

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
MAY 5, 2022**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on May 5, 2022, was called to order by Chairperson Shute at 3:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. *(All meetings are being held with in-person attendance following County and State COVID guidelines as well as virtually.)* Chairperson Shute, presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Member Shute, Member Hamilton, Alternate Gray.

Also Present: Executive Assistant Washburn, Information Systems Specialist Espino.

Absent: Member Vernon.

One member of the public was 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**

Alternate Gray was 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. April 7, 2022

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

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

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

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Alternate Gray.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

There were no comments.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hamilton requested an item be included on the June agenda regarding Director Moss' suggestion this committee publish an article related to submetering. Ms. Washburn mentioned staff has requested clarification from Director Moss and that something may be placed on a future agenda for further discussion. Mr. Hamilton briefed the committee noting Director Moss was mostly interested in the communications aspect. Discussion ensued.

11. CUSTOMER SURVEY UPDATE

Ms. Gray reported there have been no responses received through RMWD's email link. She said since staff was in the third round of shutoffs, she was considering taking this website notice down and replacing it with a customer survey notice to see if that is more effective.

12. COMMITTEE MEMBER RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Ms. Gray reported staff has not received communications from interested members of the public. She offered to work on preparing a press release for all committees for this committee to review at next month's committee meeting.

Mr. Shute stated he would like to explore preparing a tri-fold brochure for RMWD to make available for pick up in the lobby as well as at any other community groups or events. He stated he would send a sample copy from which one could be designed.

Ms. Gray pointed out RMWD's offices will be utilized as a polling site and how having a tri-fold may be a good way to distribute more information regarding RMWD's three standing committees.

Discussion ensued.

13. COMMUNITY EVENT PARTICIPATION UPDATE

Mr. Shute clarified this was to discuss whether there were other community events in which RMWD could participate. Ms. Gray mentioned RMWD has been offered to be a part of the Fallbrook Parade during the winter holiday season.

Ms. Gray noted now that the schools are starting to open more, it may become available for RMWD to start participation in the educational programs again. She noted an RMWD employee-driven committee has also expressed an interest in seeking means of getting staff members more facetime throughout the community.

Mr. Hamilton suggested RMWD offices become a part of the local school field trip agendas. Mr. Shute recommended Ms. Gray reach out to her contacts to see what steps needs to be taken to be included as a potential field trip destination. Mr. Shute asked for this to be on the June committee agenda for further discussion.

14. AVOCADO FESTIVAL UPDATE

Ms. Gray, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Shute commented on the large number of attendees at this year's festival, respectively.

Ms. Gray noted RMWD's human resources department was available on site as well and how follow-up discussions have taken place as to how RMWD could possibly utilize two booths at next year's festival. Mr. Shute inquired as to the timeframe for reserving booths. Ms. Gray stated it is generally immediately following the current festival; however, since staff was considering ideas for two booths, she is awaiting approval for the additional rental. Mr. Hamilton suggested Ms. Gray proceed with reserving two booths and then cancel the additional booth should it be deemed not necessary.

15. CROSS-CONNECTION OUTREACH UPDATE

Ms. Gray reported the outreach was going very well. She noted staff was being very cautious about shutting off the actual water by providing plenty of notice. She mentioned the last set of failure notices sent for the month of February totaled approximately 50 and staff was currently in the process of sending out the notices for March.

Mr. Hamilton mentioned there was discussion among the Board Members regarding whether RMWD may want to consider promoting to customers with devices that there may not be a need for them and what requirements must be met for determining whether their device can be removed.

Ms. Gray pointed out there may be opportunity for RMWD's customer service representatives to include the possible removal of a backflow device during conversations with customers related to how their water bill could be reduced. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Shute recommended included an insert to those customers with backflow devices who receive physical bills and email those signed up for electronic billing letting them know they may qualify to have their devices removed by clicking on a quick survey. Mr. Hamilton recommended the notification be provided on the bill pay site if possible. Mr. Shute clarified he was talked about more of a letter or email that does not necessarily need to be included in their bill. He stated both ideas would communicate to the customer base via mail as well as electronically.

Mr. Shute suggested there be an item on the next committee meeting agenda for strategies for backflow.

Ms. Gray stated she was unsure as to whether customers would opt to have their devices removed since it would be at their sole cost. Mr. Shute stated it was his understanding that the device would not need to be physically removed should someone pass the qualifications test, they would simply stop maintaining it. Mr. Hamilton added should something occur to a device that has a customer chooses to have removed, it would be their sole responsibility. Ms. Gray recommended this be made very clear in the communications.

16. CALL VOLUME UPDATE

Ms. Gray asked for this item to be deferred to the next meeting. She noted customer service staff members were taking an average of 860 calls over the past 4-5 months; however, since shutoffs have restarted, the average has increased up to 1,100.

17. TOWN HALL MEETING UPDATE

Mr. Hamilton reported the meeting was very well attended with approximately 175 people in attendance. He mentioned some of the key people in attendance including Jim Desmond who serves as one of the commissioners on LAFCO. He stated nobody from SDCWA seemed to be in attendance. He mentioned the message was clear that the matter of detachment was a pretty hot topic.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the matter of detachment would go to a county-wide and some of the implications.

18. SHUTOFFS UPDATE

Ms. Gray reported staff was receiving good response which is being identified by the number of accounts being shut off cut in half. She stated at least twenty lock offs that are not for empty lots which will be investigated to ensure the meters are not being bypassed.

19. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Mr. Hamilton mentioned there have been several articles published lately related to RMWD projects and how there may be another one coming soon in response to SDCWA's latest pricing structure.

Mr. Hamilton shared there have been discussions related to the detachment application process during which a conclusion was made it may be counterproductive to continue providing written responses and the focus should be shifted to communicating more with the RMWD and LAFCO ratepayers.

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

It was noted RMWD becoming a field trip destination for the local schools, customer survey update, communications strategies for backflow device removal, call volume update, committee member recruitment, Director Moss' request regarding HOA water management request.

21. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary