

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
FEBRUARY 2, 2023**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on February 2, 2023, was called to order by Chairperson Shute at 3:32 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, Member Stewart
(*via video conference*).

Also Present: General Manager Kennedy, Executive Assistant Washburn, Alternate Gray, Finance Manager Largent, Interim Customer Service and Communications Supervisor Cruz, Information Systems Specialist Espino.

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**

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. December 1, 2022

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

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

Vote: Motion passed (summary: Ayes = 3, Noes = 0, Abstain = 1).

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Member Milakovich.

Abstain: Member Stewart.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Kennedy provided an update on the different hydrologic conditions both in the State of California as well as what is transpiring with the Colorado River. He noted there has been a record-setting snowfall over the past 30-45 days; however, it has tapered off a bit which may not be as helpful compared to having normal precipitation.

Mr. Kennedy talked about the requirement for the seven basin states to voluntarily agree to reduce 2-4 million acre feet per year of demand including what has been transpiring in attempt to meet the stipulated deadline. He mentioned another alternative presented is the Voluntary Compensated Conservation Agreements (VCCA's) and some of the components of such. He mentioned he along with others proposed cutting everyone a pro rata which would be fair; however, some may not be agreeable.

Mr. Kennedy announced Ms. Gray will be retiring from RMWD effective tomorrow. He introduced Josh Cruz who will be filling in as Acting Customer Service and Communications Supervisor until further notice.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Stewart stated he appreciated Mr. Kennedy's comments.

Mr. Shute welcomed Ms. Milakovich to her first meeting as well as noted his surprise to learn about Ms. Gray's retirement.

11. HOA AND SUBMETERING OUTREACH UPDATE

Ms. Gray stated she has received the spreadsheet with all of the customers inside the HOA's for which RMWD does not have contact information; however, she was unable to deny or confirm whether all the information was captured such as the names or unit numbers. She recommended it be determined if this was the only means of reaching those customers or whether to contact the HOA's to find out if they would be willing to distribute newsletters to their residents. She concluded with noting this may be discussed at quite a few future committee meetings before any final determinations can be made.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned although staff was seeking means of accomplishing this goal at no additional cost, another option may be to cross reference a commercial bulk mailing address list with RMWD's parcel data to get a more complete list as well as a generic database that staff would not be tasked with continuing tracking.

Mr. Hamilton inquired as to whether there has been any direct contact with the HOA's in terms of building a mailing list. Ms. Gray noted the one HOA contact she had told her they have HOA meetings at which they were more than happy to distribute an interest list to find out who was interested in receiving information from RMWD as well as their preferences for receiving such.

Ms. Milakovich asked how this issue first came on the radar. Mr. Hamilton explained it came from one of the Board of Directors who belongs to an HOA and does not receive direct communications from RMWD. Ms. Milakovich expressed concern staff would put a great deal of time and energy

in this and how difficult it will be to keep those lists viable, when it is only one period who is concerned about not receiving flyers from RMWD. Mr. Kennedy pointed out another aspect is that some residents who are not actual RMWD customers may be impacted by something transpiring within the district about which they should be notified; therefore, if commercial data lists and establish a data base, it would be a one-time effort.

Ms. Milakovich added it may be beneficial to seek input as to how other agencies are addressing this type of matter with their HOA's. Ms. Gray acknowledged Ms. Milakovich's question as well as spoke to Mr. Kennedy's comments noting at this point everyone was trying to find the quickest and least expensive way to reach these individuals. She noted even though newsletters and other information is provided on the website, a great deal of RMWD customers like to receive paper notifications.

Mr. Shute agreed there will be a great deal of topics RMWD would like to share with all of its residents and how it will be nice to communicate with those residing in those dwellings.

Mr. Stewart asked as whether this problem was related to units with net metering or all condominiums and departments that are rented out. Mr. Kennedy stated the goals was to reach every mailbox within the District's service area that does not receive an individual water bill. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Hamilton recommended researching how much it would cost to obtain a mail list. Discussion followed.

12. DETACHMENT UPDATE

Mr. Kennedy provided an update noting the various eight commissioners have different terms of office with one ending in March after which they would like to hold three meetings prior to scheduling a hearing to discuss the detachment matter. He noted the current testament is the staff report will be discussed in April.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned the LAFCO candidate forum will be held at the February 16th San Diego California Special Districts Quarterly Dinner meeting.

13. RMWD HEADQUARTERS BECOMING FIELD TRIP DESTINATION FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS UPDATE

Mr. Shute inquired as to who would be carrying this torch following Ms. Gray's retirement. Mr. Kennedy stated he and Ms. Largent are both in the Rotary Club with the school superintendent who has expressed an interest in continuing with this type of program. He pointed out staff was working on reviewing the current job descriptions to determine how to properly place the communications piece that Ms. Gray was overseeing as part of her role as Customer Service and Communications Supervisor.

Ms. Gray mentioned current staff was ready to all fall in line once it is determined when these field trips are initiated. Mr. Kennedy confirmed staff will continue to provide the committee with updates.

14. DISCUSSION REGARDING ON-LINE BILL PAY HIGHER RATES OF ADOPTION

Mr. Kennedy stated there may be a demographic cap in terms of on-line payments in this area. Ms. Largent pointed out the customer service team is continually suggesting customers sign up for on-line bill pay and how approximately 60% of the customer base were utilizing on-line bill pay two years ago, but she would have to check the current rate.

Mr. Shute asked staff to research what the current rate is compared to the past three months and report back to the committee in March.

15. COMMUNICATIONS ANNUAL CALENDAR

Ms. Largent noted staff was recommending starting off the year with some direction as to the goals for year as to what should be reported out during the year and then turn this into a monthly reporting item.

Ms. Gray explained she put together a list of articles that were published in the District newsletter, including the frequency for those recurring items that was provided as a handout. Ms. Washburn offered to email this list to Mr. Stewart for his reference.

Mr. Shute recommended providing a customers with a note on a monthly basis recommending visiting the District's website to read the newsletter. Mr. Kennedy noted this may be something that could be outsourced; however, staff would need to finish working on the tasks related to communications should be placed first.

Mr. Shute proposed everyone take a look at the communications annual calendar in preparation for discussion at the next committee meeting with Items #15 and #16 being combined into one topic. He also asked the District's position in the event there was a volunteer willing to assist with drafting or creating a newsletter. Mr. Kennedy explained one of the challenges is meeting the deadline which may not be best for a volunteer position as opposed to an employee being responsible for completing these tasks.

Mr. Hamilton inquired as to RMWD's delivery mechanism to InfoSend. Ms. Gray explained although newsletters are provided to InfoSend in PDF format, there were some other complicated mechanisms involved with the production processes. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Shute stated he understands the mechanics for producing a newsletter; however, the hardest part was getting the content from the appropriate resources which would have to be someone associated with the District. He noted if the technical skills are not within the organization right now, would there be a role for an intern or volunteer to assist. He requested an item be placed on the March committee agenda to discuss how the newsletter will be supported going forward.

Discussion ensued.

16. NEWSLETTER ENHANCEMENTS

This item was discussed under Item #15.

17. COMMUNICATION CHANNEL COUNTS

Mr. Shute explained this item was to get an idea of the different means by which RMWD communicates with its customers (i.e., email, telephone, mail). He asked if these statistics could be presented to the committee in March. Ms. Largent requested clarification as to what information should be collected. Mr. Shute clarified he would prefer counts of how many customers RMWD was actively communicating with through each channel.

18. 2023 EVENT CALENDAR

Ms. Gray stated RMWD will not be participating in the Antique Car Show since it will be held in Valley Center, the Avocado Festival will be held on Sunday, April 23, 2023 for which RMWD has already requested two spaces, and the Fire Symposium is scheduled for March 25, 2023.

Ms. Gray mentioned the only event she found that may be another good opportunity for outreach would be the Fallbrook Farmer's Market; however, RMWD's participation may not be viable.

19. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Discussion ensued regarding the media piece run by the Voice of San Diego that was written by Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Bebee related to RMWD and FPUD seeking detachment from SDCWA.

Mr. Hamilton noted there was an article related to the Weese Agreement published in the Village News this week.

Mr. Shute mentioned he has seen several articles lately spotlighting utilities.

20. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Ms. Washburn explained this item was placed on the agenda in the event Ms. Gray would like to take the opportunity to notify the committee as to whether she would like to continue as a member of the public following her retirement; however, if she would rather wait, this item could be deferred.

Ms. Gray stated she would like to continue serving on this committee as a member of the public. She pointed out she has a vested interest as a ratepayer residing in Division 1.

Motion:

To recommend the Board appoint Ms. Gray as a member of the Communications and Customer Service Committee.

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

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

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

21. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

This item was deferred to the March meeting.

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

It was noted a high-level overview of the District's current projects, HOA and submetering outreach update, detachment update, RMWD headquarters becoming field trip destination for local schools update, on-line bill pay higher rate of adoption, communications annual calendar/newsletter enhancements, communication channel counts, preparation for the Avocado Festival, committee membership and appointment of committee chairperson and vice chairperson should be on the next committee agenda.

23. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary