



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

Medford Police Department Prescott Room
219 S. Ivy Street, Medford, Oregon 97501

The regular meeting of the Medford Water Commission was called to order at 12:24 p.m. on the above date at Medford Police Department Prescott Room, with the following commissioners, staff, and guests present:

Chair Michael Smith; Commissioners Jason Anderson, Bob Strosser, and David Wright. Commissioner John Dailey was absent.

General Manager Brad Taylor, Executive Administrative Assistant Amber Furu, Engineering Manager Brian Runyen, Information Technology Manager Kris Stitt, Water Operations Manager Dan Perkins, Water Resources & Customer Service Manager Julie Smitherman, Senior Accountant Jamie Looch

Guest(s): MW Attorney Mark Bartholomew, Medford City Council Liaison Nick Card, Beau Belikoff, Katy Kelley*, Robert Annear*, Eagle Point Irrigation, Anna Roeder*, (*Via Zoom)

3. Comments from the Audience

None.

4. Consent Calendar

4.1 Approval or Correction of the Minutes of the Last Regular Meeting of October 18, 2023

4.2 Quarterly Letter to Mayor and Council

Motion: Approve the Consent Calendar

Moved by: Mr. Anderson

Seconded by: Mr. Strosser

Roll Call: Commissioner Anderson, Smith, Strosser, and Wright voting yes.

Motion carried and so ordered.

Commissioners directed General Manager Brad Taylor and leadership staff to present the Quarterly Letter to the Mayor and Council at the Medford City Council meetings when possible; this has and will benefit our connection with the City.

5. Items Removed from Consent Calendar

None.

6. Credit Card Fee Discussion

Medford Water (MW) currently does not charge fees to our customers when processing credit or debit cards and is considering passing this convenience fee along to our customers. Last year MW processed about 350,582 payments of those payments, 40% were credit cards, 32% were electronic checks, and 26% were paper checks. Currently it takes about an hour and half to process an average of 372 checks per day. In fiscal Year 22/23, MW processed 142,505 credit card transactions totaling 6.9 million dollars. MW is enrolled in the Utility Billing program which eliminates percentage fees in favor of a higher transaction cost for many common credit card types. Non-Utility payments (such as Engineering fees, SDC fees, etc.) are similar but they are not eligible for the Utility Billing discount program offered by Visa, MasterCard, and Discover. The estimated fees passed onto residential customers would be \$2.00 per transaction for a maximum payment of \$300 and commercial customers would pay \$3.25 per transaction with a maximum payment to be decided.

Commissioners and staff discussed continuing to absorbing credit card fees or to start charging customers the fees (with the rollout of our new customer service website, we are already asking customers to re-register) and although MW is paying the fees, the credit card fees are lower if they are paid by MW (the customers are going to pay more because there would no longer be a utility discount for utility bills). With the difficulty of changing the fees right now, it seems it is not the time to do it (we can keep an eye on it for the future and see if this becomes a larger issue).

Motion: Medford Water will continue to absorb Credit Card Fees

Moved by: Mr. Wright Seconded by: Mr. Anderson

Roll Call: Commissioner Anderson, Smith, Strosser, and Wright voting yes.

Motion carried and so ordered.

7. Leadership Team Reports

- Julie Smitherman, Water Resources & Customer Service Manager
 - Watershed update – We are starting our water year just slightly above last year with 92% of normal precipitation and slightly cooler than average temperatures. Springflows are starting out higher this year than in previous years. Willow lake is 41% full, just slightly lower than the start of last year. Rogue River Stream flows are at 1,210 cfs which is 91% of normal. Lost Creek is 36% full, about 80% of what it would normally be at this time. Climate predictions for November are above normal temperatures and above normal precipitation.
- Water Operations Manager Dan Perkins
 - Contract and Redundant Sources – Northstar Chemical was awarded a contract on October 19, 2023, at that meeting Commissioners inquired about having a backup chemical supplier. Medford Water has learned from recent years of supply chain issues, as an established customer, we receive priority service from Northstar Chemical, however sole source is not guaranteed to the supplier on contract. The price and performance of our supplier is reviewed annually and can be resolicited if our supplier is not working out for us, and spot purchases are always an option if a supplier is not meeting expectations. Medford Water can also contract with the next lowest bidder.

Commissioners and staff discussed the various ways Medford Water can acquire chemical supplies in case of an issue with the supplier on contract.

- Brad Taylor, General Manager
 - Bric Grants Update - A meeting with Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) was held on October 6, 2023. FEMA coordinates the grant awards through OEM. Our application requested \$34,806,506 assuming a 30% Medford Water match. This grant was submitted for 3 projects, Capital Hill Reservoir, Crater Lake Ave Pipeline, and Control Station Improvements. The next steps are to revise project schedules, revise project scopes and budgets, re-run BCA models to verify cost benefit scores stay similar and then wait for FEMA to issue requests for more information.
 - Upcoming Board Schedule – December 6, JC/MWC Bulk Waer Sales Update and Intermediate Water User Update. December 20, Annual Audit.

8. Propositions and Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioner Wright thanked staff for the Quarterly Letter to the Mayor and Council.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business, this meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m. The proceedings were recorded and are on file along with the complete agenda of this meeting.



Amber Furu
Assistant Clerk of the Commission