

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
APRIL 1, 2021**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on April 1, 2021 was called to order by Chairperson Shute at 3:34 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. (*Due to COVID restrictions the meetings are being held virtually.*) Chairperson Shute, presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Member Hamilton (*via video conference*), Member Shute (*via video conference*), Member Vernon (*via video conference*).

**Absent:** Member Stewart.

**Also Present Via Teleconference or Video Conference:**

Alternate Gray, Human Resources Manager Harp, Information and Technology Manager Khattab, Information and Technology Specialist Espino.

One member of the public was present via teleconference or video teleconference.

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**

There were no alternates seated.

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

There were no changes 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. March 4, 2021

***Motion:***

***To approve the minutes.***

**Action: Approve, Moved by Member Vernon, Seconded by Member Hamilton.**

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

**Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Member Vernon.**

**9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS AND UPDATE ON REOPENING THE RMWD HEADQUARTERS**

Ms. Harp stated approximately 40% of the RMWD staff members have been vaccinated; however, the District has not yet loosed up any of the safety protocols due to Cal OSHA not updating their safety standards as of yet.

**10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Hamilton asked if Item #17 was an opportunity for Mr. Gutierrez to provide a presentation on the sewer system. He suggested the committee may want to consider ideas for communicating information to the public during Item #17.

**11. WATER SERVICE UPGRADE PROJECT (WSUP) UPDATE**

Ms. Gray reported the project was going well and communications were on target. She noted the crews were currently working on the larger routes and how there was a great deal of signage in these areas. She pointed out focus was being placed on two different routes which will impact pressure for which additional communication will be provided to those customers including how to address pressure reduction.

Mr. Shute asked how much time lapses between the communications and the work being completed. Ms. Gray stated approximately 2-3 weeks advance notice is provided for the area in which work is being conducted including signage and mailed postcards. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Shute encouraged the use of multiple means of communicating with the customers including robo calls to ensure those who may not see the signs are notified.

Mr. Hamilton added the latest update was the project was just under 50% complete.

Mr. Vernon inquired about the recent article claiming RMWD had not provided notification there would be work conducted in their area. Mr. Hamilton provided more details as to what caused the customer to be upset and how staff was working diligently with the customer toward a resolution. Mr. Vernon recommended placing door hangers on gates or property entrances. Ms. Gray stated door hangers are utilized when possible. Mr. Vernon suggested RMWD prepare a follow up article with the newspaper describing what steps the District is taking to provide the best notification possible. Ms. Gray and Ms. Hamilton agreed this would be a good idea to increase the level of communications with the public.

**12. PERMANENT SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL WATER RATE (PSAWR) OUTREACH UPDATE**

Ms. Gray stated staff has completed the District's outreach to all the customers under the classification to which 332 responses were received which makes up approximately 40% of the agricultural customers. She pointed out some of these responses were for multiple meters.

Ms. Gray noted applications were steadily being submitted and how she anticipates this to continue. She added RMWD was still working with SDCWA for a possible deadline extension to lessen the impact on the small growers. She confirmed all the information she has received from the third party has been published on the District's website.

**13. REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Mr. Shute asked if staff was prepared to present an overview of communications. Ms. Gray said she was prepared to provide a quick presentation on external communications and Ms. Harp would give a presentation on internal communications.

Ms. Gray presented a presentation noting what upgrades have been made to better communicate with the public at community events such as the Avocado Festival and Vintage Car Show. She pointed out staff was collaborating with the Bonsall Rotary which offers an opportunity to engage with junior and senior high school students which has been very positive. She noted staff was hopeful to possibly implement an internship program.

Ms. Harp shared a presentation on what has transpired to improve internal communications for the workforce. She pointed out the key focus area of Strategic Plan provides communication objectives including development of useful and engaging communication methods to keep staff educated about the District's plans, challenges, and successes. She mentioned a study was conducted to allow for an opportunity to receive feedback from the workforce in terms of what was of interest as well as what the District was doing well and what areas could be improved upon. She briefed the committee on what steps have been taken to improve on internal communications as provided in the presentation.

Mr. Vernon asked about the size of the workforce. Ms. Harp stated currently it was 57.5 employees. Mr. Vernon requested copies of the internal newsletters to be sent to the committee members. Ms. Harp offered to send these to the committee members noting these were not accessible to the public.

**14. ONLINE PAYMENT PROCESSOR CHANGE UPDATE**

Ms. Gray reported the next set of letters were mailed to the remaining customers who have not signed back up for the new autopay program. She noted the response has been great with more customers utilizing autopay than ever before.

Mr. Shute asked for clarification regarding the reminder texts customers receive and whether payments are automatically made should someone reply "yes" to the text. Ms. Gray offered to investigate this further and report back to the committee as to her findings.

**15. REVIEW OPTIONS FOR CONDUCTING SURVEYS TO RECEIVE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

Ms. Gray stated her team was currently investigating what other agencies are utilizing as well as other available options. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Gray offered to bring a comparison in call volume to the committee in May.

**16. PRESSURE REGULATOR WEBSITE FAQ REVIEW**

Mr. Vernon suggested the first word on the second line, “inexpensive”, was misleading since this was not what he experienced.

Ms. Gray mentioned the additional FAQ’s that have been published as well as the steps taken in gathering the information. Mr. Vernon recommended possibly adding some graphics as well as expressed his appreciation to Ms. Gray for putting these together.

**17. REVIEW INFORMATION AND DETERMINE CUSTOMER CONTACT RELATED TO SEWER SYSTEM MANAGEMENT PLAN (SSMP)**

Ms. Gray offered to email the presentation Mr. Gutierrez shared with the Board on March 23, 2021 to the committee members.

Mr. Hamilton explained the reason he suggested this item be brought to the committee was due to the information provided in terms of how to protect the sewer system which could be enlightening to share with the public.

**18. 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 was no discussion.

**19. REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RMWD RELATED MEDIA STORIES**

Mr. Hamilton noted there was an article published in the Village News he will share with the committee members via email. He also noted the detachment ad-hoc committee has hired a communications expert to develop a plan to educate both FPU and RMWD customers on matters related to detachment.

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

It was noted the call volume comparison, an update on conducting customer surveys should be on the next committee agenda.

**21. ADJOURNMENT**

*The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute.*

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

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**Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson**

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**Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary**