspection will occur soon.

Administrative Activity – A 2020 Fiscal Year Audit Exit Conference, with State Auditor’s Office (SAO) staff, was held today with the manager, Commissioner McCall and Director Sischo in attendance. There were several internal and immaterial management recommendations provided as a result of the audit. SAO stated that there were no significant deficiencies and nothing material found during the audit. SAO further stated that the PUD was compliant in all areas, had the highest possible accountability and SAO provides their highest level of assurance in the PUDs controls and accountability. There were no findings or management letter. This was the PUDs 34th consecutive clean audit.

Per Board direction, research was conducted on the siting and use of a fuel storage tank for daily and emergency use by PUD vehicles and equipment. After reviewing average monthly usage of fuel, it was determined that the required volume for both daily usage and for emergency reserve purposes would be 1,500 gallons for diesel and 1,500 gallons for regular unleaded gasoline. Based on the siting of the tank, which would be within the fenced operations shop area, the fuel tank best suited for the site and for our use would be a split-compartment 3,000-gallon tank with half the tank being diesel and the other unleaded. A vendor provided an estimate on a 3,000-gallon split-compartment fuel tank that would be double-walled for primary containment and would include a leak detector and all necessary atmospheric emergency venting and safety equipment. The tank would also include a metering pump. A cardlock system will need to be installed for tracking of usage for auditing purposes and to prevent theft. The estimated cost is \$5,600. The cost estimate for the fuel tank delivered is \$37,380. Coleman Oil was contacted and fuel delivery is not an issue. Coleman discussed building and leasing a tank to the PUD.

Both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Washington regulations were checked regarding the siting of a fuel tank. EPA gives primacy to Washington and the state does not regulate the placement of fuel tanks on the local level. They leave the siting to the discretion of local officials and fire marshal. Staff contacted Karst Riggers, Asotin County Fire Marshal, requesting a determination of the siting of the fuel tank on PUD property, which is zoned public/semi-public. Based on the County zoning regulations, fuel tanks can only be sited on industrial or commercial properties but Mr. Riggers stated that the land use regulations do not apply for our situation because we are using it for own purposes and not selling it to others. He stated that we will need to apply for a placement permit to ensure that we are following and meeting all installation requirements. After discussion of the information presented, the Board directed the manager to research a lease to own option with Coleman.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Commissioner McCall and Ridge attended virtual Washington PUD Association meetings on September 15-17. They reported that the efficient disbursement of information regarding energy issues and bills during the legislative session was discussed. Differing needs amongst PUDs is driving a change in the process of providing information. The Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) and its effect on future policy setting and reporting was discussed. The state Building Council is discussing a requirement for commercial buildings to install solar power that would supply 10% of the building’s energy usage. Utilities are in discussion with the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the removal of dangerous trees near transmission and distribution lines. A special session may be called in November. Letters were sent to the governor, on behalf of PUDs, seeking funds for utility arrearages.

Commissioner Nuxoll attended a virtual Public Utility Risk Management System Administrative meeting on September 22. He reported that cyber insurance costs may increase 86%. Industry wide, cyber insurance has increased 241% with coverage reduced by half. There are 4,000 ransomware attacks nationwide which are driving the increase in the cost of insurance. Liability insurance may increase 51% mostly due to wildfires. Property and health insurance costs are doing good.

Commissioner McCall attended a virtual Washington PUD Association Water Workshop on September 22-23. He reported that discussion continued regarding DNR and the funding for the removal and relocation of culverts for fish passage. Letters were sent to PUDs regarding required vaccination of employees who work on Department of Transportation projects. Water rights use and relinquishment and the selling and transferring of water rights was discussed. The beneficial use of water rights is becoming an even bigger issue than it has been. The Plumber's Union is pushing for prevailing wage for plumbers who work on underground pipelines. The Department of Health is reviewing a number of chemicals and contaminants in water for regulations and testing. A company presented information regarding micro-generation of energy in water systems utilizing pumping and flow systems and the installation of fiber optics inside water mains.

Commissioner Ridge will be attending a virtual Public Power Council meeting on Thursday, October 7.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.