

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PUBLIC AWARENESS/PERSONNEL/POLICY COMMITTEE  
OF THE VALLECITOS WATER DISTRICT  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2018 AT 9:00 A.M.  
AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE, 201 VALLECITOS DE ORO,  
SAN MARCOS, CALIFORNIA

Director Evans called the meeting to order at the hour of 9:35 a.m.

Present:                    Director Evans  
                                Director Hernandez  
                                General Manager Pruium  
                                Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins  
                                Financial Analyst Arthur  
                                Administrative Secretary Johnson

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

WATER BILL ADJUSTMENTS

General Manager Pruium stated the District does not have a policy for water bill adjustments; however, it is something that occurs quite often particularly with water leaks. The District's current practice allows for a bill adjustment if a leak is confirmed and staff's review of the customer's water usage history indicates a deviation from their normal usage. The customer must also verify that the leak has been repaired. Typically, the bill adjustment is for a period of one month and consists of charging the usage that was in the highest tier 3 at the tier 2 rate. The customer still pays for all of the water used, but at a lower rate. The intent is for emergency water main breaks or something of that nature, not when sprinklers are left on, etc.

General discussion took place regarding establishing criteria for a policy allowing a billing adjustment such as the frequency of leaks. Director Hernandez suggested one adjustment per year. Director Evans agreed with one per year; however, she doesn't feel anyone should be punished in a true emergency.

General Manager Pruium stated staff is developing an informational video on how to read a water meter that will be available on the District's website to assist customers in monitoring their water usage. Director Evans suggested that when a billing adjustment is made, the customer could be asked to have a residential landscape audit performed at their home. Mission Resources performs the audits at no charge to the customer. The San Diego County Water Authority and the District share the cost of the program. The District's cost for a typical audit is approximately \$60.00.

Mike Hunsaker, member of the public, stated irrigation lines have more potential for leaks and this should be taken into consideration. He further stated leaks in apartments

are one of the biggest water wastes we have and asked if submeters are starting to be required for apartments and if so, who pays for them.

General Manager Pruim stated developers are required to install submetering in new apartments and the apartment owners are required to send notice to tenants of their water consumption. They are not required to share this information with the District.

The consensus of the Committee was to ask staff to draft a billing adjustment policy to be brought back to the Committee for further discussion. The policy should include a once-per-year adjustment limit, eligibility criteria, review of usage history for a maximum of three months, billing the extra water at tier 2 rates, requiring a landscape audit, and a maximum amount for the adjustment such as a percentage of their average monthly bill. Staff will review data to determine how many leaks are reported per year that would qualify for a billing adjustment and how many customers received an adjustment.

### AGRICULTURAL WATER RATES PROGRAM

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins provided background on this issue dating back to the May 16, 2018 Board meeting at which Robert Case requested approval of an agricultural rate for his single-family residence. Agricultural water is required to be used for growing crops, animal husbandry, floriculture products, etc. District Ordinance No. 207 does not address the subject of customers enrolling in Certified Non-Participating Agricultural Water Rate (CNPAWR) accounts. At the Board's direction, Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins provided additional information to this Committee on August 21 concerning the history of the CNPAWR, how agricultural water had been "grandfathered" in previous ordinances, customers interested in the CNPAWR and CNPAWR related revenue loss. The Committee requested additional information on the expected revenue loss and if there was any logic or reason for leaving CNPAWR out of Ordinance No. 207.

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins stated that he found no reason why CNPAWR was not addressed in Ordinance No. 207. He further stated that four additional customers have requested agricultural water since May and that he consulted with Attorney Kelly Salt from BBK about this issue. Her opinion was that it is unclear how access to CNPAWR can be restricted based on the current ordinance. Attorney Salt recommended this be addressed in future ordinances and that a mandatory reduction in times of drought or a drought rate could be invoked for CNPAWR accounts.

General discussion took place regarding how a usage reduction could work, 218 considerations, and the possible development of an irrigation rate which the District does not currently have.

Financial Analyst Arthur provided data on two accounts that have requested CNPAWR water, Hokto Kinoko (commercial property) and Michael Rote (residential property) which illustrates the annual revenue loss for the past year if they were allowed the CNPAWR. The District currently has 22 CNPAWR accounts.

General discussion took place regarding possible caveats to go with an irrigation rate. In a drought situation, irrigation accounts would have to cut back or pay higher rates if a reduction is not verified in a month or two.

Director Hernandez recommended staff draft a revision to Ordinance No. 207 and bring it back to the Committee for further discussion. The draft Ordinance should include an agricultural rate, several tiers, allowing new customers into the program including micro-farms, developing an equivalency for hydroponic crops relative to acres, and defining the criteria for a commercial grower.

Mike Hunsaker, member of the public, expressed his concerns that some types of businesses may not be adaptable to more efficient water usage, totally unfettered consumption of water cannot be allowed by any segment, and that something should be said about water softeners and more tiers.

Director Evans recommended changing the CNPAWR name to eliminate confusion and to create a new program which allows a lower rate but comes with sacrifices in regard to efficiency and lack of water.

General discussion took place regarding creating an irrigation rate rather than a commercial rate. This is something that could be considered during the next Cost of Service Study which is anticipated to be completed in the fall of 2019.

The consensus of the Committee was to offer a pilot program for agricultural rates for approximately one year and evaluate the results during the next Cost of Service Study. Staff will draft a revised Ordinance and bring it back to the Committee for further discussion.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

None.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at the hour of 10:55 a.m.