MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT FEBRUARY 4, 2021

1. **CALL TO ORDER –** The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on February 4, 2021 was called to order by Chairperson Shute at 3:34 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. *(Due to COVID restrictions the meetings are being held virtually.)* Chairperson Shute, presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Member Hamilton *(via video conference)*, Member Shute *(via video conference)*, Member Stewart *(via video conference)*, Member Vernon *(via video conference)*.

Also Present Via Teleconference or Video Conference:

General Manager Kennedy, Executive Assistant Washburn, Alternate Gray, Finance Manager Largent, Information and Technology Manager Khattab, Information and Technology Specialist Espino.

One member of the public was present via teleconference or video teleconference.

4. **INSTRUCTIONS TO ALLOW PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS FROM THOSE ATTENDING THIS MEETING VIA TELECONFERENCE OR VIDEO CONFERENCE**

Mr. Shute read aloud the instructions for those attending via teleconference or video conference.

5. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

No alternates were seated.

6. **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA (Government Code §54954.2)**

There were no changes to the agenda.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT RELATING TO ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (Limit 3 Minutes)**

There were no comments.

***8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. January 7, 2021

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

Action: Approve, Moved by Member Vernon, Seconded by Member Stewart.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (summary: Ayes = 4).

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Member Stewart, Member Vernon.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS UPDATE ON REOPENING THE RMWD HEADQUARTERS

Mr. Kennedy reported the surge appears to be on the downswing; however, the District will remain operating status quo until more individuals are vaccinated.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no comments.

11. WATER SERVICES UPGRADE PROJECT (WSUP) UPDATE

Mr. Kennedy updated the committee noting the project was 41% complete and how the backfills are taking place within a day or two after the meters are replaced. He noted the claim rate associated with this project has remained extremely low and those received were minimal. He mentioned the Budget and Finance Committee will receive information related about the water loss reporting and financial impact as well as the benefits RMWD is already experiencing in relation to this project.

Mr. Hamilton suggested staff consider the audience they are trying to reach when preparing printed communications in terms of using larger print. Mr. Shute mentioned the rubber wheels the Post Office uses to sort the mail caused smear marks which made some of the important details difficult to read. Mr. Stewart offered to drop his postcard off to the District for staff to use as an example when speaking with the service provider. Discussion followed.

Ms. Gray shared a draft of the postcard to be mailed to the customers. The committee members provided staff with input as to how best convey the information provided in the postcard. Mr. Kennedy agreed to meet with Ms. Gray and Ms. Largent to work out the details.

12. PERMANENT SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL WATER RATE (PSAWR) OUTREACH UPDATE

Mr. Kennedy mentioned there will be information in the upcoming newsletter as well as other information sent from RMWD to the customers. He noted all the north county water agencies with significant special agricultural rate customers have met to discuss this matter and will be meeting with SDCWA to communicate the need to extend the timeframe. He stated RMWD has seen a 15% uptake so far and how some of the information received is that some customers find challenges with the requirements to join the Farm Bureau and the Regional Board oversight. He shared some of the other local agencies have indicated some coordination is taking place with people calling the County to get on an organic growers list which is being sent to the Regional Board. He pointed out this was not the expectation; however, there is a concern that in order to

save money on the water, some of these individuals may end up being placed on a new regulatory regime they may not want. He said the question for SDCWA is if they cut off everyone on July 1, 2021, will the benefits of the program which creates additional reliability diminish.

Mr. Vernon asked if the other 85% of the existing TSAWR users are not going to or do not plan to move over to the PSAWR. Mr. Kennedy clarified only 15% have submitted their applications to date; however, the deadline has been set for the end of June which may result in more applications to be remitted over the next few months. Mr. Vernon inquired as to the process for notifying the customers regarding this matter. Mr. Kennedy stated letters have been sent to all customers on the rate and information is being published in the RMWD newsletter. Ms. Largent mentioned letters were also being sent to agricultural customers and as the deadline approaches, additional outreach will be made to those customers who have not responded.

13. STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW WITH ESTABLISHING COMMITTEE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mr. Kennedy noted a draft version of the plan was sent to the committee members in January for their review and feedback. He solicited the committee members for their input noting this plan would be presented to the Board in February for their consideration.

Mr. Vernon said he found the plan to be well-written, unoffensive, and not complicated.

Mr. Kennedy stated once the detachment matter is settled and the ability to meet in person becomes available again, the Board may want to consider going through the full workshop process as has been done previously with the Board, staff, and committee members.

14. ONLINE PAYMENT PROCESSOR CHANGE UPDATE

Ms. Largent reported 1,100 customers have signed up on the new online payment processor and how staff was monitoring those customers who were previously on autopay to make sure they get on the new system. She mentioned in January the Board approved waiving any late fees for autopay customers during the transition period. She stated the overall feedback received from both customers and staff has been positive. She noted the work involved with maintaining twelve different sources from which payments could be received has now been narrowed down to six. She said although there will be a great deal of work for staff assisting customers with the sign-up process; however, once the customers are established, the workload will lessen.

Mr. Hamilton inquired as to how many customers have switched over to the new system. Ms. Largent stated approximately 1,100 out of 8,200 customers. Mr. Hamilton said he was curious as to how many customers were signed up for autopay prior to the transition. Ms. Largent said there were approximately 1,000; however, the customers currently signed up for the new system may not have necessarily been on the previous autopay system.

Ms. Gray reported many customers have expressed interest in the new process with many very excited RMWD had made the switch. She mentioned numerous customers like having staff walk them through the process which is helpful for all parties involved. She stated there will be a write-up about the new autopay system in the upcoming newsletter.

Mr. Kennedy confirmed the old system was already down.

Discussion ensued regarding the steps involved with enrolling in the new system.

15. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH ITEMS

- **A.** Topics
- **B.** Calendar
- **C.** Snipes Calendar
- **D.** Updates from Other Committees
- **E.** Customer Relations
- **F.** Monthly Newsletter Review
- **G.** Social Media Post Updates

Mr. Vernon inquired as to whether information has been provided on the District's website relative to addressing water pressure matters. Ms. Gray stated she was in the process of preparing information to post on the website.

Mr. Stewart suggested RMWD provide a better means of contacting customers when their water service may be interrupted when a shutdown occurs. He expressed concern not providing enough notification does not allow for customers to make any necessary arrangements. Mr. Kennedy stated he and the Operations Manager have discussed better means for communicating shutdowns with the customers.

16. REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF RMWD RELATED MEDIA STORIES

Mr. Kennedy noted media stories related to RMWD, FPUD, and SDCWA matters will be published in the near future.

17. LIST OF SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING

It was noted first review of goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan, updates on the on-line payment processor change, PSWAR, and WSUP program, as well as conducting surveys to receive customer satisfaction feedback using the District's phone system should be on the next committee agenda.

18. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute.

The meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary