

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
JULY 6, 2023**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on July 6, 2023 was called to order by Chairperson Shute at 3:31 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Chairperson Shute presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Member Milakovich (*via teleconference*), Member Stewart.

Also Present: Executive Assistant Washburn, Information Technology Manager Khattab, Acting General Manager Largent, Administrative Analyst Weber, Customer Service Supervisor Cruz.

Also Present Via Teleconference or Video Conference:

Alternate Harp, Human Resources Specialist Ramirez.

No members of the public were present in person, via teleconference or video conference.

4. **INSTRUCTIONS TO ALLOW PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS FROM THOSE ATTENDING THIS MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE OR VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Mr. Shute read aloud the instructions for those attending the meeting via teleconference or video conference.

5. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

No alternates were seated.

6. **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA (Government Code §54954.2)**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT RELATING TO ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (Limit 3 Minutes)**

There were no comments.

***8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
A. June 1, 2023

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

Action: Approve, Moved by Member Hamilton, Seconded by Member Stewart.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (summary: Ayes = 4).

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Member Milakovich, Member Stewart.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Ms. Largent, as Acting General Manager, deferred her comments to Item #12.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no comments.

Discussion returned from Item #19.

Mr. Stewart expressed how pleased he was with how far RMWD has come with regard to communications and everything it involves. The remaining committee members concurred.

Discussion went to Item #20.

11. SUBMETERING OUTREACH UPDATE

Ms. Weber displayed a breakdown of how many submetered customers were in each of the five divisions. She mentioned staff would like to print and mail monthly newsletters to these customers for which InfoSend has estimated their costs to be approximately \$20,000 per year. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Largent recommended proceeding with quarterly mailings first to which the committee agreed. Ms. Weber offered to create a separate quarterly newsletter made up of the most important or highlighted articles with a call-to-action message printed on the envelopes.

Mr. Stewart pointed out encouraging the customers to opt into receiving the newsletters electronically would assist with creating a list that could be utilized for both emergencies and other notifications.

12. DETACHMENT UPDATE

Ms. Largent announced LAFCO will meet on July 10, 2023 to vote on the detachment. She noted members of the public were encouraged to attend, but not necessarily speak at the meeting. She reiterated Mr. Kennedy's comments in that it appears the vote will be in support of the detachment. She stated she was unsure as to whether there would be sponsored buses available to take members of the public to the hearing.

13. NEWSLETTER CONTENT PLANNING

Ms. Weber stated the August edition will include articles on how to read your bill and fire season preparedness as well as a plug on the customer service survey. Mr. Hamilton inquired as to whether an op-ed piece on the RMWD's new rates should be included. Ms. Largent recommended waiting on the how to read your bill article until September to allow time for all the rates to be in effect for a full month and providing an overview and information related to the rate changes in August so that the customers would get a better understanding about the rate changes prior to them going into effect.

Ms. Weber explained the article related to fire season preparedness will include highlights of the infrastructure, communications, and staff RMWD has in place as means of providing the customers with reassurance. She solicited the committee members for additional ideas.

Discussions ensued.

Ms. Weber noted the September newsletter will include an article highlighting common support calls to customer service for assistance. She mentioned Mr. Gutierrez would also like to have a feature on the operations team that would give the customers an inside look as to what the crews do in the field to support them daily. Mr. Shute suggested including statistics related to the meter replacements that took place during the WSUP program. Ms. Largent explained there are some issues to be worked through related to the WSUP program; therefore, she would recommend waiting until these are resolved prior to publishing statistics. Discussion followed.

It was suggested there be newsletter write-ups on any of the larger projects highlighting the benefits of the project as well as pictures of such.

14. CUSTOMER SERVICE METRICS UPDATE

Mr. Cruz presented data showing the metrics comparing customer service calls for January-June for both 2022 and 2023 noting the reason for the significantly higher call volumes in 2022 was due to it being the time period during when RMWD resumed lock offs for non-payments following the pandemic deferral being lifted. He pointed out the call volume for 2023 to date was pretty steady.

Mr. Cruz talked about the metric presented related to the maximum and average call hold times. He pointed out the twenty-five-minute hold time reflected in the data was most likely due to there being limited staff available to take calls. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Shute requested a side-by-side call hold time comparison for 2022 and 2023.

Mr. Cruz complimented his team for significantly reducing the average hold times. He noted June 2023 was the first month the customer service team was fully staffed. Discussion followed.

Mr. Shute inquired as to how much time lapse is experienced between the call coming in and the caller requesting a call back. Mr. Cruz explained how the call back feature works as well as pointed out the wait time prior for requesting a call back is included in the wait time averages provided.

15. CUSTOMER SURVEY UPDATE

Mr. Cruz noted part of promoting the customer service survey will include a pop-up banner on the website, ongoing newsletter features in both June and July, adding a survey link to the customer service representative email signature blocks, creating a poster in the lobby with a QR Code. Ms. Harp clarified thirty-seven total responses have been received to date.

Ms. Weber provided handouts related to the costs for placing advertisements promoting the customer service survey in The Village News. She pointed out one of the possible risks would be anyone outside of RMWD may use this platform to voice their opinions not related to RMWD; therefore, this may not be the best use of district funds as opposed to the other options presented that are free of cost.

Mr. Shute suggested providing a URL link in an article as part of a press release where RMWD would potentially receive free advertising. Ms. Weber agreed this would be another avenue to explore in op-ed pieces as a means of helping shape RMWD's future. Mr. Shute pointed out if there is enough content, the online version could be utilized to get feedback as opposed to advertising.

16. 70TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO DESIGN INPUT

Ms. Weber presented ideas related to the RMWD's upcoming 70th anniversary. She noted some of the ideas for elevating the current logo tagline and icon would be to remove the rainbow icon that resembles a WIFI signal, replacing the "committed to excellence" tagline with a "70 years of service", as well as resizing the "R" to maximize space creating a cleaner presence and making it easier to print on apparel.

Ms. Weber talked about the ideas for building on the RMWD brand including keeping Rainbow text to establish consistency with branding, designing a symmetrical and balanced logo, and using color to evoke feeling and connection. She stated staff would like to select 2-3 accent colors to add dimensions such as orange and green that focus on RMWD's core values as well as drive in how RMWD partners with the community. She solicited the committee for feedback.

Mr. Shute stated he looks forward to seeing a sample brand pallet from which the committee can make suggestions.

17. CUSTOMER SERVICE WELCOME PACKET

Mr. Cruz talked about how staff would like to build on the existing RMWD Customer Service Welcome Packet including revising the welcome letter to add information regarding the Flume device as well as explain the size of the District and comparing the difference in population from surrounding communities. Discussions ensued.

Mr. Cruz mentioned other revisions would include one-page infographics that emphasizes the number of ratepayers, area to cover, and topography of the community, as well as a rate sheet showing the new rates that went into effect July 1, 2023.

18. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Ms. Weber stated staff has scanned in the most recent articles published in The Village News to share with the committee. Discussions ensued.

19. LIST OF SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING

It was noted updates on the heli-hydrant, 70th anniversary logo design, customer service metrics, newsletter content, detachment, and submetering should be on the next agenda.

Discussion returned to Item # 10.

20. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute.

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary