

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
JULY 7, 2022**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on July 7, 2022 was called to order by Chairperson Shute at 3:33 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, Member Shute, Alternate Gray.

Also Present: General Manager Kennedy, Executive Assistant Washburn, Construction and Meters Supervisor Lagunas, Cross Connection Control and Backflow Technician Galloway, Information Systems Specialist Espino.

Absent: Member Vernon.

Also Present Via Teleconference or Video Conference:

Operations Manager Gutierrez.

Two members of the public were 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.

Discussion returned from Item #7.

Ms. Gray requested Item #14 be deferred to the next committee meeting when Mr. Khattab is available to share a presentation. There was no objection.

Discussion went to Item #8.

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

There were no comments.

Discussion returned to Item #6.

***8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
A. June 2, 2022

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

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

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

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Alternate Gray.

Discussion went to Item #9.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Kennedy reported Mr. Vernon has notified the District that he will be resigning from the Committee and that a commendation will be prepared and presented for his years of service.

Mr. Kennedy encouraged the committee to follow upcoming media reports related to the current drought conditions, solutions under consideration, and potential upcoming restrictions.

Discussion went to Item #10.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Shute talked about a recent article with regards to improvement in desalination technology. Discussion followed.

Discussion went to Item #11.

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

Ms. Gray stated she has spoken with school superintendents and shared some of the ideas that were discussed at the previous committee meeting encouraging it be presented to staff so the appropriate teachers can bring it into their curriculum. She suggested it would be a good kickoff to have some committee members from each standing committee scheduled to come and go through the full tour. She noted a Water 101 presentation, video showing the District boundaries, as well as multiple demonstrations for each department are already prepared; therefore, staff was ready to start these field trips after conducting a dry run with the committee members.

Mr. Kennedy recommended preparing a flyer or pamphlet for the superintendents to distribute to the teachers in which pictures of young people visiting these demonstrations can be portrayed as a means of generating interest.

Ms. Gray stated staff was pretty close to being ready to execute these field trips following a practice run. She pointed out there were new field staff she would also like to get involved.

Mr. Hamilton recommended there be a preparatory curriculum that could be provided to the teachers prior to a scheduled field trip they can use as part of their educational program that would feed into the field trip. Ms. Gray offered to work with the schools to see what they would be interested in having and report back to the committee.

Mr. Galloway recommended the hydrological cycles may also be of interest to students. Mr. Kennedy agreed that this may come through the science curriculum.

Ms. Gray noted these field trips will be fun and very interactive.

Ms. Johnson stated she sees this with great potential and was excited about the ideas being presented. She noted the Grades K-12 curriculum that has lacked for many years is the manner in which organizations are governed; therefore, she encouraged the committee to think about talking about how governance is conducted with matters being brought through committees and the Board making major decisions for the betterment of the region. Ms. Gray pointed out Ms. Washburn could put something together similar to a mock board meeting used at the Take Your Kids to Work Day Event.

Mr. Shute noted staff wanted to perfect the program including the execution by conducting a practice run as well as asked for clarification as to how the District Tour Sheet for public outreach provided as a handout would synch up with this item. Ms. Gray explained the Bonsall Chamber staff was interested in knowing more about the District; therefore, the thought was making this more accessible on a quarterly basis in the event public members were interested. Mr. Shute inquired as to how this could be utilized to get the word out to generate enough participation to make it worthwhile as well as a tool for committee member recruitment. Ms. Gray stated she will be attending more Chamber events at which information can be shared. Mr. Shute recommended starting a target list.

Mr. Kennedy recommended creating an educational brochure for distribution throughout the community.

Mr. Shute inquired as to the proposed timeframe for starting to schedule these events. Ms. Gray the first step would be to create a brochure for both public members as well as the schools for committee input. She noted she would also share some creative ideas for advertising.

Mr. Shute asked if there anything prohibiting the District's headquarters from being used for a community organization meeting if in conjunction with a tour. Mr. Kennedy mentioned this was requested by a local organization and how a policy will be taken to the Board in August for consideration. Mr. Shute clarified he was inquiring about if RMWD was going to have an event with a tour, one of the incentives may be to get a group and its membership to attend as well as hold their meeting at the same time. Mr. Kennedy stated this may be challenging since the meeting space cannot be accessed without having a secured parameter; however, when a new facility is built, this could be taken into consideration.

Discussion went to Item #12.

12. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES FOR BACKFLOW DEVICE REMOVAL

Mr. Lagunas stated staff has been working on strategizing the best way to provide information to customers who wish to have their backflow devices removed. He explained staff was hesitant to send out a mass mailer to 5,000 customers notifying them that if they want to get their backflow devices removed, to contact the District because then it will pull the Cross-Connection Control Specialist from his regular duties. He stated the backflow program has made some great strides in the past two years and sending out a mass mailer is a concern. He pointed out staff has considered sending information by cycles or by routes with approximately 500 per month so the calls are not coming in all at once. He agreed staff wanted to be reactive as opposed to proactive as a means of avoiding becoming overwhelmed.

Mr. Hamilton suggested communications related to backflow device removal qualifications be enhanced on the website. Ms. Gray stated she has updated the website and asked Mr. Hamilton to look at it and provide her with any feedback. Mr. Kennedy recommended a stand-alone tab titled "backflow" be provided as one of the items listed on the first page of the website so it can be easily accessed.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned some ideas for accomplishing a complete backflow assessment utilizing Palomar Backflow.

Mr. Gutierrez stated assessments were conducted in Lake Rancho Viejo a few years ago as well as part of the WSUP program; therefore, staff is being proactively assessing these devices. He talked about the many steps involved with the removal of backflow devices outside of the physical removal process, especially administrative; therefore, he proposed utilizing a step-by-step approach with a refined target list.

Mr. Shute appreciated taking the type of approach Mr. Gutierrez suggested. He also recommended a simple checklist being posted on the website for customers to work through before contacting the District for device removal. Mr. Hamilton recommended adding a FAQ as well for customers to reference.

Ms. Gray agreed with Mr. Gutierrez's suggestion, especially when considering the great deal of time involved with letters to customers who have failed backflow devices. Mr. Kennedy acknowledged the time involved noting other agencies have more staff assigned to the tasks associated with backflow devices.

Mr. Galloway stated he likes the idea of the FAQ's as well as suggested including language in the letter to those customers with failed backflow devices asking them to contact the District should they believe the backflow device is no longer necessary as well as to have their device removed should their usage or criteria change.

Mr. Gutierrez spoke on the importance of the records and data being absolute to avoid having crews being called out to work on a backflow device that has been removed. Mr. Lagunas added although customers can bury or leave a disconnected device in place, the District prefers the devices be removed altogether. Discussion ensued.

Discussion went to Item #13.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Ms. Gray suggested having testimonials from several current committee members would be helpful in preparing a piece related to recruitment. Mr. Shute offered to write a testimonial.

Discussion went to Item #14.

14. HOA AND SUBMETERING COMMUNICATIONS OUTREACH

This item was deferred per Item #6.

Discussion went to Item #15.

15. BEST PRACTICES FOR WATER CONSERVATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Gray referenced the handout provided informing customers as to how they can become more effective in reducing water use. She stated this information is literally all that is available and how the website is continuously being updated.

Mr. Kennedy pointed out there will most likely be a ramp up within the media on water conservation communications throughout the State.

Mr. Shute asked if there were any programs still in place such as turf rebates, etc. Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Gray confirmed some rebate programs were still available.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Shute recommended sharing as much information related to subsidizing changes that could potentially reduce a customer's water bill at the same time be ramped up to entice as much interest as possible. Ms. Gray pointed out she has updated the website under a tab labeled "conservation" so that it would be easily recognizable.

Mr. Hamilton stated it appears there is no economic benefit to being water-wise. Discussion followed.

Ms. Gray mentioned all SDCWA's member agencies were contacted regarding some of the programs SDCWA will be ramping up and how SDCWA is looking to partner up with agencies at community events, such as the Fallbrook Farmer's Market which she is considering attending. She stated RMWD is delegated \$15,000 each year through the Member Agency Administer Program (MAAP) which could be utilized to convert RMWD's front area into an actual conservation garden with signage as to which items should be purchased. She said if RMWD is approved for a conservation garden, she can remit an application to mimic FPUD in terms of a conservation/cactus garden. Discussion followed.

Mr. Shute reiterated the more things that can be made a call to action should be fed into the newsletter. Mr. Kennedy recommended a title lead may be "Rebates Available for Conservation" with the beginning of each one having an attractive title from which attention can be drawn.

Discussion went to Item #16.

16. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Discussions ensued regarding water-related articles recently published throughout the media.

Discussion went to Item #17.

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

There were no items listed for the next committee meeting.

Discussion went to Item #18.

18. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary