

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
MAY 7, 2020**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on May 7, 2020 was called to order by Chairperson Johnson at 3:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Chairperson Johnson, presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Member Hamilton, Member Johnson (*via video teleconference*), Member Stewart (*via video teleconference*), Member Vernon (*via video teleconference*), Alternate Gray (*via video teleconference*).

Also Present: General Manager Kennedy, Executive Assistant Washburn, Engineering Technician Rubio, Information and Technology Manager Khattab, Information and Technology Specialist Espino.

Absent: Member Shute.

Present via video teleconference:

Operations Manager Gutierrez, Finance Manager Largent, District Engineer Strapac.

No members of the public were present.

4. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

There were no alternates seated.

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

Ms. Gray asked to remove the CSUSM Student Program Update item due to the fact she just received their report today and Mr. Kennedy still needs to review it.

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

There were no comments.

7. **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

There were no comments.

***8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
A. March 5, 2020

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

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

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

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Johnson, Member Stewart, Member Vernon.

9. DISCUSSION REGARDING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT BEING PROVIDED ON THE RMWD WEBSITE OR AS MAILERS

Mr. Gutierrez recalled documentation was presented to this committee a few meetings ago noting the EPA as well as California PDW allows RMWD to do electronic delivery of the District's Consumer Confidence Report. He said staff wanted to get input from the committee if there was interested in providing the report electronically, in hard copies, or a combination of both delivery methods. He mentioned the cost savings would be approximately \$5,000 in printing costs with distributing the report electronically.

Mr. Vernon recalled the committee wanting to do as much as possible by providing information to assist the customer in understanding the conditions under which RMWD was looking to change providers as well as to feel comfortable with the product being delivered. He said although it does not seem appropriate to spend additional monies at this time, unless RMWD has a really confident complete coverage with the electronic communication, both methods would be more suitable.

Hamilton suggested posting the report on the website and utilizing the newsletter as a communications piece. Mr. Kennedy added providing a means for requesting a hard copy of the report should also be made available.

Mr. Vernon expressed the importance of promoting the fact RMWD was still reporting a high-quality product, was a reliable source, and that during these uncertain times this was a stable organization. He said taking advantage of having to provide this report must be provided to use this leverage. He noted the details are not as important as the message.

Mr. Gutierrez confirmed the report must be out by July 1, 2020. Mr. Kennedy said the June newsletter could be used to provide information on the report.

Ms. Johnson noted staff was provided with committee input and Mr. Gutierrez would be able to proceed. Ms. Gray agreed with promoting the importance of the information contained in the report as well as the value of seeing where the water comes from and the reliability.

10. WSUP AND PUP COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Mr. Gutierrez reported the WSUP project just started back up this week with Concord back at work. He said construction crew has been brought in to assist with exchanging the meters. He said the focus right now was Route 11.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned the communication plan is continuing as planned previously with information being provided to customers in a specific area notifying them of the work to begin within

their area two weeks in advance. He pointed out Concord has implemented a new information system they have been using that has great staff and mapping reports which will assist in communicating locations. He stated very soon there will be a color-coded map showing the areas in which work will be scheduled to take place. Ms. Gray added two customer service staff members are scheduled for training on this program which will be helpful in addressing public inquiries.

Mr. Kennedy stated there was information on the PUP project in the current newsletter noting construction is to begin in the Olive Hills area. He said once construction is scheduled for other locations, outreach efforts will be expanded to those areas.

11. DISCUSSION REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE CODE SECTION 1.02.030 – PUBLIC COMPLAINTS POLICY

Ms. Johnson explained the Board would like committee input on this policy.

Mr. Vernon expressed concern there was no real stipulated timeframe for which customers may make a complaint such as those set for making a claim. He asked how often customer complaints are received and whether there was an existing complaint process that was being revised.

Mr. Kennedy explained the distinction between a complaint and a claim. He said in most instances staff is able to address a complaint pretty instantaneously; however, if a resolve cannot be reached the matter may be escalated to a written complaint may be filed with the District for staff to address or escalate to the General Manager for response. He pointed out claims are covered in the Government Code and have a specific set of procedures to be followed.

Mr. Stewart suggested the policy provide a general program for the response to a complaint as opposed to a claim and how the General Manager should be granted as much discretion as possible. He recommended the policy be broadly written and he agreed with the proposed language provided.

Mr. Vernon stated right now there is no obligation for the General Manager to respond in writing as well as a person may only file a complaint with the Board within thirty days after the General Manager responds in writing. He recommended the language be updated to clarify this process.

Mr. Hamilton recommended the word “may” be changed to “shall” in regards to the General Manager responding to a written complaint in written. Mr. Kennedy noted should he not be available the Acting General Manager would be tasked with providing a written response to a written complaint.

Mr. Hamilton expressed concern with written complaints being presented to the Board without a record of written response. Mr. Kennedy proposed revising the last sentence in the second paragraph to “shall be provided to” as opposed to “may be requested by”. Mr. Hamilton agreed this would assist with better record keeping of written complaints and responses.

Ms. Gray pointed out the purpose of this policy was to ensure public complaints are addressed at the lowest level as possible.

Mr. Vernon recalled a discussion regarding addressing customer requests to waive fees. Mr. Kennedy explained the Board approved a policy approximately eighteen months ago providing guidelines for addressing these types of situations as opposed to giving staff and the General Manager individual discretion to make decisions arbitrarily.

Ms. Johnson summarized what she heard was that it would be nice to have a specific timeline to respond to a complaint, who determines what is or what is not addressed, the General Manager should have some discretion in the response timeline, there is a concern the ten days may be a conflict for the General Manager, the “may” should be changed to “shall”, written responses shall be provided, and the matter will be addressed by the Board at the next “available” regular meeting and special meetings not be called regarding a public complaint. Mr. Kennedy clarified this policy is referring to complaints and not claims.

Mr. Kennedy noted the changes to be made to the policy and would present an updated revision to the Board for consideration.

Ms. Johnson tasked Mr. Hamilton with explaining the committee’s proposed revisions to the Board.

12. CSUSM STUDENT PROGRAM UPDATE

This item was deferred per Item #5.

13. COMMUNITY EVENT UPDATE

Ms. Gray reported the Vintage Car Show has been rescheduled to Sunday, August 23, 2020 at Potter Junior High School. She said she will keep the committee posted if anything changes.

14. COVID-19 UPDATE AND RMWD PROVIDING BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

Mr. Kennedy reported back in 2017 when the Lilac Fire occurred, staff focused on changing the District’s information systems. He noted the internal phone system was updated to a cloud-based system so when the decision employees needed to work remotely, the District was up and running taking phone calls and access information systems from home. He noted one employee was currently on leave due to childcare limitations. He mentioned Infor would be holding a webinar for their customer base to talk about the RMWD experience after seeing something he posted on Twitter.

Mr. Vernon asked if this information was shared in the newsletter. Ms. Gray reported it was in the March newsletter as lessons learned.

Ms. Johnson said under these unique and difficult times, she appreciated all staff was doing here at RMWD. Mr. Kennedy mentioned there has been a recurring after hours Zoom meeting scheduled for all staff members to attend should they choose. He stressed the number one goal has been to achieve the mission of the District irrespective of the conditions and how everyone has done a great job adapting to the situation.

15. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Kennedy reported RMWD filed an application with LAFCO in March for the detachment from SDCWA noting SDCWA had responded to LAFCO on the matter. He said although LAFCO did not make any decisions and how it may remain quiet for a few months, Diane Jacobs recommended an ad hoc committee meet to work out the details and concerns related to the detachment matter.

Mr. Kennedy reported the Board approved the Annexation Agreement with the Pardee Meadowood development. He stated this will add approximately 10% to RMWD's water and wastewater customer base as well as include \$16M-\$17M in water and wastewater capacity fees. He noted the Board will consider adopting a resolution of application to go to LAFCO again (with Valley Center Municipal Water District's consent) to detach this development area from VCMWD and move it into RMWD.

Mr. Stewart asked how many homes were being developed in Meadowood. Mr. Hamilton said in round numbers there would be 850 homes. He noted the developers would also be helping RMWD to build the line extension from the Rainbow Tank to this area which will be a benefit to RMWD's water distribution. Mr. Kennedy explained the Environmental Impact Report has been amended to handle the environmental for the Rice Canyon Pipeline which was adopted by the RMWD Board in April. He added the Board also authorized utilizing the developer's engineering firm at a great price for the design and how working out the construction contract details will commence soon.

16. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH ITEMS

- A. Topics
- B. Calendar
- C. Snipes Calendar
- D. Updates from Other Committees
- E. Customer Relations
- F. Monthly Newsletter Review
- G. Social Media Post Updates

There were no comments.

17. REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RMWD RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Mr. Kennedy pointed out there will be articles in The Village News regarding some of the recent activities.

Mr. Hamilton noted there was something published regarding RMWD receiving the District of Distinction accreditation.

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

It was noted updates on the CSUSM Student Program be on the next agenda and that the General Manager comments include an update on the plans for the RMWD headquarters.

19. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Ms. Johnson.

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 p.m.

Julie Johnson, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary