

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
MAY 5, 2014**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on May 5, 2014 was called to order by Chairperson Bednarski at 3:33 p.m. p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Chairperson Bednarski, presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Member Vega  
Alternate O'Leary  
Member Bednarski  
Member Romani (*Arrived at 3:35 p.m.*)

**Absent:** Member Daily

**Also Present:** General Manager Buckley  
Executive Assistant/Board Secretary Washburn  
Director Brazier

No members of the public were present.

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT RELATING TO ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

There were no comments.

**COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS**

5. **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. O'Leary stated he had worked with Mrs. Plonka regarding the award received by RMWD. Ms. Washburn pointed out this would be included in the May edition of the newsletter. Mr. Buckley added it would also be submitted to the newspaper for publication.

Mr. O'Leary mentioned he had attended the FPUD April 28, 2014 Board meeting; however, he was running a few minutes late and everyone was leaving by the time he arrived at 4:45 p.m. He also noted he had attended the RMWD May 2, 2013 Board meeting where Mrs. Bednarski's comments written comments were shared.

Mrs. Bednarski announced she has decided to resign from the Communications Committee. Mr. Vega stated he, too, was considering resigning as well, especially in light of the potential hiring of a public relations consultant. Ms. Romani asked if the reason for hiring a public relations consultant was to replace the Communications Committee. It was confirmed this was

not the case. Ms. Romani expressed concern the committee meetings have not been the same since Mr. Seymour left RMWD. Mr. Buckley pointed out the idea was not to replace the committee; however, if the committee feels the need for the committee has lessened because of the idea of a public relations consultant his first thought would be to possibly have this committee serve on an ad hoc basis.

Mr. O'Leary stated these decisions may be premature. He talked about his recommendation to the Board that the district not hire a one-issue public relations person, but rather make it a part time staff position as a means of building public information framework within RMWD. He suggested there would be more than enough work for a part time staff member, especially in regards to the website and press releases. Mr. Vega stated what Mr. O'Leary has said reinforces his personal decision to step aside and allow the public relations consultant to come in to structure whatever may need to be done. Mrs. Bednarski agreed this may be a good time for her to step aside as well.

Ms. Romani expressed concern this committee had not been involved for the past several months. Mrs. Bednarski stressed the need for more communication on a regular basis as opposed to meeting once a month where the committee spends a great deal of time getting caught up to speed. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Buckley clarified RMWD did not pay for Ms. Denke to be at Communications Committee meetings nor did RMWD bill for some of their staff time spent on JPA matters.

*Discussion went to Item #7.*

Mr. Vega reiterated that he would feel better if he was literally in the way of a new consultant firm. He said it was the wrong time for a committee to meet monthly and that RMWD now needed something that was on the ground and ready to make moves on a more regular basis. He thanked the committee noting he had learned a great deal and hoped he was able to contribute. He added he had thought it through and decided to resign immediately.

Mrs. Bednarski said she, too, had her mind up prior to this meeting about her resignation. She said for all the same reasons Mr. Vega mentioned, she would be resigning after this meeting and may consider returning should there be more of need for the Communications Committee in the future.

Mr. Buckley understood the committee members' frustrations, but he wanted to know if the committee thought there would be good sense in keeping the committee to assist with phasing in a consultant should the Board decide to take that route.

***Mr. Vega excused himself from the meeting at 3:54 p.m.***

Ms. Romani asked Mr. O'Leary for his thoughts. Mr. O'Leary suggested if the members do not think the committee is doing any good, it could take a vote to make a recommendation to take to the Board to end the committee. He noted with three individuals remaining on the committee it may be difficult to get a monthly quorum.

Ms. Bednarski asked if this committee was mandatory. Mr. Buckley pointed out the existence of and rules for the committee were in the Administrative Code; therefore, it would be up to the Board to decide how they would like to proceed.

Mr. O'Leary recalled when the committee was formed it was a noble idea on the part of the district to get more involvement from ratepayers including those with some expertise. He noted in some ways this was a breath of fresh air for RMWD and he would hate to see it thrown away.

Mrs. Bednarski suggested it may be too early to make a recommendation to the Board for disbanding the Communications Committee. Mr. O'Leary clarified if Mrs. Bednarski was going to resign at the end of this meeting, there were still three committee members remaining which would keep the committee in place. He also pointed out if RMWD hires a consultant for the LAFCO matter, staff would lose support in other areas such as the newsletter. He agreed this was a difficult position.

Discussion went to Item #7.

**\*6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A.** April 14, 2014

Mr. Buckley clarified for Ms. Romani that Brian Brady was on the LAFCO advisory committee, not the LAFCO executive director. He also noted the staff changes during the JPA were made by Brian Brady which was within his scope of work as RMWD's general manager at that time.

**Action:**

***Moved by Alternate O'Leary to approve the minutes. Seconded by Member Romani.***

***After consideration, the motion CARRIED by the following vote:***

**AYES:** Member Romani, Alternate O'Leary and Member Bednarski.  
**NOES:** None.  
**ABSTAINED:** None.  
**ABSENT:** Member Vega and Member Daily.

Discussion went to Item #8.

**7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING RMWD HIRING A PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM**

Mr. Buckley explained that a consultant could get here very quickly as opposed to going through the hiring process which takes more time to complete. He mentioned he has received three good referrals. It was confirmed the Board made a request at their May 2, 2014 meeting that Mr. Buckley bring back some recommendations at the May 27, 2014 Board meeting.

Mr. O'Leary said it was his thoughts the committee would meet first on this issue and in turn make a recommendation to the Board; however, it appears the Board seems to have already moved past that point. He expressed concern that if the District was looking to pay for consultant to take on the LAFCO matter, then there may not be a need for volunteer committee members. He noted he feels the same frustration as the other committee members.

Discussion returned to Item #5.

Discussion ensued regarding the committee making a recommendation to the Board regarding hiring a public relations firm.

Mr. Buckley clarified the costs have not yet been established.

Ms. Romani suggested the committee hang in there for a little while to see what happens. Mr. O'Leary explained why he did not see the need for the committee to make a recommendation.

Mr. Buckley suggested a committee member attend the May 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting and reiterate Mr. O'Leary's recommendation made to the Board on May 2, 2014.

Discussion went to Item #6.

## **8. UPDATE ON FPUD APPLICATION TO LAFCO**

Mr. Buckley mentioned FPUD had to reapply to LAFCO due to the fact they did not properly notice their first meeting to make the initial decision to apply. He noted FPUD did hold a meeting on April 28, 2014 for the second application and now RMWD was waiting to hear from LAFCO on that second application. He mentioned some of the options available to RMWD within the LAFCO process.

Mr. Buckley explained the NCJPA was set up to explore the possibility of consolidation with a separate Board to govern that process; however, the NCJPA no longer exists.

Mr. O'Leary asked about whether or not it would be acceptable for RMWD can spend money on a public relations consultant in the petition process. Mr. Buckley stated it would be acceptable. Mr. O'Leary inquired as to whether RMWD can hire a public relations firm to assist with the LAFCO issue and it would not be considered an election year. Mr. Buckley explained it would be considered educating the public on the LAFCO issue.

Discussion went to Item #9.

## **9. UPCOMING NEWSLETTER TOPICS**

Mr. Buckley pointed out Mr. O'Leary assisted with a write-up on the award recently received by RMWD that will be included in the newsletter as well as in The Village News. He also asked the committee if it worthwhile to use the Union Tribune as a source for press releases. Mr. O'Leary pointed out it may be worthwhile; however, the Union Tribune does not generally publish press releases and may go unnoticed. Mrs. Bednarski suggested sending press releases to both The Village News and San Diego Tribune in hopes they will get published.

Discussion went to Item #11.

## **10. UPDATES ON DISTRICT "COMMUNICATOR"**

This item was not discussed.

## **11. REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RMWD RELATED MEDIA STORIES**

Mrs. Bednarski talked about the EDCO editorial that had a whole section on water conservation. Ms. Romani mentioned the EDCO article on the Fat Oil and Grease (FOG) program.

Mrs. Bednarski mentioned the opinion published in The Village News on April 24, 2014 suggesting the RMWD Update was slanted. Mr. Buckley pointed out RMWD has saved the money and continues to save by not refilling positions which was not what FPUD appeared to be doing. Mrs. Bednarski suggested putting more information in a follow-up to the RMWD Update to address concerns such as this.

Ms. Romani asked who pays for the water when someone hits a fire hydrant which was something that happened on April 26<sup>th</sup> outside her residence. Mr. Buckley answered RMWD will bill the insurance company for the repair and any estimated water loss costs.

Mr. O'Leary talked about the articles on the LAFCO issue.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential drought situation. Mr. Buckley pointed out SDCWA has spent millions of dollars to protect San Diego County from extreme drought conditions.

Discussion went to Item #12.

**12. LIST OF SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

It was suggested to have an item for discussion with the new consultant should one be selected by the Board.

Mrs. Bednarski suggested an item be on the agenda to select a new committee chairperson due to her immediate resignation.

It was noted an item should be added noting Mr. O'Leary's change from an alternate to a committee member.

Discussion went to Item #13.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**Action:**

***Moved by Member Romani to adjourn. Seconded by Alternate O'Leary.***

***After consideration, the motion CARRIED by the following vote:***

**AYES:** Member Romani, Alternate O'Leary and Member Bednarski.

**NOES:** None.

**ABSTAINED:** None.

**ABSENT:** Member Vega and Member Daily.

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

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**Kelly Bednarski, Committee Chairperson**

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**Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary**