

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
JANUARY 6, 2022**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on January 6, 2022, was called to order by Chairperson Shute at 3:35 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 Hamilton *(via video conference)*, Member Shute *(via video conference)*, Alternate Gray *(via video conference)*.

Also Present: Executive Assistant Washburn.

Absent: Member Vernon.

Also Present Via Teleconference or Video Conference:

General Manager Kennedy, Finance Manager Largent, Information Systems Specialist Espino, Information Technology Manager Khattab.

One member of the public was present 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**

Ms. Gray was seated as an alternate.

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

Ms. Gray requested Item #11 be deferred to the February committee meeting.

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

There were no comments.

***8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. December 2, 2021

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

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

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

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Alternate Gray.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Kennedy announced until the virus outbreak settles down, RMWD will be keeping everyone as separated as possible for approximately four weeks. Mr. Shute requested to have a COVID-19 pandemic update placed back on agendas until further notice.

Mr. Kennedy reported the Water Service Upgrade Project (WSUP) is progressing well with less than 1,000 remaining.

Discussion ensued regarding the recent rain events.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hamilton stated he was contacted by a ratepayer regarding her water service being interrupted and how she was distressed that he was unaware there had been an emergency shutdown. He suggested including some type of push notification to ratepayers affected so they are aware. Ms. Gray explained the minute staff is notified of an emergency shutdown, a map of the area affected as well as a list of streets and customers with contact information is provided so staff can notify the customers as quickly as possible.

Mr. Shute asked for clarification as to whether the ratepayer was involved in the emergency shutdown but was never notified. Mr. Hamilton said the implication was that they were not notified and when they contacted customer support, staff stated they were not aware of an emergency water shutoff. Mr. Shute noted this could be due to staff not having the correct contact information.

Mr. Shute inquired as to whether it would be appropriate for a subset of volunteers, elected officials, and customer care team to always be on the list so that every time there is an emergency shutdown those on the Board, committee, or customer care team are notified. Mr. Hamilton stated it would not be necessary to involve the Board in operational issues. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hamilton also mentioned another issue has come up where a customer has been paying for backflow maintenance. He stated when looking at the records, it was found the maintenance had not been presented because the customer has not kept the backflow device accessible. He noted after speaking with Ms. Largent and Ms. Gray, the operations staff are the current point of notification to the customer for these matters with which he expressed concern in that it seems customers are asking operations staff to perform something that is not part of their normal job description. He said for whatever reason, the notifications did not get back to the customer and that it is his opinion that this would be a customer service responsibility to ensure the customer is notified as well as to conduct follow-up.

Ms. Gray pointed out it has been quite a while since RMWD had a cross-connection specialist who would be tasked with this responsibility as part of their job description that may be part of the issue; however, she would defer to Mr. Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy noted when staff is out on-site testing any of the 5,000 devices and finds one is inaccessible, the protocol is to notify the customer in any available manner. He added there will be updates made to the Cross-Connection Control policies to address these types of situations which will be reviewed by the Engineering and Operations Committee with something to present to the Board in March for consideration.

Mr. Hamilton explained he brought these matters forward because he views them as customer care issues and may be areas in which improvements could be made in communications. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Largent pointed out Standard Operating Procedures are being prepared as part of the Administrative Code update process. It was noted the updates should be presented to each of the committees for feedback and input. Discussion followed.

11. CUSTOMER SURVEY UPDATE

This item was deferred to February per Item #6.

12. REDISTRICTING UPDATE

Mr. Kennedy stated this would be the last committee meeting at which this will be presented. He noted the Board was pleased with the proposed updates. He also mentioned in completing the demographic analysis and making any necessary modifications, there were no significant changes to the originally proposed updates. He concluded by sharing the next steps to be taken.

13. EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION ANALYTICS

Ms. Gray reported the numbers were pulled to determine how many RMWD active accounts (including owners and tenants) have missing contact information and that staff will continue to reach out to these customers in any way possible. She pointed out when it comes to actual emergency shutdowns, staff would now be recording a message to play in the first part of the queue that will provide customers with the shutdown details such as the areas impacted and when water service will resume when they call the District. She noted the same emergency notification information will also be published on the District's website as soon as the details become available which may not be until shortly after the shutdown goes into effect in some cases. She pointed out these efforts have been extremely effective with call volume decreasing significantly.

Mr. Kennedy inquired as to what occurs in the event an emergency shutdown occurs during a weekend. Ms. Gray said although this has not happened recently, she will need to coordinate with IT as to how a weekend or holiday occurrence could be addressed in this same fashion.

Mr. Hamilton asked what happens should an emergency shutdown occur after hours. Mr. Kennedy said these are picked up by the answering service who takes the basic information and passes it along to the appropriate staff.

Mr. Kennedy stated now that there is an automation system in place, this may be something a supervisor may be able to populate in the event a break occurs after hours. Ms. Gray agreed to work with IT on how this could be accomplished.

Ms. Gray reported numerous customers have been responsive to staff's efforts in obtaining current contact information which has been extremely helpful in updating the customer database.

Discussion ensued.

14. DROUGHT RESTRICTIONS UPDATE

Mr. Kennedy provided an update on the current drought restrictions noting if the weather is dry in January, mandatory restrictions could be initiated throughout the State. He said although there is no basis for mandatory restrictions right now, the threat of such may be kept in place.

Mr. Shute inquired about the \$500 penalty to anyone not complying with the current restrictions. Mr. Kennedy explained the State does not have a means for enforcing the restrictions; however, RMWD does have a water waste reporting system on the website where customers can report such activity for staff to investigate.

15. WATER BOARD ARREARAGES PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Largent reported letters were sent out the last week of December to 950 customers, credits were distributed over the three cycles for the end of December and beginning of January. She mentioned positive feedback has been received and although it took a great deal of effort to administer the plan, the District will be reimbursed for the time spent working on it.

Mr. Shute expressed his appreciation for everyone who worked on this project.

16. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Mr. Shute stated he does not subscribe to the Union Tribune and when he wanted to read a recently published article related to RMWD's detachment from SDCWA, he was unable to do so without subscribing. Mr. Hamilton said he experienced the same with The Village News. Mr. Kennedy offered to share the article with the committee members. Discussion ensued regarding the content of the article.

Mr. Shute inquired as to whether a Top Work Places of 2021 press release was remitted. Ms. Gray stated Ms. Harp has confirmed a press release has been sent.

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

It was noted updates on the COVID situation, customer surveys, and emergency notification analytics as well as backflow notifications and committee recruitments should be on the next committee agenda.

18. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute.

The meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary