



MAPLETON WATER DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
UNAPPROVED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:00 PM OCTOBER 9, 2023

Board Members Present: Vanessa West, Julie Doran-Lee, Art Donnelly, Sharon Kelly.

Others present: Linda Viera, Frank Roles, Mario Tovar, Kim Anderson, ShirleyMarie Raven, Carolee Howes, Lauren Hesse, Lucas Stang.

Meeting opened 6:16 p.m.

Safety Meeting

Rochon was absent so the safety meeting was postponed.

Consent Agenda

Walker said that the actual minutes included with the consent agenda are August 14 and September 11. The other listed minutes are not included. West counted 55 checks in August. The board reviewed the expenditures listed for September. West said that she wanted to review the items listed for reimbursement from Biz Oregon for accuracy. The board reviewed the employee timecards. West said that Walker has more work than he can complete in the time allotted him on a weekly basis. She said she asked him to let her know when he needed additional hours to complete certain tasks. Raven asked if the additional tasks are something she could help with as a community member. Walker said that there were tasks that she could assist with. West said that Rochon's hours seemed high, but the last week, for instance, by mid-week he had already gone into overtime. She explained some of the issues Rochon and Hughes had been dealing with. The Fire Department assisted in cleaning the intake which seemed to help.

Motion: Approve the consent agenda excluding the minutes for September 19, 25, and October 5.

Made by West, seconded by Donnelly. Approved unanimously.

Resolution 2023-08

West explained that part of the resolution is to change the "meter fee" to a "service fee" for clarity. She also said that some residential customers had larger meters for no apparent reason. The resolution ensures that these residential customers pay the same as other residential customers.

Roles asked if all meters should have their own tap to the main. West said that should be the case. Roles then asked how the district would handle services where multiple meters are on a single tap to the main. Anderson sought to clarify Roles' situation and his responses suggested that it is not ideal. Roles said that he knows for a fact that there are four meters on a single tap at his residence. West said that there are several driveways where this is the case. Roles found this out after the district repaired a leak in the area and all four houses lost water. West explained that pressure vary depending on where they are in the system. Legally the district only needs to provide 20 psi. Anderson said that what Roles is discussing is volume, not pressure. She said that this issue is something the board should take a deeper look at this issue. Roles said that he had new house put in and he was charged a fee to tap the main because they would not put a meter on an existing line coming from the main. Donnelly said that this issue may be further addressed in a master plan. This plan would guide improvements to resolve issues such as this. He said that it is a legitimate issue the board does not have a way of dealing with at this point. Anderson explained to the board the difference between pressure and volume. She said that the



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district should be able to provide 20 gpm to each residence, but that will vary depending on the usage of the of each meter. West said that she would ask Rochon the DRC (direct responsible charge) for the details. Anderson suggested that the district ask the engineers to find these issues and how many so-called spider services there are in the district. Donnelly noted that this meeting was the first one where members of the public, aside from Raven, had attended.

West explained that another part of the resolution is to raise the service fee from \$17 to \$34 per month for residential customers. This increase, in part, is because the district cannot pay Rochon salary any longer. Therefore, Rochon will be entitled to overtime. In order to be salaried, the position would need to supervise two full time employees. To cut back on overtime for Rochon the district has hire another employee to assist him. Another expense the increase is paying for the response to the cyberattack in March earlier in the year. The district now hires a company to administer the districts network and IT services. They monitor the network and provide the district with email and other storage services.

A member of the public asked for clarification on the how the service fee is assessed. Doran-Lee explained that it is essentially a base charge for services unrelated to the actual meter itself. She went on to say that it had been some time since rates were increased and it had not been keeping up with costs. West clarified that rates were increased most recently because revenue decreased after installation of the new meters. The increase in rates was to adjust rates to match revenue received by the district prior to the installation of the new meters. Raven clarified that the current service fee increase is simply to cover operating costs. Donnelly said that revenue has decreased or stayed the same while at the same time costs have increased. The water rate will not change with this resolution. The rate charged for water consumption will be addressed in a future rate study. He added that increasing the service fee indicates to prospective grant funders community buy-in to the district. He also added that compared to other utility service providers the Mapleton Water District is at the low end in terms of service charges.

Hesse said that she attended the meeting to support the resolution and she thanked the board members for the time to put into the district. She drew the board's attention to David Jeffries' letter which raised the issue of district patrons who have not paid their bills and whether the increase is going towards subsidizing delinquent accounts. She wanted to know what system is in place to collect on delinquent accounts and suggested at least partial payments to maintain service. West said that Walker would be the person best able to answer the question but said that before Walker's time with the district at one point the district had more than \$40,000 in delinquent account balances. Walker said that as of today delinquent account balances totaled about \$18,000. Doran-Lee said that the board had been enforcing policies more recently. Hesse also suggested that the grant committee provide a report in the future. Anderson suggested that Walker break the balances down by age of delinquent account. Doran-Lee said that some accounts are disputed by residents, but few are outright declining to pay. West said that she would like a subcommittee to resolve some of the disputed bills. One instance is a customer that was told they had a leak who paid for repairs to a leak that later turned out not to exist.

Howes, a member of the grant committee noted that in order to qualify for large grants the district needs to have a master plan. Once the district has a master plan it is very likely that the district would



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receive those grants. There are a lot of pieces that need to come together for major progress to be made on the district.

Roles said that he had an issue with the new meters where the meter was showing a leak but they could not find it. The house had just been replumbed and Rochon spent an entire afternoon trying to find it and could not. They dug up the service line to where it was visible and there was no leak but the meter was still showing a leak. Doran-Lee said that because the meters read vibrations in the line it should not have affected the billing. Roles said that he did get some exorbitant bills during that time. West said that she was not sure how the meters' leak detectors work and would need more information on the issue before commenting. Roles said that he just wanted to note that the new meters are not foolproof. West said that this is another instance where a subcommittee would be helpful.

Anderson wanted to clarify that the term "rate study" is shorthand and really what it is is a cost of service study. This will vary across districts which accounts for the variation in rates between districts. This will also include the capital improvement program as well to calculate how much needs to be held in reserve. Anderson said that failure to maintain a reserve fund is common in utility districts across the country for a couple of reasons. One is that very few people run for board positions on a platform of increasing fees. The other is that the federal government was much more loose with funding for infrastructure projects in the past. There are many other districts in the same boat as the Mapleton Water District. West discussed her experiences at conferences where she had met people from district in much worse conditions than Mapleton from around the state.

Motion: Adopt resolution 2023-08.

Made by West, seconded by Doran-Lee. Approved unanimously.

Rate Study

Walker said he just wanted to bring it up to discuss what is required. It appears that the district has most of the documentation required. Anderson said that Tessa Wells at RCAC would probably be the lead on this. There is still some work to do on the documentation side of things, specifically getting the data from the correct timeframe. The engineering portion will be required in order to assess the required revenue side of the equation, but that is not an immediate need. West explained that the SIPP grant funds were diverted to the master plan from the rate study because the district would be working on the study with RCAC without cost. Donnelly asked what the timeframe would be in terms of signing an agreement. Anderson said that if the district is ready to make that commitment, she would put Mapleton in the hat to be put on the schedule. West said that she did not think the district was ready because there is no available master plan. Anderson said that the process is closer to twelve months rather than six months as has been previously mentioned. West said that it may require some volunteer work from the board to assist Walker on this project given the amount of time it might require. Walker said that much of the required data for the rate study is collected by the district's accountant. Anderson said that it may be the case that the accountant may have that information, but there is work that needs to be done once that data is retrieved. She noted an asset inventory as an example. For the benefit of the attendees, Anderson explained how the RCAC is funded and functions. West asked if any action from



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the board was needed to begin the process. Anderson said that it would be a good idea to have that in the record.

Motion: Move forward with the cost of service study with the assistance of the Rural Community Assistance Corporation.

Made by Kelly, seconded by Doran-Lee.

Letter from Special District Insurance Services

Walker explained that the letter is from the district's insurance underwriter. One thing in the letter to highlight is the importance placed on the management policies of the district. West said that the district had previously been advised to hire a manager to oversee the district, which the district cannot currently afford to do. At the most recent site visit and discussion they said that they prefer that board members not be engaged in day-to-day management of operations, but said that other smaller districts do have that level of board member involvement. Anderson said that she spoke with one of the SDAO officials that attended that meeting and he said that if the district goes in that direction there would need to be clearly written policies to establish authority and responsibility. She said that the document presented to the board tonight are draft policies that would establish a structure to board management of the district. West wanted Anderson to clarify what exactly SDIS's concerns were regarding board management. Anderson said that typically there are lines of responsibility up to and ending with the district manager. As an employee of the district, the district is insured if the manager makes bad decisions. A board member typically is not covered in the manner. Doran-Lee wanted to clarify what would be expected of a manager. For example, would it cover performance reviews and policy reviews? Anderson said that it would include those. Doran-Lee suggested the possibility of a management committee or a volunteer manager. Anderson said that it would require an attorney to create a volunteer agreement and that insurance generally prefers to cover employees rather than volunteers. West said that this would require some very bright yet fine lines in terms of board-employee policies. Anderson said that her draft is an attempt to begin that process. Anderson suggested that the board read the document and then she and the board can have a work session to work on any additions or changes. Donnelly wanted to table this discussion so the board could have a more comprehensive discussion on how to proceed with the draft policies. Doran-Lee wanted to schedule a board meeting to discuss the draft policies. Anderson suggested that the board discuss this amongst themselves at the next regular meeting then schedule a work session to go over the document with her.

West noted a couple of other items in the letter including personnel policies and sick leave procedures. Walker noted that Pettibon had begun working on this somewhat before she went on leave. He said he had a template Oregon Public Employee Policy manual he received from SDAO's human resources contact. West asked that he send that and whatever else Pettibon was working on to Doran-Lee, who will be filling in for her until she returns. Anderson also noted that the district has twenty hours of time for consulting with HR solutions included with their insurance policy. She said that their time is best spent reviewing something the district has developed rather than developing a policy specifically for the district.



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Another item included in the letter was a request to develop and improve the physical infrastructure of the district as leaks pose a liability threat. West noted that the district does not have the funds to complete this but this will be the goal over the coming years. Walker said that, in the meantime, the district could develop a program to identify areas of high risk and make plans to address them. West said that the master plan will go some way to address this. However, she noted, it takes some upfront investments in order to obtain funding for larger projects.

West asked that Doran-Lee to make and maintain contact with the district's underwriter.

Geological Risk Above WTP

West said that the last few weeks have been a blur but about three weeks ago she visited the plant and notices that there was water above the plant where there had not been water before. In speaking with Rochon, she was told that there was evidence that there was ground movement. She then emailed several people with a "mayday" request for assistance. Several of the people she emailed were actually in Florence for a conference which Rochon was attending at the time. West expressed concern that the activity would put the new plant at risk. The USDA sent out Civil West to do an assessment of the area along with several other agencies. The consensus was that there were several issues with the area in addition to the water and ground movement. A geoengineer inspected the site but did not provide a report. A second geoengineer also inspected the site and said that he would be able to help.

West spoke with USDA who let her know about an emergency grant that could get funding quickly. However, an engineering report costing more than \$60,000 will be required in order to apply for that funding. To qualify for the grant there needs to be an imminent risk to disruption of the water system within the following twelve months. Based on these conditions her contacts at the USDA are confident that the district will qualify due to the decrease in water quality from the turbidity. USDA said that they can assist in applying for the grant and the application should take only an hour or two.

The geoengineer is scheduled to be on site on October 18th. The proposal is to construct barriers that will guide material into the creek to be diverted from the path towards the treatment plant. Also, is proposing to replace the ACS line with a pipeline that is more durable in the event of significant movement. He also would like to bypass the settling tank which has already been damaged by falling trees.

Donnelly asked where the funding for the \$60,000 would come from. West said she spoke with Business Oregon and was told that the funds would come from the WTP improvements grant. She said that theoretically this would qualify for the \$800,000 grant but it would take a month to receive. Because of the time lag it would make it appear less of an emergency than it is. The WTP grant funds are available nearly immediately. Alternatives to a grant opportunity like this would take years to receive so she believes that the district should do all it can to pursue this emergency grant opportunity.

Doran-Lee asked if the funds we take from the WTP grant could be replaced later on by the \$800,000 congressional grant funds. West said that she did not think that was a possibility. Raven asked West if the money was needed upfront for the geoengineering plan. Howes explained that the projects need to be approved by the EPA in order to access those funds which requires several additional steps. Doran-Lee



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said that she does not question the need for the engineer's services for the emergency grant application. She is just concerned that the district is spending money that we do not have. West said that she knows that the district is going to need to borrow money she just does not know the figure as of yet. Business Oregon said that there was an addition \$50,000 in grant funding the district qualifies for, but she needed additional information.

Roles asked if there was any legal restrictions on using grant funds for one thing rather than another. West said that they just require preapproval which she already received.

Motion: Approve using funds from the IFA Grant/Loan to hire a geoengineer to prepare a report to assist in the application of the USDA emergency grant application.

Motion made by Doran-Lee, seconded by West. Approve unanimously.

Donnelly said that in order to find out what our shortfall for the plant will be the district would need a bid. He asked if the district has taken the hold off the bidding process. West said that the board does need to remove any hold but at this point the district has not delayed the process. The Oregon Health Authority is still reviewing the plans after having them for two weeks.

Motion: Remove the hold on the bidding process for the Mapleton Water Treatment Plant Improvements project.

Made by Doran-Lee, seconded by Donnelly. Approved unanimously.

Kelly asked if there is a timeline for the next steps in the WTP project. West said that as soon as the OHA approves the plans and does not have any objections the engineer than move forward with the bidding process. Doran-Lee explained that the hold was placed on the process because the board received a the engineering report which indicated the present location of the WTP was at risk. Anderson noted that the board can stop the process with any and all bids at any point up to signing a contract.

Review of Projects and Future Projects

West said that this item was added for Anderson for her projects with the district. Anderson presented her draft board policies and encouraged the board to take it home and read it and contact her for questions, comments, and changes. Anderson said that she is working on a board orientation policy, and she presented a draft. She encouraged board members to review and discuss this document as well.

West said that she would like to add a diversity statement and establish policies to enact the diversity statement. She said that many grant agencies like to see that this is part of the applicant's policies. Anderson said that those sorts of items would generally go into the employee policies. Doran-Lee asked when Anderson would be available to go over these documents. Anderson said that she needs to clear future attendance with her supervisor. Walker said that Anderson suggested that the board go over the policies itself then have her attend a meeting to work on a final draft. Once the board has done that then the board and Anderson could schedule a work session.

Anderson said that one item she is working on is an Emergency Response Plan. She does not have work product for that but Jack with RCAC is working on it as well. After the district started on the ERP, RCAC



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was notified that EPA grant applicants need to use the “Risk and Resiliency” template rather the “Vulnerability Assessment” template. Jack is working on transferring the data from the Vulnerability Assessment template to the Risk and Resiliency template. Anderson said that the new template is more complicated and detailed than the original template. On the upside she said that this only needs to be completed every three years. It will also be more useful in applying for grants. Doran-Lee suggested that they set up a time for Zoom meeting to work on this.

Anderson asked if anyone had looked into completing the training so it can be check off on the SDAO best practices survey. Doran-Lee said that it was now her responsibility to complete that. She asked if she could use the certificates from previous training to satisfy the requirements. Anderson said that she would need to look into that. She said that normally SDAO does not ask for documentation. They just need to know if it has been done.

Anderson said that her manager asked her to jot down all of the items that the district needs help with. She said that she is sure the list is not complete because she made the list rather quickly. She also only listed the ones that are most urgent and most related to RCAC’s expertise. Donnelly had previously suggested another item he would like to add. Donnelly said that the district could use assistance grant inventory and management. In the near term the district has just a few grants so it is a relatively small task. However, with the amount of funding the district will need in the future it will be a much larger task and board is untrained.

Doran-Lee raised the possibility of Willamette Partnership’s assistance. West said that they could not help the district because they work under RCAC and RCAC would need to authorize them helping the district. Anderson clarified that at that time they were in the process of negotiating an agreement so they could not make any commitments. West said that they offered a lot of assistance with grant training and management and she was disappointed that the district would not be able to work with them. Anderson said that it may still be possible but at the time of the conversation they could not make any sort of commitment. Donnelly also said that the EPA also said they had an agreement with RCAC to provide assistance and therefore were limited on how much they could help. Anderson said that she would need to get an update from her manager. This was a new partnership and RCAC does not have expertise in the grant field. Donnelly asked if the RCAC has a similar relationship with Oregon Economic Development Districts or the Ford Family Foundation. Anderson said she does not believe it does. She did not know for certain as there is another part of RCAC that she is not as familiar with that works in rural economic development.

Anderson said that she needs to have an active project in her “Community Workplan” in order to continue assisting the district. She said she will be next working on the rules and regulations for water service, or service policies. That will need to be next on her list. System mapping is another potential project. Walker said that Rochon had told him that the district had a Diamond Maps account in the past but that the subscription had lapsed. Anderson said that the asset inventory and master plan projects make this an opportune time to work on the system mapping project. Many engineers use only CAD mapping which has less usefulness and functionality. The GIS system offer more information that can be saved and used in the future. Anderson is going to notify her manager that this is something to be cued



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up along with the master plan. She will also take a look at the financial information the district has for the cost-of-service analysis and work with Dessa on that. The district currently has only two of the four financial reports that are required for that analysis. Another project is completing an asset inventory. West agreed that an asset inventory needs to be done as soon as possible and then revised after the skid is installed. Kelly asked if the district accountant would have this information. Anderson said that they may have a consolidated inventory but probably not an itemized inventory. Walker said that he thought he saw an asset inventory that was conducted within the last fifteen years.

Anderson said with all the projects ongoing or planned time management will need to be considered. She and RCAC have other projects with other entities and as a result may not have the staff time available at the time the district would like to work on a project. In the last round of EPA funding, the RCAC received a large portion. The EPA also gave the RCAC a list of communities in the western United States like Mapleton, that could use their assistance. The items that she discussed today may not happen in the near term, but they will be placed in a queue for future action.

Treasurers' Report

West noted that the Financial Statement provided by the district's accountant serves this purpose. Walker said that he may need to speak with the accountant's office as there may need to be some recategorization of expenditures. He said it would probably be best hold off on approving that until the information was corrected or confirmed.

Billing Report

Walker said that the content of this report was generally covered in the discussion of the service fee increase resolution.

Risk Management Report

Walker said that much of this was covered in discussion of the board correspondence earlier in the meeting. He noted that Troy DeYoung said he would like a bimonthly report on progress being made on the listed items. West said that we can tell them that we received the report and are working with RCAC on making progress. Anderson said that the items in the report need to be addressed directly and she the things she is working on are more related to management policy. DeYoung is looking for mostly at-risk management related items. Doran-Lee said she was not directly assigned anything from the list provided by SDIS. West said that she would be responsible for the items that would normally be assigned to the Administration Chair in the absence of Pettibon. Anderson said that Doran-Lee does not necessarily need to complete the progress on the list, only ensure that work is being completed. Doran-Lee reviewed what she said was assigned to her to her knowledge, including: the best practices survey and related training, employee policies, emergency response plan, risk management plan, reviewing the board policies and anything else Pettibon was working on. West said she would let Doran-Lee know if there was anything else that came to mind. Walker said that Pettibon was assigned nearly everything in the SDIS letter.

