



MAPLETON WATER DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
APPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
6:00 PM AUGUST 28, 2023

Board Members Present: Vanessa West, Julie Doran-Lee, Sharon Kelly, Art Donnelly and Nancy Pettibon

Others Present: Jordan Walker

*Meeting opened at 6:05 p.m.*

**Swearing in Julie Doran-Lee**

Doran-Lee was absent for the meeting in which the commissioners elected in the May election were sworn in.

**Motion:** Swear in Julie Doran-Lee to Commissioner Position 3.

Motion made by Kelly, seconded by Pettibon.

**Executive Session Related Item(s)**

West explained that the board reviewed the three applications received for the position of Assistant Water System Operator. Interviews will be conducted on Thursday, August 31 at 1:00, 1:30 and 2:00. A regular meeting will be held at 12:30. After the executive sessions for the interviews the regular meeting will be gaveled back in for the final decision. The 12:30 special meeting will be for the board to discuss the questions to ask the applicants. Pettibon said she would call the applicants to schedule interview times. Later in the meeting, Doran-Lee expressed her support for having a probationary period of three months for new employees. Kelly suggested that new employees not receive the full rate of pay until after the probationary period. Pettibon said she disagreed with that idea, but supported a probationary period in general.

**Board Ground Rules**

Walker explained that the board made several changes to the draft board ground rules prepared by Rural Community Assistance Corporation consultant Kim Anderson. The most recent change was to elect board officers every year at the first regular board meeting in August. West explained that these ground rules were not written in stone and could be changed by the board in the future.

**Motion:** Adopt the board ground rules as amended.

Motion made by Pettibon, seconded by Kelly. Motion passed unanimously.

Doran-Lee wanted to know what the position numbers were for each board member. Walker said the positions were as follows:

- Position 1: Donnelly
- Position 2: Pettibon
- Position 3: Doran-Lee
- Position 4: West
- Position 5: Kelly

**Organizational Chart**

West said she was somewhat concerned about how the board would adopt the organizational chart.



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She said she has already worked on many of the red-outlined items. She was concerned that officially adopting the organizational chart would make it difficult for board members to work together. Many of the items on the chart require work from different committees. Walker said that the board could adopt the organizational chart as a primary reference for board officer responsibilities.

**Motion:** Adopt the draft organizational chart as the primary reference for board officer responsibilities.

Motion made by Pettibon, seconded by Doran-Lee. Motion passed unanimously.

Pettibon also discussed the difficulties she was having in obtaining information to create material safety data sheet. Most of the information available online costs. Donnelly suggested that she speak with the district's insurance carrier for assistance.

**Pay Period**

Walker said that he spoke with Brittany Hornung with Buckwald and Hornung, CPAs, the district's accountant, regarding pay periods. The board had previously said they would like a two-week pay period to be better able to keep track of employee hours and overtime. In his discussion with Hornung, Walker found that their office offers a twice-monthly pay period, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. Kelly suggested that the employees have a standard once a month pay period with the ability to have a draw between pay checks. West said that she would prefer two-week pay periods so she did not have to remember as far back when reviewing timecards when necessary.

**Motion:** Establish the 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of the month as the district's pay days.

Motion made by Pettibon, seconded by Doran-Lee. Motion approved 4 to 1 (Kelly).

Kelly said she voted against the motion because she thought the board was making it harder for itself and the accountant.

**Rate Changes**

West said she added this to the agenda because the district urgently needs to raise the service fee to keep up with costs and keep from losing money every month. She spoke with Kim Anderson with RCAC who said that a rate study would be needed to increase the consumption rate but the service fee could be raised with justification. West said she wanted to incorporate the street light fee into the service fee as well. Doran-Lee said that she was concerned that increasing the service fee now and then, in a few months when the rate study is complete, would lack public support. Though she did understand the need to increase revenue. West said that she understood that but the district needs more revenue before a rate study can be completed and rates changed. Doran-Lee said that she also said that she was concerned that the board keeps assuming unfunded obligations with the anticipation of a rate increase. She wanted to stop doing this going forward as she was afraid it may come back to haunt the district in the future. West said that her goal is to cover operating costs with the service fee. Walker said that he and Kelly could work on assessing what those costs would be and what service fee would cover those costs. Walker noted that any changes of more than 10 percent would need a supplemental budget according to Oregon law. West said that she understood that but it would make more sense to pass a



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supplemental budget after we adjust the service fee so the budget committee would have a better sense of the resources their expected to budget. Walker said he agreed.

**Employee Insurance Update**

Pettibon said she had looked into possible health insurance plans for the Lead Water System Operator. They all seemed to have a pretty high monthly premium. She provided copies of the Special District Insurance Services plans and premiums. The lowest premium was \$449 so she solicited another insurance agency to provide a quote for a health insurance plan that was less expensive. She spoke with the agency and was told that the most common plans were the “balanced bronze” plans. None of the options are cheap but the premiums are considerably less than the SDIS plans. One requirement is that the employer would need to pay at least half of the monthly premium or the board could decide to cover the entire premium depending on how much the board decides the district can afford. Pettibon said if the district cannot afford then it cannot afford it, but these are the options she investigated. Before the district moves forward she wanted the Rochon and the board’s input. Kelly said that she did not think that Rochon’s input was necessary. The board should do what it thought was necessary and Rochon can make his decision. Pettibon said that it is important to have his input because what the district offers is going to affect his decision. Rochon has expressed certain preferences about a potential plan and the board can try to find one that is better suited to his situation. West said that she thought that the board should just agree on a monthly amount the district would be willing to pay and if Rochon chooses a plan that’s more he can make up the difference. She thought that it was important to keep compensation competitive with other water systems to retain staff. Doran-Lee said that she wanted to note that pay a premium of \$400 per month would require each customer to pay an additional \$1.50 per month. West said that the community should have been keeping wages competitive this whole time anyway. Doran-Lee said she understood the need to compensate employees properly, but she said the board is still talking about spending money the district does not currently have in hand. She said she would prefer to postpone this decision until we know how much the district can afford. Kelly said she supported West’s idea of allocating a certain amount per month and let Rochon choose a plan, but he should have to choose a plan. He should not be able to take the money and spend it on something else. The rest of the board agreed. Pettibon she just wanted to know the board’s thoughts before she moved forward. West said she thought the board needed more time to think about it.

**Cybersecurity Update**

West asked to Doran-Lee to provide an update on cybersecurity. Walker said that he might be able to provide that update. Hyak set up a new secure modem at the office and will be bringing back a second computer on Wednesday. It seems they are done with the plant until the new plant arrives. Rochon was thinking that the second computer would go to the plant but that is probably not going to happen until he has more room. West said that they still need to connect the Ring cameras at the plant that were disabled during the cyberattack in March. West said that she still wanted to work with Kim Anderson on a cybersecurity policy and technology agreement to reduce the risk of another cyberattack in the future. Hyak said it did not matter what connects to the Wifi now that there is a secure modem now, but she still does not want outside devices on the district’s internet. West asked Doran-Lee to follow up with Anderson to work on that.



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**Email and Website Update**

Walker said that everyone except Kelly and Pettibon had set up their district emails. He offered to help Kelly and Pettibon set up their emails on Thursday if that worked for them. He said that he used the banner function on the website's homepage for the recent boil notice and that the online payment system has been corrected so customers are charged the transaction fee rather than the district.

**2023 Fall Operator's Conference/Florence OR Sept 11-14**

West said that Rochon has already signed up for this conference. This is going to limit his availability at the plant. This is why she wants to hire someone so they can monitor the plant while he is unavailable. West said that if Walker were to monitor the plant he would likely need more hours that week.

**Plant Update/Leaks**

West said that she thought Rochon would be at the meeting but he was dealing with an emergency regarding Berkshire Creek's pH. She did not know what the reason was for the change. It could be anything from dead animals up the creek or smoke ash or something else. She said if Rochon was unable to get it under control there may need to be a district-wide boil notice soon.

Doran-Lee said that she had a difficult time getting in touch with some residents when part of East Mapleton Road was isolated to repair leaks. She said that some of the numbers she called were out of date. She wanted to work with Walker on being able to get contact numbers for people in case of an emergency.

West said that some of the services on Highway 36 were still on the old line that was switched over by H&J. She found this out because she received a call on a weekend and one of the owners of the houses on Highway 36 said they had no water. West said that Rochon was able to restore service by opening the valve to that line, but H&J will need to do additional work on that area to fully vacate the old line.

West said the settling tank was hit by a tree which mangled the metal lid which allows more organic matter in the intake. She said that she has been trying to get in touch with the Forest Service regarding the surrounding hazardous trees but has not had much luck as the main contact was on leave at the time.

West updated the board on the leak that took place on East Mapleton. She said she received a voicemail from the customer the previous night but it did not sound like the leak was very large. The next morning she was on site and found that the leak had drastically increased in size to the point where the customer's dogs were swimming in their back yard. When the contractors dug up the line they found two holes in it from where it was laying on a couple of boulders. The leak was repaired, but because the line was made stronger there is an increased likelihood that additional leaks will appear in the area.

Rochon provided an update on the most recent issues including the unbalanced pH and leaks in the plant intake line. He said that

**New Skid Update**

West said that the reengineering of the new skid by West Yost has been delayed a few weeks. The process was supposed to take nine weeks but now they are supposed to provide the district with a final



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design by the end of the thirteenth week. Once this is done they will need approval to send it to the Oregon Health Authority for final approval. She said the engineer said that the total will end up being more than one million dollars to complete. She discussed the financing options for any excess. The engineers said that he hopes to get the project out to be by early October.

**Grant Update**

West said that Rochon planned on making a run to Eugene to purchase equipment using casino grant funds so long as the town has water. Rochon said that he had a utility trailer picked out. West said she was concerned that the trailer was too long. Rochon said that a shorter trailer would be harder to maneuver and would be able to hold pipe as well. West said that Rochon has been in contact with a company for leak detection equipment. The equipment initially recommended was not what the district was looking for. Rochon said that the company does not take checks so he would need to use the district debit card.

Donnelly provided a review of progress on grants. He has had trouble logging into the federal grant website. West said that it can take a while to get approved. Donnelly said he has been looking into some smaller grants for security. He is hoping to get some good news soon on the FEMA grants that have submitted. He has been in contact with Michelle Bilberry with Biz Oregon and he trying to get additional information on the district's grants with that agency. He emphasized the importance of keeping track of grants and meeting requirements. If handled correctly some loans are forgivable and therefore more like grants. He noted how rare it is for organizations to receive grants for operating expenses like the Oregon Community Foundation grant West applied for and received. He said the grant committee will need guidance on what projects Rochon and West would like to fund so they can pursue the right grants. West mentioned that the Riverview Culvert project would be one to consider. Originally Lane County said they could loan the district funds to do its part with payments over two years. Now the county is proposing that they would need payment of the \$40,000 within a couple months.

**Update on Meeting with SDAO Representatives**

Donnelly said that he had arranged to have a risk management representative and the district's insurance agent on Wednesday, September 6. They want to take a tour of the facilities and then meet with the board for a presentation and take questions at around 5:00 p.m. West said that she would like to have a clean up day during the coming weekend because it's the last opportunity before the meeting. Board members Donnelly and Pettibon said they could make it.

*Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.*