

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
SEPTEMBER 7, 2023**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on September 7, 2023, was called to order by Vice Chairperson Stewart at 3:32 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Vice Chairperson Stewart, presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Alternate Harp.

Also Present: Executive Assistant Washburn, Information Technology Manager Khattab, Customer Service Supervisor Cruz.

Absent: Member Shute, Member Milakovich.

Also Present Via Teleconference or Video Conference:

Operations Manager Gutierrez, Administrative Analyst Weber.

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**

There were no members of the public in attendance via teleconference or video conference; therefore, the instructions were not read aloud.

5. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Alternate Harp was seated as the alternate.

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

Mr. Cruz stated all the information related to Item #12 had been provided at the August committee meeting; therefore, he recommended Item #12 be deleted. There were no objections.

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

There were no comments.

***8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
A. August 3, 2023

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

Action: Approve, Moved by Member Hamilton, Seconded by Alternate Harp.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 3).

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Alternate Harp.

Absent: Member Shute, Member Milakovich.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Ms. Harp stated Mr. Kennedy was attending a SDCWA workshop. She announced the new general manager has been selected who is scheduled to start on September 25, 2023, and how there will be an overlap with two RMWD general managers through to Mr. Kennedy's October 2023,023 retirement.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hamilton mentioned he has had a few discussions with ratepayers related to customer service matters that may be insignificant, but cause friction between the ratepayer and the District.

Mr. Hamilton relayed one of the comments is regarding the drop box relocation now requiring customers to exit their vehicle to drop off their payments. He recommended consideration be given to the possibly of moving the box to a more convenient location, especially for the more senior customers.

Mr. Hamilton mentioned that upon arriving at the headquarters at approximately 1:30 p.m. on a weekday, he found the front door to the main lobby was locked. He expressed concern that although this may not be a big deal, a ratepayer may become frustrated to find the office door locked after making the trip over to the headquarters. It was noted this was most likely an error that occurred with the emergency lock button accidentally activated.

Mr. Hamilton stated he also heard complaints that with the current flexible work schedule, many senior managers are not available to meet with ratepayers when they have questions about activities. He noted one ratepayer stated they made multiple trips to the District to try to get information related to downsizing their meter and anyone to provide support beyond customer service was unavailable.

Mr. Hamilton stated he does not want to make these matters a big deal, but wanted to bring them forward so that staff may be able to find a means of facilitating the interaction between RMWD and the ratepayers without incurring any great expense. He pointed out these customers did relay they receive excellent service from the front desk representatives; it was more about other staff members being available to meet with them, which seemed to need to be escalated.

Discussion ensued regarding what RMWD can or cannot do related to the November 7, 2023, elections regarding the detachment.

11. SUBMETERING QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Ms. Weber announced RMWD received and signed the proposal from InfoSend for sending out quarterly newsletters to the submetering non-ratepayers. She noted the articles will include the latest detachment information, grant award, as well as some highlights for emergency preparedness. She stated it was anticipated to have these newsletters rolled out the third week of September. Ms. Harp added there will also be information about for the North County Fire Open House that will take place on October 14th.

12. CUSTOMER SERVICE METRICS

This item was deleted per Item #6.

13. RANKING OF TOP 10 ITEMS BROUGHT TO RMWD'S ATTENTION FROM CUSTOMERS

Mr. Cruz reviewed the Top 10 Customer Service FAQ's compiled after meeting with his team.

Mr. Hamilton inquired as to what the most difficult concerns customer service must address. Mr. Cruz stated although not difficult, the backflow notice inquiries take a bit more communicating with the backflow specialist. Mr. Hamilton asked if there was something that could be improved within the system that would assist customer service in addressing backflow matters more efficiently. Mr. Cruz said he would reach out to the backflow specialist to see if there was something available.

Mr. Stewart asked whether it was RMWD's backflow specialist's job to test all the backflow devices. Ms. Harp noted this would be the primary contact; however, all members of the meter crews were certified to conduct the testing as well. It was noted the testing is now conducted in-house as opposed to being contracted out.

14. GENERAL LOGO UPDATE

Ms. Weber announced the Board selected the new logo after being presented with those recommended by the committee following receipt of input and feedback. She displayed the logo chosen including mockups of how they will appear on the circular badges, apparel, and collateral.

15. 70TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PLANNING

Ms. Weber stated staff are planning for a 70th anniversary event to be held on a Saturday in mid or late January 2024. She noted the idea is to hold a marketplace/farmer's market that centers the event on the community and highlights local business. She listed potential sites under consideration.

Mr. Stewart asked if this would be the only event in celebration of the 70th anniversary. Ms. Harp shared several other ideas that may be explored. Mr. Stewart suggested considering the Pala Mesa Resort as another possible venue or event location.

16. NEWSLETTER CONTENT PLANNING

Ms. Weber pointed out the profile of Mr. Kennedy will be profiled in the September newsletter and the new general manager, Jake Wiley, will be profiled in the October edition. She noted the October edition will also include emergency preparedness month as well as a call to action for the customer service survey. She stated the November edition will include an operations team feature, holiday reminder, and a repeat call-to-action for the customer service survey.

17. DETACHMENT UPDATE

Mr. Hamilton reported SDCWA has filed suit against LAFCO. Ms. Washburn mentioned RMWD was served today with a first amendment to the initial summons. He mentioned RMWD was in active negotiations in hopes of reaching a potential settlement.

18. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Ms. Harp mentioned hard copies of the recent media stories have been distributed. Ms. Weber stated there were an abundance of media stories recently noting The Village News was actively keeping the public advised as to updates related to the detachment matter. She reviewed each of the media stories while providing additional details as to the subject matter and media sources.

Discussion ensued.

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

It was noted district headquarters field trip update, introduction of new general manager, quarterly customer service metrics, 70th anniversary celebration planning update, and detachment update should be on the next committee meeting agenda.

Ms. Harp suggested moving the October 5, 2023, committee meeting to an earlier time to allow staff and board members to attend Mr. Kennedy's retirement event that starts at 4:00 p.m. It was decided to schedule this meeting for earlier in the day to accommodate for the event.

20. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Vice Chairperson Stewart.

The meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Bill Stewart, Committee Vice Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary