

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
INDIAN WELLS VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

APRIL 12, 2021

The Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Indian Wells Valley Water District was called to order by President Griffin at 3:04 p.m. in the Board of Directors Hearing Room, 500 West Ridgecrest Boulevard, Ridgecrest, California.

CALL TO ORDER

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chuck Cordell.

PLEDGE

DIRECTORS PRESENT: President Charles D. Griffin
Director Mallory J. Boyd
Director Charles F. Cordell
Director Stan G. Rajtora
Vice President David C.H. Saint-Amand

ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS ABSENT: None.

STAFF PRESENT: Don Zdeba, General Manager;
Jim Worth, Attorney;
Chuck Krieger, Consulting Engineer;
Renée Morquecho, Chief Engineer;
Ty Staheli, Chief Financial Officer;
Jason Lillion, Operations Manager;
Lauren Smith, Recording Secretary

AGENDA DECLARATION

Recording Secretary, Lauren Smith, reported that the agenda for today's Special Board Meeting was posted on Friday, April 9, 2021.

**AGENDA
DECLARATION**

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

None.

**CONFLICT OF
INTEREST**

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

None.

**PUBLIC
COMMENTS**

With no further Board or Public comments, President Griffin recessed the meeting and adjourned to Closed Session at 3:07 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

The meeting was reconvened in Closed Session at 3:12 p.m.

**CLOSED
SESSION**

The meeting was adjourned to Open Session at 5:46 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

The meeting was reconvened in Open Session at 6:00 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

No action was taken which would require disclosure under the Brown Act.

CONSENT CALENDAR

**CONSENT
CALENDAR**

MOTION: was made by Director Cordell and seconded by Vice President Saint-Amand approving the Minutes of the March 8, 2021 Regular Board Meeting, and payment of Accounts Payable totaling \$1,261,048.49. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Cordell, Griffin, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

COVID PREVENTION PLAN (CPP)

The Board reviewed updates made to the District's CPP approved at the January 11, 2021 Regular Board Meeting to further meet the emergency standards adopted by California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA). Redlined and clean versions provided in Board packet. CPP

MOTION: was made by Vice President Saint-Amand and seconded by Director Rajtora approving the revised COVID Prevention Plan as presented. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Cordell, Griffin, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

ADMINISTRATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Board reviewed the current Unanticipated Water Use Claim Policy, specifically how the District should handle claims with regards to how the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (IWVGA) Fees are calculated. The fees include the Replenishment Fee and Pumping Fee, which are not able to be forgiven nor waived when processing an Unanticipated Water Use Claim, as those fees must be paid. UNANTICIPATED WATER USE CLAIM

The Board discussed the current procedure of exhausting all outreach efforts notifying customers of high usage. The current practice is for staff to turn off the water if they are unable to reach the customer, to avoid continuous usage and potentially a very high bill.

MOTION: was made by Director Rajtora and seconded by Director Boyd approving additional language to the Unanticipated Water Use Claim Policy explaining the customer is responsible for the applicable IWVGA Fees accrued during the loss. Motion was carried, unanimously. (Ayes: Boyd, Cordell, Griffin, Rajtora, Saint-Amand. Nays: None. Absent: None.)

The Board reviewed the current number of accounts that should be locked off due to non-payment; however, are not as a result of Governor Newsom's Executive Order prohibiting water shutoffs during the pandemic. At the September 2020 Regular Board meeting the Board directed staff to send a letter to all past due accounts informing them of their outstanding balance and options available to them. FLOW REDUCERS

The letter also addressed the possibility of a flow restrictor being installed if a customer failed to enter into a payment agreement and fulfill its terms.

The Board directed staff and legal to review the legality of installing flow reducers to past due accounts, as well as potential safety hazards with such a low flow, and provide follow up at future meetings.

INDIAN WELLS VALLEY GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY (IWVGA)

IWVGA

Director Rajtora attended the March IWVGA Regular Board meeting and reported on actions taken including:

- Approval of Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) planned project No. 1: Surface Percolation Replenishment and Pilot/Demonstration
- Approval of Variance Request per Ordinance No. 04-20 by J. Freeman
- Regional Government Services (RGS) has taken over administrative roles for the IWVGA
- Shallow Well Impact Mitigation reporting forms

Director Rajtora suggested for a single general legal counsel to serve the Board, preferably one not currently associated with an agency with a Board member on the IWVGA.

The Board discussed items on the April 14th IWVGA Regular Board meeting agenda.

GENERAL MANAGER AND STAFF UPDATE

**GENERAL
MANAGER AND
STAFF UPDATE
SAFETY,
PRODUCTION &
NEW SERVICES**

Don Zdeba updated the safety record to 302 consecutive days without a recordable injury. The District currently has no staff in quarantine as a result either a positive COVID-19 test or exposure to someone testing positive. Staff is following Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Department of Public Health guidelines as well as AB 685 requirements for informing and testing those who have been in contact with the employees who tested positive. Staff does anticipate to re-open the front office to walk-in customers on Monday, April 19th, while continuing to practice distancing, and providing masks and hand sanitizer for customers.

Metered water production at the wells for the month of March was 136,633,000 gallons (419.3 acre-feet). The number the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is using for comparison is metered water through the distribution system, or consumption, and non-revenue water, which is water lost to leaks, flushing activities, blow-offs, etc. For the month of March, the number is 98,625,000 gallons (302.7 acre-feet). The conservation results for March were reported to the SWRCB on April 7th. Consumption was down 10.9% compared to March 2013. The 20% conservation target established by the Board of Directors took effect June 2016. Since that time, the cumulative result remains at 22.5%.

Comparing the March conservation results in recent years, 2020 was 10.0%, 2019 was 25.2%, 2018 was 10.3%, and 2017 was 23.8%. The residential gallons for capita per day (R-gpcd) for the month of March was 80.8.

There were fourteen new connections added during the month of March. There have been 102 new connections during the fiscal year that began on July 1st. The new connections have contributed \$675,708.00 in additional revenue. At the same time last year there were fifty-five new connections that contributed \$243,282.00 in Capital Facility Fees.

Don Zdeba commented he was invited to be the speaker at the March 17th Rotary Club meeting. Among the topics he addressed was how COVID-19 has impacted the District, the Groundwater Authority Fees and how to estimate the impact on their bills, financial impact of Executive Order N-42-20 issued by Governor Newsom on April 4, 2020 putting a moratorium on the shut off of water service to customers due to non-payment during the pandemic, and SB 606 and AB 1668: the Water Conservation and Drought Planning Legislation passed in May 2018 setting targets for indoor and outdoor use by June 2022. Mr. Zdeba also participated in this month's web-based Community Collaborative on April 6th hosted by Mayor Bruen. He reported on start-up of Well 35, scheduled testing of the intertie connections with the Navy and Searles Valley Minerals, the updated number of delinquent accounts and the outstanding balance, and he mentioned that tonight's Board meeting would be the first to be live-streamed with the new audio-video equipment.

PUBLIC
OUTREACH

The following updates were given on items assigned at the January 27, 2021 Special Board Workshop:

BOARD
WORKSHOP
UPDATES

- Address how brackish water would count toward the 7,650 acre-feet of pumping within the framework of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)

UPDATE: At the March 8th Board meeting, Mr. Zdeba reported that he and Jim Worth discussed this with Tim Parker in the context of is brackish water a management tool or a new source of water. They agreed it is a management tool. The Board received Mr. Parker's summary of his research into this issue and there was the opinion among some Board members that the question was not addressed adequately. Mr. Parker has reached out to Department of Water Resources (DWR) again with specific questions and is awaiting a response. A copy of the email from Mr. Parker to DWR was provided to the Board.

- Finance Committee to discuss a policy for issuing Will-Serve letters for new connections

UPDATE: Item will be added to the May 4th Finance Committee meeting agenda. It was suggested that Jim Worth be involved in the discussion.

Renée Morquecho reported the preliminary startup activities began a week before last with collection of required Title 22 water quality samples. An inspector with State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) will be on site on April 14th to conduct an inspection. Once Well 35 has been approved by SWRCB and all water quality sampling completed, the Well may be used by the District. ENGIE has completed the installation of racking and modules. Their electrical crew is scheduled to begin working on April 19th and approval of the installation by Southern California Edison (SCE) will follow sometime in June.

WELL 35
UPDATES

Ms. Morquecho reported on the status of the C-Zone booster building roof replacement and seismic upgrades. Wasson Roofing will be

POST-
EARTHQUAKE
REPAIRS

mobilizing on May 3rd due to a delay obtaining all the materials and the project manager being out of town.

CalOES granted an extension to June 30th to complete the project.

Gateway booster station: Krieger & Stewart put together a technical memo at the request of CalOES comparing the cost of replacing the one damaged booster (\$2.3M) with the cost of replacing both boosters on site (\$3.3M). The District had planned to replace both boosters since the Salisbury booster is reaching the end of its life, both boosters work together and run off the same control system. In the long run, the cost will be less to replace both booster stations now and put them in one building that is up to code and less likely to fail during a future earthquake. However, CalOES is only able to provide funds for replacement of the booster damaged during the July 2019 seismic activity. The District has decided to proceed with replacement of both boosters.

Ty Staheli reported that the estimated year-to-date revenues as of March 31, 2021 are \$10,517,148 and expenses are \$9,928,041. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$598,108, which exceeds budget by \$2,159,172. FINANCIAL STATUS

Mr. Staheli reviewed the report provided by ENGIE Services for July 2020 through March 2021 with the Board of Directors. The guaranteed savings during that time was \$363,284.34 and actual savings was \$326,977.95. For March, the actual savings was \$46,736.79 and guaranteed was \$45,619.18. SOLAR PRODUCTION

Mr. Staheli reported on the following conservation items: CONSERVATION
➤ State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Water Waster Report - So far in 2021, there has been eleven water waste reports received with eleven contacts made. There have been zero formal Second Notices and zero penalties issued.

Jason Lillion reported all sites have completed the installation and testing of the new system except the Arsenic Treatment Plants. Once the plants are online, ATSI will finish programming of Plant 2 remotely and then be on-site to complete the installation of Plant 1. SCADA

Plant 2 was brought online last week, and Plant 1 is being disinfected prior to being brought online. The new iron analyzer is scheduled to be online in mid-May. PureFlow met with staff and demonstrated their stainless-steel underdrain system and stated they are willing to guarantee its performance to mitigate the amount of media in the effluent tank. Details of the warranty have yet to be received and reviewed by staff. ARSENIC TREATMENT

Mr. Lillion reported for the month of March, thirty-one services were repaired and twenty-one were replaced. Saddles and services were replaced on Ward ahead of the City paving. The NO-DES truck made four runs in March, filtering 26,700 gallons. Since inception, the NO-DES truck has filtered 7,891,475 gallons. 151 valves were exercised. OPERATIONS

BOARD COMMENTS/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Director Rajtora hopes public will soon be allowed to physically attend IWVWD meetings. He added the District needs to be more proactive looking for augmented water, exploring for a new aquifer or

BOARD COMMENTS

basin, perhaps the El Paso area. He further commented on investigating the reclaiming of brackish water on the playa.

Vice President Saint-Amand commented it is critical the District find water within an economic radius of us. He commented on Senate Bill (SB) 606 and Assembly Bill (AB) 1668 and the need for public to contact representatives of the Assembly and voice their opinion on being restricted to 40 gallons per day.

President Griffin echoed Director Rajtora's comments on public attending future meetings. He also asked for staff to add Director Rajtora's suggestion for the District to explore augmented water to the next Water Management Committee meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren Smith
Recording Secretary

APPROVED: May 10, 2021