



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS - MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

Medford City Hall Council Chambers
411 W. 8th Street – Rm 300, Medford, Oregon 97501

The regular meeting of the Medford Water Commission was called to order at 12:15 p.m. on the above date at Medford City Hall Council Chambers, Rm 300, with the following commissioners, staff, and guests present:

Acting Chair Bob Strosser; Commissioners Daniel Bunn, John Dailey, and Michael Smith; Commissioner Jason Anderson was absent

General Manager Brad Taylor; Executive Administrative Coordinator Yvette Finstad; Finance & Administration Director Tessa DeLine; Human Resources Manager Tanya Haakinson; Water Meter & Controls Supervisor Ken Johnson (by Zoom); Water Maintenance Supervisor Lester McFall (by Zoom); Water Treatment & Quality Director Ben Klayman; IT Manager Kris Stitt

Guest(s): Medford Council Alternate Liaison Kevin Stine; JD Clarizio (Bear Creek Golf Course)

3. Comments from the Audience

JD Clarizio, of the Bear Creek Golf Course, spoke on the history of the course and requested it be added to the list of courses that the Commission has had agreements with to provide emergency metered surplus water service to since 1993 (Resolution No. 764), as well as an additional meter for irrigation purposes to fill their pond, which will store supplemental water.

Commissioner Strosser noted that the Board takes these requests seriously, and will hear from staff as they consider the issues of capacity and surplus in the near future.

4. City Council Biennial Goals

City Manager Brian Sjothun presented information to the Board regarding City Council's 2021-23 Biennial Goals adopted on June 17, 2021:

- City Center Revitalization – Liberty Park Plan, Downtown Plan, parking district enhancements, building rehabilitation program, Economic Incentive Program, MURA Strategic Funding Plan
- Community Engagement – Medford 2040 Vision Plan, Communication Plan, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, partnership engagement
- Economic Development – One Rogue Valley strategy, Comprehensive Economic Development Program
- Housing Strategies – Increase housing opportunities, Homeless System Action Plan
- Public Infrastructure – Bear Creek Master Plan, Public Works infrastructure, City Wayfinding Program, promoting park and recreation infrastructure
- Vision Statement – Medford: A Hometown for All
- Focus Areas – Connecting Community, Fostering Economic Growth & Resiliency, Enhancing Hometown, Safety and Wellness, Promoting Recreation Opportunities

These areas are organized with actions to provide the framework and actions for the Mayor, Council, and staff to work towards. Commissioner Strosser acknowledged the large amount of work that the Mayor, Council, and staff have put into the work on goals, and thanked Sjothun for bringing the information to the Board.

5. Written Communications

5.1 Letters from ACCESS, St. Vincent de Paul, and The Salvation Army

DeLine provided background on the annual grants for low-income, water bill payment assistance. Funding request letters have been received from the three agencies that receive the grants, which have been included in the Commission's budget since 2003,

and are awarded based on the agencies' current balances, up to the \$5,000 maximum. Based on their current funding status, staff would recommend the following grants for FY 2021-22: ACCESS - \$5,000, The Salvation Army: \$5,000, and St. Vincent de Paul - \$5,000. Though two of the agencies have remaining balances from FY20-21, all three request the \$5,000 maximum, as they anticipate an increase in demand for funds from customers in the 2021-22 year when the Commission resumes shut-off activities in October. Statistics, including the number and average balance of accounts that are over 60 days delinquent, were included, and Commissioner Dailey questioned how long the average balance amount had accumulated since it is a large number and average monthly bills are general fairly small. DeLine confirmed that many of these have accumulated over a year since the pandemic began and the Commission suspended shut offs for non-payment. Commissioner Bunn noted that he is a member of the Board of Directors for ACCESS but there is no conflict.

Motion: Approve the grants for water bill payment assistance.

Moved by: Mr. Smith Seconded by: Mr. Dailey

Roll Call: Commissioners Bunn, Dailey, Smith, and Strosser voting yes.

Motion carried and so ordered.

6. Approval or Correction of the Minutes of the Last Regular Meeting of July 21, 2021

The Chair put forth the question on approval of the minutes from the last meeting.

The minutes were approved by general consent.

7. Review of Vouchers

Regarding the HASA invoice for chlorine, Commissioner Dailey asked if it was consistent with our usual price or if the national shortage has impacted costs. Klayman responded that HASA's prices have increased over the years due to increases in their material and production costs, rather than the recent shortage. Commissioner Smith inquired about an entry for S.O. Credit Service that was marked as "double payment"; DeLine replied that a customer had made a double payment, paying both S.O. Credit the Commission.

8. Management Reports

Management staff presented information:

- General Manager Brad Taylor – Big Butte Springs was the subject of a clue on the July 23, 2021, episode of Jeopardy (Ep. #175).
- Water Treatment & Quality Director Ben Klayman – Watershed, System Demand, and Treatment Plant Production data was presented. There was a small amount of precipitation at BBS in June, although totals remain at 65% of average. 90% of state in severe drought or higher. Springflows are setting historic lows each week. Willow Lake is sitting right around average; releases for EPID began this week. Current demands are near 5-year average; plant production is above average.

Commissioner Dailey inquired about the status of the new ozone equipment; Klayman responded that it has been purchased, but project completion is still about a year out.

- Human Resources Manager Tanya Haakinson – Two new hires start August 16: Field Tech. III Luke Zielinski and UP I (Meters) Jose Perez. These hires refill already existing positions.
- General Manager Brad Taylor
 - SDC Deferment – The Board discussed SDC deferment at the May 19 Study Session, and directed to staff to move collection from prior to infrastructure construction to the time of acceptance of said infrastructure. The development community is requesting further consideration of moving SDC collection to the building permit process; the Board would like to revisit this issue in a future session.

- Emergency Metered Water Service Agreements – Rogue Valley Country Club is requesting 300k to 500k gpd (contract limit is 800k); they want to be good partners and are working to understand and minimize how much water is really needed. Quail Point Golf Course is working to understand how much water they will be requesting (contract allows up to 500,000); Stewart Meadows Golf Course will be requesting around 80k to 150k (contract limit is 500K). Just as any other customer, Bear Creek Golf Course can get a 1" metered service for irrigation (which would provide an estimated 75k gpd), the installation charge would be around \$6700 plus the SDC fee.

Commissioner Bunn suggested creating a rate structure to incentivize overnight use, and requested information regarding underlying use assumptions for current SDCs. Taylor added that Rogue Valley, Quail Point, and Stewart have voluntarily agreed to use water off-peak. An added complexity is that the Manor/Quail Point owns Centennial Golf Course, and the pond at Quail is linked to Centennial. We have not received confirmation about Quail's needs yet with regards to their surplus water agreement. The Commission wants to find a way to help the community, making it work under the provisions of these agreements.

Commissioner Strosser observed that the dynamics have changed greatly since these agreements were put into place; we will bring the issue back at a study session as soon as possible, with options and details from staff so that the Board can make an informed decision. Bear Creek can install a 1" service, but the Board cannot provide a cohesive and coherent plan before discussing it in full.

- WIFIA Update – Two meetings in the last week; working to answer questions on application, drafting a Master Bond Agreement, and preparing resolution for City Council to authorize the Board to issue debt.

Commissioner Dailey asked how much money we applied for; Taylor estimated that it is around \$140M for total projects that we have identified, 49% of which would be WIFIA. Following an inquiry from Commissioner Bunn regarding support from the advisors and bond counselors, Taylor affirmed that they are very capable and have been very helpful.

9. Propositions and Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioner Smith remarked that he had spoken with a local restaurant owner that had spotted a large increase in the water bill recently. Upon investigation of surveillance video, they observed an unlicensed RV showing up in the middle of the night and filling tanks from their spigot (the owner then put a lock on the spigot). The Commission may see more reports of theft in the coming weeks/months; Taylor added that there are avenues to prosecute for theft of services if it comes to that.

With the Commission's centennial coming up, Commissioner Dailey proposed the documenting of the history of the Commission; he and Taylor will come up with a plan, as we are taking a strong position on the watershed (referencing our letter to WRD) and want to make sure we are shown in a positive light. Commissioner Strosser noted that the 1925 water rights that were subject to HB2616 are crucial to providing drinking water to our 130,000 customers in the Rogue Valley; the legislature received information that was not entirely accurate, passing the bill which then died in Senate after we provided testimony. Commissioner Dailey added that our forest management policies are the key to being good stewards of the watershed; a communication plan should include watershed maintenance and our responsibility for protecting it. Commissioners would like to work with the city lobbyist and others to help us protect the watershed by being aware of these bills before they receive support and begin to advance. Council Alternate Liaison Stine remarked that the City wants to help all different agencies on important issues such as these, in addition

to working with delegates like Senator Jeff Golden and Representative Pam Marsh. Commissioner Strosser volunteered to meet with Stine to share information on the topic.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business, this Commission meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m. The proceedings of the Medford Water Commission meeting were recorded and are on file along with the complete agenda of this meeting.

Yvette Finstad
Assistant Clerk of the Commission