

**MINUTES OF THE ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
JANUARY 6, 2021**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Engineering and Operations Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on January 6, 2021 was called to order by Chairperson Nelson at 3:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Member Nelson, presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Member Nelson (*via video conference*), Member Ratican (*via video conference*), Alternate Largent (*via video conference*).

Absent: Member Gasca, Member Marnett.

Also Present Via Teleconference or Video Conference:

General Manager Kennedy, Executive Assistant Washburn, Associate Engineer Powers, Acting District Engineer Williams, Information and Technology Manager Khattab, Operations Manager Gutierrez, Project Manager Tamimi, Engineering Technician Rubio, Information and Technology Specialist Espino.

Two members of the public were 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. Nelson read aloud the instructions for those attending the meeting via teleconference or video conference.

5. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

Ms. Largent was seated as an alternate.

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

There were no amendments to the agenda.

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

There were no public comments.

***8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
A. December 2, 2020

Motion:

To approve the minutes.

Action: Approve, Moved by Member Ratican, Seconded by Alternate Largent.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (summary: Ayes = 3).

Ayes: Member Nelson, Member Ratican, Alternate Largent.

9. GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Kennedy thanked everyone for attending this meeting via Zoom, especially in light of the recent positive COVID tests as well as potential exposures among staff. He explained the main goal was to keep contact to a minimum and protect the district operations, staff as well as members of the public.

Mr. Nelson expressed concern for any employees who have contacted the virus and asked if anyone has become seriously ill. Mr. Kennedy explained the scenarios were mixed as well as mentioned the applications members of the IT staff has put into place for all employees to utilize for COVID-related reporting.

Mr. Kennedy updated the committee on the status of the CIP Strategic Plan noting it is intended to have a full review conducted at the February committee meeting.

10. DISTRICT ENGINEER COMMENTS

Mr. Williams updated the committee on the steps being taken to create the CIP Strategic Plan and how it will be brought to both this committee as well as the Budget and Finance Committee in advance of the committee February meetings prior to taking it to the Board for consideration.

Mr. Williams provided an update on the Gopher Canyon Pipeline project which is a part of the Pipeline Upgrade Project (PUP) project. He noted ISMND was required for this project and how these processes were already underway including notifications being mailed to each of the impacted customers.

Mr. Williams noted there were no additional comments to the two receive related to the Thoroughbred Lift Station. He noted responses have been provided to those comments. Mr. Kennedy pointed out outreach with the local tribes also went very smoothly.

11. OPERATIONS MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Gutierrez reported RMWD has experienced fifteen main breaks over a four-week span in December. He explained these were challenging to address due to a reduction in staff related to the recent COVID situation. He reported the North River Road Phase II was near completion. He explained some of the steps necessary to take at the North River Road worksite.

Discussion ensued regarding tubercles.

12. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Ratican inquired as to whether committee officers are to be selected during the January meetings. Ms. Washburn agreed to review the policy and would include a committee officer selection on the February committee agenda if deemed necessary.

Mr. Nelson stated although he understands the amount of time being spent on the CIP Strategic Plan was challenging; however, he believes it will be a tremendous benefit in the future. He thanked staff for their efforts.

13. BOARD ACTION UPDATES

Mr. Kennedy updated the committee on the actions taken by the Board at their December 8, 2020 meeting.

14. WATER SERVICE UPGRADE PROJECT (WSUP) UPDATE

Mr. Gutierrez reported the project was 38% complete. He pointed out during the recent breaks and COVID-related situations Concord was asked to focus more on backfilling until RMWD staff was able to place more focus on the project.

Mr. Kennedy described the steps taken when RMWD completes the required Water Loss Analysis. He noted the software also calculates the net cost of what the determined water loss. He stated RMWD has reduced its water loss which has resulted in a decrease of apparent losses totaling a net savings of \$578,000.

15. POSSIBLE REFUNDING OF BACKFLOW TESTING CHARGES

Mr. Kennedy thanked Mr. Marnett for highlighting this issue. He pointed out as staff dug deeper into the data, it was found there were some areas where improvements could be made including where customers who have backflow devices who are not being charged. He explained staff also found an anomaly with the data being entered into the software. He said although it appears there should be a simple resolve to the situation, there are additional steps that need to be taken before making a final determination. He said most importantly, it was necessary for the team to determine what has transpired, but also find a means to ensure there are no reoccurrence.

Mr. Nelson inquired as to whether those cases where customers are not being charged for backflow devices was due to RMWD not being made aware the devices were in place. Mr. Kennedy stated he did not believe so, but rather could be due to data conversion which the IT department was currently working on identifying a way where the error occurred as well as creating one primary reference. Discussion ensued regarding how this error would be communicated to the customers.

Mr. Nelson noted Mr. Marnett's concern was regarding some customers possibly being billed for backflow tests that did not take place. Mr. Kennedy explained based on the data, it does not show there were no backflow devices not tested for multiple years. He stated part of the process involves developing the information to present to the Board to consider a policy decision related to this matter. He also noted the input received from Legal Counsel regarding this matter. He concluded with noting before reaching a resolve, staff wants to make sure there is a full understanding of what occurred prior to the providing the Board with any range of options they may want to select.

Ms. Largent noted staff was working with billing to eliminate any of the manual processes so when staff changes or SOP revisions occur, anytime the data does not align within the different software, it will trigger an alert for staff to address.

16. SANEXEN WATER PIPE LINING PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Kennedy confirmed this was a pilot project. He summarized some of the challenges staff witnessed during the demonstrations.

Mr. Williams shared photographs and videos taken during the pilot testing process. Discussions ensued regarding what was transpiring in the photographs and videos.

Mr. Kennedy noted the testing plans will be completed prior to conducting any constructive testing.

17. HUTTON AND TURNER PUMP STATION DESIGN UPDATE

Mr. Williams shared the bid results for this project. He mentioned Mr. Ratican's evaluation score was taken into account. He pointed out six proposals were received with Hoch Consulting receiving the highest score. He said staff was prepared to go the Board in January with a request for authorization to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Hoch Consulting for the design of the pump station. He shared the spreadsheet showing how each consultant scored individually.

Mr. Ratican expressed concern with the highest point total being assigned to meeting RMWD's work schedule. He said based on the information contained in their proposal, Hoch Consulting did not appear to be able to meet this requirement; however, some evaluators gave them the highest rating possible. Mr. Williams explained he had spoken with Hoch Consulting who assured him they would be able to meet the District's schedule. Mr. Ratican stressed the judging process should only be based on the information provided in the proposals and not on discussions held afterwards; therefore, he still questioned how staff rated Hoch Consulting so high in this category.

Mr. Williams pointed out there were other firms who provided very aggressive schedules that appeared well on paper, but he did not believe were achievable; therefore, he considered his past experience with Hoch Consultant and what they are capable of providing.

Mr. Ratican said after spending a great deal of time reviewing the Request for Proposals and how based on what he saw, the numbers do not make sense; however, they could make sense to others. He stated he was impressed with three of the proposals and that he did not have a problem with any of these three being selected. Mr. Kennedy acknowledged Mr. Ratican's concerns.

Mr. Nelson inquired as to whether staff was asking the committee to recommend the Board recommend the Board retain Hoch Consulting. Mr. Williams confirmed this was the request.

Motion:

To recommend the Board retain Hoch Consulting for the Hutton Turner project.

Action: Approve, Moved by Alternate Largent, Seconded by Member Nelson.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (summary: Ayes = 3).

Ayes: Member Nelson, Member Ratican, Alternate Largent.

***18. AS-NEEDED SERVICES EXPENDITURES SUMMARY**

Mr. Nelson confirmed the report provided was in landscape format. He inquired about one item added to the list. Mr. Tamimi explained this was in relation to challenges being experienced with encroachment not allowing staff access meters which needed to be addressed. Mr. Williams confirmed this was the only addition to the summary since it was last reviewed by the committee.

Mr. Ratican inquired as to the costs associated with this easement. Mr. Tamimi explained after reviewing the remitted estimates and costs, staff used the information to determine the most cost effective and efficient option. Mr. Williams added this easement was not necessarily complex, but rather expands over multiple parcels including property that does not belong to the individual staking the claim. Mr. Gutierrez pointed out the individual was trying to not grant RMWD access to an easement located on his neighbor's property; therefore, to validate RMWD's authority to access the easement as well as determine if an encroachment has occurred, the first step would be to have the easement staked out to validate the area is RMWD's easement and it is defined.

19. LIST OF SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT SCHEDULED ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

It was noted an update on the WSUP project, backflow investigation process, CIP Strategic Plan as well as the appointment of committee officers and process improvement discussion should be on the next committee agenda.

20. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Nelson.

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Flint Nelson, Committee Chairperson

Dawn M. Washburn, Board Secretary