

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PUBLIC AWARENESS/PERSONNEL/POLICY COMMITTEE
OF THE VALLECITOS WATER DISTRICT
MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 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 Pruum
Administrative Services Manager Emmanuel
Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins
Administrative Secretary Johnson

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

PERSONNEL

(OLD BUSINESS) UPDATE ON PALOMAR COLLEGE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins stated the internship program with Palomar College is moving forward. The District's and Palomar College's legal counsel have approved the internship program contract. General Manager Pruum has received the contract and will sign it today.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

(OLD BUSINESS) UPDATE OF BILL CONSOLIDATION FOR LARGE CUSTOMERS

General Manager Pruum stated staff has created a sample bill to consolidate all of the San Elijo Hills HOA's more than 40 accounts. A meeting with the HOA representative group will be scheduled for some time next week to discuss the bill consolidation and next steps. Director Boyd-Hodgson expressed her interest in attending the meeting.

General discussion took place regarding the ability to consolidate accounts for other customers with multiple accounts that are interested in doing so.

(OLD BUSINESS) VWD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Administrative Services Manager Emmanuel provided an update on the research she performed via a survey to other agencies in an effort to fast track the scholarship program. Helix Water District (HWD) and Vista Irrigation District (VID) offer scholarship programs geared toward high school seniors. Both have an application process and checks are mailed directly to the school. HWD offers \$1,000 each to two high school seniors heading to four-year colleges. VID offers up to a maximum of six scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 which can be used for vocational school as well as four-year colleges.

Administrative Services Manager Emmanuel stated that once the structure is determined, staff can develop language for the District's scholarship program to be reviewed by the District's legal counsel.

General discussion took place regarding eligibility and selection criteria. Staff will provide a summary of the survey and recommendations at the next Committee meeting.

(OLD BUSINESS) IMAGINE A DAY WITHOUT WATER

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins stated San Marcos Mayor Rebecca Jones is willing to appear in a video staff is creating for this year's Imagine A Day Without Water event on October 21. The City of San Marcos is also issuing a proclamation regarding the event for the District at their City Council meeting on October 12, at 6:00 p.m. President Sannella will be attending the meeting to receive the proclamation.

Director Boyd-Hodgson expressed her opinion that a Board member or the landscape contest winners should be featured in the video instead of Mayor Jones. She suggested the video could also focus on the District's efforts to conserve water. She does not want the District's video to be used to support the Mayor's reelection campaign.

General discussion took place regarding how customers are made aware of the event and how many people have actually viewed the District's videos for the event in the past. The video will be posted on the District's social media, website, and YouTube page. Mayor Jones' participation in the video may draw a larger audience. The City of San Marcos will post the video on their social media and website as well.

Staff will explore alternative options for the video.

(OLD BUSINESS) LOBBY DISPLAY

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins discussed incorporating the District's 1946 Jeep in the planned lobby display. The previous Board did not approve the idea. The value of the Jeep, if it were to be sold, would be approximately \$9,000. Staff offered the Jeep to the San Marcos Historical Society, but they do not have a place for it. He recommended placing the Jeep in the lobby to preserve a small piece of the District's history.

General discussion took place. The Committee supports staff's recommendation of placing the Jeep in the lobby. Staff will present this item to the Board for their consideration.

(NEW BUSINESS) UTILITY RATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION PLAN

Director Boyd-Hodgson inquired about the District's communication plan regarding potential rate increases.

General Manager Prum discussed the requirements of Proposition 218 as it relates to increases in water and wastewater rates. The law requires the District to give the community a 45-day notice before the Board acts on rates. A formal legal notice explaining the rate increase and reasons for the increase must be mailed to all customers and posted on the District's website. After the 45-day notice period, the District must hold a majority protest public hearing which gives customers an opportunity to voice their opposition. Customers may also submit letters of protest. To date, there has never been a successful majority protest hearing at the District.

General discussion took place regarding what information is included in the Proposition 218 Notice, the current Cost of Service Study, and wastewater rates that have been flat.

POLICY

(NEW BUSINESS) SINGLE USE PLASTICS RESOLUTION

Director Boyd-Hodgson stated the San Marcos City Council will be considering an ordinance regarding single-use plastics on October 12. She would like the District to support the reduction of single-use plastics.

General Manager Pruim discussed steps the District has taken in the past several years to reduce single-use plastics such as eliminating plastic cups and bottled water in favor of environmentally friendly cardboard boxed water for meetings. The only bottled water purchased is for use during water main breaks for customers who are temporarily out of drinking water as the cardboard boxed water is very expensive.

This item will be discussed at a future Committee meeting after the outcome of the City's proposed ordinance is known.

General Manager Pruim announced that an agreement with Bill Dean has been executed. Mr. Dean is in the process of identifying a school and teacher for the collaborative program with the District. The goal is to complete the program by the end of the school's calendar year. The program will target fifth graders in the San Marcos Unified School District.

NEXT MEETING DATE – NOVEMBER 1, 2021

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 1, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at the hour of 10:59 a.m.