

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PUBLIC AWARENESS/PERSONNEL/POLICY COMMITTEE
OF THE VALLECITOS WATER DISTRICT
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2021, AT 10:00 A.M.
VIA TELECONFERENCE

Director Boyd-Hodgson called the meeting to order at the hour of 10:00 a.m.

Present: Director Boyd-Hodgson
Director Pennock
General Manager Pruim
Administrative Services Manager Emmanuel
Finance Manager Owen
Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins
Administrative Secretary Johnson

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

PERSONNEL

(OLD BUSINESS) UPDATE ON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM WITH PALOMAR COLLEGE

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins stated he has submitted an internship application to Palomar College. He is working with Jacob Shiba, Assistant Professor and Water and Wastewater Technology Program Coordinator at Palomar College, to add additional information to the application. The District's legal counsel is currently reviewing an affiliation agreement which also must be submitted to Palomar College. The District is on track to have an intern start on January 31, 2022.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

(OLD BUSINESS) UPDATE OF BILL CONSOLIDATION FOR LARGE CUSTOMERS

General Manager Pruim stated staff is waiting for information from the San Elijo Hills HOA folks to match backflow meters and meters with their account numbers. Once all of the data is aligned, the process to consolidate their bills should move forward quickly. A mock bill will be created; however, there are system limitations regarding what can be displayed on the bills such as historical usage information for multiple accounts.

(NEW BUSINESS) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

General Manager Pruim stated this item was discussed at the August 24, 2021, Finance/Investment Committee meeting. The Finance/Investment Committee supported the general concept but asked this Committee to discuss it as well. The scholarship could be targeted to high school or college students to help pay for education costs in a water or wastewater related field.

General discussion took place regarding possible parameters of a scholarship program. Suggestions included the inclusion of two-year colleges as well as four-year colleges and veterans.

Administrative Services Manager Emmanuel will research to see if other agencies have scholarship programs and also any legal issues that should be considered. She will report back to this Committee at a future meeting.

(NEW BUSINESS) IMAGINE A DAY WITHOUT WATER

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins provided information on the District's participation in the "Imagine a Day Without Water" events in previous years which has included production of educational videos. Staff has reached out to San Marcos Mayor Rebecca Jones to participate in the event, scheduled for October 21.

General discussion took place regarding ideas for the District's participation in this year's event. It was suggested the theme be related to the drought and geared toward children.

(NEW BUSINESS) LOBBY DISPLAY

General Manager Pruim stated the lobby of the District's administration building is a large space that could be better utilized for public outreach.

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins proposed the idea of displaying the District's first vehicle, a 1946 jeep, in the lobby as part of the District's history. It was refurbished years ago so that it could be driven in parades; however, it overheats at low speeds and is unsafe to drive. Other items that could be displayed are appurtenances such as hydrants, meters, sampling stations, and other equipment with signage to explain what the equipment is.

The Committee was agreeable to this idea. Staff will prepare a conceptual floor plan with possible exhibits to be included in the lobby and present it at a future Committee meeting.

POLICY

(OLD BUSINESS) UPDATE ON CSDA BOARD HANDBOOK TEMPLATE ACCESS

General Manager Pruim stated staff has confirmed with the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) that the District, as a registered owner of a digital copy of the CSDA Sample Policy Handbook, may provide copies of the handbook to interested Board members. The handbook includes standard policy templates that could be used to develop a new policy.

On a separate issue, General Manager Pruim clarified that the District does have a New Board Member Handbook; however, the contents are outdated and would need extensive updating. Director Boyd-Hodgson requested an electronic copy of the CSDA Sample Policy Handbook and stated she would like the New Board Member Handbook updated at some point, possibly in conjunction with strategic planning. As a starting point, staff will provide the Committee with the Table of Contents from the New Board Member Handbook along with an electronic copy of the CSDA Sample Policy Handbook.

(NEW BUSINESS) DISCUSSION ON PROCEDURE FOR BRINGING POLICY TO VOTE BEFORE BOARD

Director Boyd-Hodgson requested clarification on the process of how new policies are written and presented to the Board for approval.

General Manager Pruim stated proposed topics for new policies are typically discussed with the appropriate Committee first before going to the full Board to see if the Board is interested in moving forward with a policy. If the Board is interested in developing a new policy, staff works with the District's legal counsel to ensure proper development of the resolution, ordinance or policy. If there is a function for which the District does not have a policy, staff will reach out to other agencies to see if they have a similar policy that could be modified for the District's needs.

General Manager Pruim suggested the Committee review the active ordinances and resolutions that are available on the District's website. Administrative Secretary Johnson reviewed how the ordinances and resolutions can be accessed.

(NEW BUSINESS) DROUGHT ORDINANCE

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins reviewed the proposed revised drought ordinance which has been reviewed by the Finance/Investment Committee. He requested this Committee review it as well before it is presented to the full Board. The proposed ordinance continues the permanent water waste prohibitions. Staff is currently working on drought rates. Revisions to the current ordinance include:

- The current ordinance has four levels of drought. The state is requiring six levels.
- Level 1 is a drought watch seeking 10% voluntary reduction. The General Manager will have the authority to implement this level.
- Levels 2 and 3 are drought alerts with mandatory 20% and 30% reductions respectively with appropriate drought rates.
- Levels 4 and 5 are drought critical alerts with mandatory reductions at 40% and 50% respectively with appropriate drought rates.
- Level 6 is a drought emergency alert requiring more than 50% reduction.
- Levels 2 – 6 require Board action to implement.

General discussion took place regarding the possibility of offering incentives to customers who save water, rebates for low-flow toilets and replacing lawn turf with water-wise plants, and the legalities of such programs.

(NEW BUSINESS) BILL PAYMENT PLANS/SHUT OFFS

General Manager Pruim stated this item was discussed at the August 24, 2021, Finance/Investment Committee meeting. The District curtailed water service shut offs for non-payment last year ahead of the state's moratorium on shut offs. The state's moratorium is set to expire on September 30, 2021. If it is not extended, it will be the District's decision on whether to begin shut offs after that date. This item was placed on the September 15, 2021, Board agenda for the Board to consider and provide staff direction.

General Manager Pruiam briefly discussed the state's arrearages payment program. The program has \$985 million to assist customers who have fallen behind on their bills. The program will not be running until January or February 2022. It may benefit the District to continue the moratorium until the state program is up and running; however, customers who were current on their bills during the program's eligibility time frame of March 2020, to June 2021, for past due accounts and are now behind would not be eligible. Staff will need to know if shut offs would begin for those customers or all customers.

General discussion took place regarding payment plan parameters, customers who do not respond to the District's outreach to assist them, and the potential number of customers affected and who are or are not eligible for the state's arrearages payment program. Staff will present updated numbers to the Board at the September 15, 2021, Board meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE – OCTOBER 4, 2021

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 4, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at the hour of 11:18 a.m.