

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PUBLIC AWARENESS/PERSONNEL/POLICY COMMITTEE  
OF THE VALLECITOS WATER DISTRICT  
MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2022, AT 10:00 A.M.  
AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE IN THE BOARD ROOM  
201 VALLECITOS DE ORO, SAN MARCOS, CALIFORNIA

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  
Assistant General Manager Gumpel  
District Engineer Hubbard  
Development Services Senior Engineer Lopez  
Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins  
Human Resources Analyst Anderson  
Information Technology Technician Todd

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

PERSONNEL

**(NEW BUSINESS) DRAFT TELECOMMUTING POLICY**

General Manager Pruum stated that most of the District's administrative staff was required to telecommute during the early stages of the COVID pandemic out of necessity. Since then, employees have expressed their interest in continuing to work remotely and have asked the District to consider a permanent telecommuting policy where they could work remotely for some or all their time.

General Manager Pruum further stated that if the District were to consider a telecommuting policy, it would be on a pilot basis and results of the pilot program would be used to consider a permanent policy. A decision would not be made until negotiations for the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Employees' Association take place. The telecommuting policy would be voluntary unless an emergency arises such as a pandemic that would require most employees to telecommute. Draft criteria have been developed considering the District's operational needs and include the following:

- Fixed component – part of a regular schedule with no more than two days per week of telecommuting during a five-day schedule and only one day during a four-day schedule. Schedules could not be changed from pay period to pay period.

- Mondays, Fridays, and days before and after a holiday would not be permitted.
- The District needs to consider alternative work schedules to accommodate the changing workforce and to stay competitive to attract and retain the best workforce.
- Intermittent component – an employee could ask to work from home for up to a four-hour period, once per quarter, four times per year.
- Subject to supervisor or manager approval.
- Employees would be required to sign an agreement outlining their obligations and the District's obligations.
- The District may limit the number of employees eligible for working remotely and schedules may need to be rotated from time to time to accommodate the District's operational and staffing needs.
- Employees may be required to return to the office on relatively short notice.
- Telecommuting employees would need to provide the same level of job performance and professionalism as those in the office and would have to be physically located at their workplace and available throughout the workday.
- Telecommuting is not to take place of dependent care.
- Employees would adhere to their normal starting, ending and break times. If unable to work for a portion of a day due to illness, employees would be required to inform their supervisor and report the appropriate sick leave time on their time sheet.
- Supervisors and managers would need to establish metrics to track employees' productivity while working at home.
- Workers' Compensation is another consideration. Employees would need to provide assurance that they have a proper workspace and equipment at home.
- The District would not be responsible for maintenance of an employee's personal computer if using it to perform their job, nor would the District pay for electric costs or mileage if the employee is called to work in the office on a day they would normally be telecommuting.

General Manager Pruim asked the Committee if they were interested in considering a pilot telecommuting policy which would require Board approval.

General discussion took place. The Committee supported the development of a pilot telecommuting policy. Staff will present this item to the Board for consideration.

### **(NEW BUSINESS) EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION REQUEST**

General Manager Pruim stated representatives of the Employees' Association requested the District consider lifting the Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) cap due to high inflation which is currently approximately 8%. The current MOU with the Employees' Association places a limit on the COLA increases every year. The limit for the current year is 3% which will be effective on the first full pay period of July.

General Manager Pruim further stated the employees' request could be denied and different COLA caps could be considered during negotiations for the next MOU. He provided the following three options for the Committee's consideration:

- Grant a COLA above 3%, possibly a one-time adjustment.
- Consider offsetting COLA reductions in future years.
- Consider a one-time, non-PERSABLE bonus utilizing leftover money from the recent ACWA/JPIA refund and unused funds from the District's 457 plan match.

General discussion took place. The Committee supported General Manager Pruim presenting this item to the Board at a future Board meeting for their consideration.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

### **(OLD BUSINESS) VALLECITOS WATER DISTRICT SCHOLARSHIPS**

Public Information/Conservation Supervisor Robbins stated 13 scholarship applications were received. No applications were received from High Tech High School or Twin Oaks High School. Copies of the scholarship applications were provided to the Committee.

General discussion took place regarding establishment of criteria to select scholarship recipients such as meeting all application requirements, demonstrating financial need, being from the local community, and preference to those pursuing careers in water or wastewater. Director Boyd-Hodgson suggested a list of the criteria be published when the scholarship recipients are announced.

Directors Boyd-Hodgson and Pennock will meet outside of this Committee to review the scholarship applications and will present their recommendations to the Board in July.

## POLICY

### **(OLD BUSINESS) REVIEW OF ORDINANCE NO. 204 (BACKFLOW DEVICE UPGRADES)**

Development Services Senior Engineer Lopez facilitated a discussion on Ordinance No. 204, Cross Control Connection (Backflow), specifically on fire protection systems. The main issue is that older backflow devices cannot be tested and are not allowed by the current Health Code. A history of the District's policy was reviewed. The District's legal counsel's opinion is that single-check devices installed since Ordinance No. 49 was adopted in July 1970 are likely to be the customer's responsibility to replace. Using Ordinance No. 49 as a timeline in determining the District's responsibility, out of a total of 496 detector checks, 202 are non-compliant single-check devices. Of the 202, 14 were installed prior to 1970 and are therefore the District's responsibility to replace. 188 were installed since 1970 and are the customer's responsibility.

Development Services Senior Engineer Lopez stated detector checks are currently being upgraded via the District's Tenant Improvement (TI) review process. The TI review process, implemented in 2018, applies only to commercial customers. The average cost for a tenant to upgrade from a single to double detector check varies from \$10,000 to \$45,000. Staff has been working with customers who request more time to upgrade their devices and estimates it may take over 20 years for just the commercial upgrades to occur.

Staff recommended implementation of a process to replace the 14 detector checks that are the District's responsibility, budgeting them for replacement in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Staff also recommended implementation of a process to notify customers of their non-compliant backflow devices and to provide them time to upgrade their devices.

General Manger Pruim asked the Committee if this is something they will stand behind if staff embarks on their recommendations.

General discussion took place.

The Committee supported staff's recommendations. Staff will develop an implementation plan to enforce Ordinance No. 204.

#### NEXT MEETING DATE – JULY 11, 2022

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Monday, July 11, 2022, in the Board Room.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at the hour of 11:55 a.m.