Plant/System Update

Rochon was not at the meeting so West gave the update. The plant has been running better since the



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fire department helped clean the intake. Rochon has been working on the generator and training Hughes on running the skid.

New Plant Update

The district is waiting for the Oregon Health Authority to approve the plans for the new plant. It has been two weeks since they received the plans. She sent a follow-up email to check on the status but has not heard back. Donnelly asked if Filter Tech has been paid in full. West said they had not been paid. Donnelly then asked what the situation is regarding storage. West said that Filter Tech needed to keep it in order to test it on October 26th. They do not want to store the skid for the additional time it is taking to begin construction on the plant. West Yost recommended that the district allow Filter Tech to make storage arrangements to limit the district's liability. Doran-Lee said that in the meeting with Filter Tech that she would have a plan for storage with a cost to be added in the final bid. Once OHA approves the plan then they send it out to bid. Once the district has a bid it would be March at the very earliest for work to begin. Roles highlighted the fact that the district will be going through winter with the current temporary skid. West said that that is why she was trying to get the Lakos filter purchased and installed prior to the construction of the rest of the skid. She said they would allow her to get a bid from H&J Construction to purchase and install the item. Once it has been ordered, it takes about six weeks to actually receive the filter. Once West receives the bid she said they would need to have a special meeting for the board to actually vote on it.

Grant Committee

Donnelly said that the committee is trying to recruit another member. He has had couple leads with no takers so he is still taking suggestions. He emphasized that members are not required to attend board meetings and he tries to limit grant committee meetings to no more than an hour.

The committee had a grant proposal ready for Coquille Tribal Foundation grant. However, in a Zoom meeting Donnelly and Raven learned that the district does not qualify.

Donnelly discussed the SIPP grant change and the tough time constraints that West had to deal with in submitting that application. Donnelly said that he thinks it is likely that the district's request to redirect those funds from a rate study to a master plan would be successful.

The committee is beginning work on phase one of the application for the EPA STAG grant, the funds for which have already been allocated (\$800,000). To simplify the process the committee is handling it in phase one is applying for the funds for the engineering study. They are also working putting together the application for the FEMA BRIC money. There is not a timeframe for those funds, but the district needs it sooner rather than later.

Donnelly has been looking into a couple of potential grant funding sources. One, after discussion with the program coordinator, the district did not qualify for as it was for non-profit organizations rather than government. Another opportunity was an EPA grant with a November deadline which require supporting engineering studies with the application.



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Both Donnelly and West are searching for new sources of funding to pay for the new treatment plant. The most likely source of funding is going to be a loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. He said West has already been discussing the possibility with Michelle Bilberry at Business Oregon. Anderson said that RCAC offers bridge loans as well.

On smaller things that may payoff in the long run, Donnelly said he has been working with Sophia Robert in Senator Merkley's office on getting the district positioned for Senate direct spending in next year's budget. Merkley's office was involved in the both the \$800,000 grant and the FEMA grant opportunity the district is working on currently. He said it's a long shot but more likely when we have more prepared, such as the master plan. He said that the district needs to rebuild a relationship with the State Representative Wright's office to pursue state direct funding in the future.

Courtney Flathers with Governor Kotek's office and Jude Anderson with Lane County Community and Economic Development would like to do a site visit on November 1st. They would also like to have meeting with the grant committee. Donnelly hopes West will be able to attend that meeting. He does not know what opportunities may come from that meeting but that's how you find them.

Donnelly submitted an application for the Oregon Economic Development Districts training program. It has been two weeks and he has not heard back from them. He will follow up with them.

He has been having trouble with Grants.gov and SAM.gov. The trouble he has been having is that the Mapleton Water District already has an account set up. West said that she has the ability to login but there have been issues with merging two different logins. He will be making this a priority this week. The district submitted a resolution and a notarized document six months ago and no progress has been made. Previously board member Sharon Schrenk has been very good about working with Donnelly about getting access to the account, but it is not a long term solution to the problem. Schrenk told Donnelly that they relied a lot on Wright's office to complete the process.

Donnelly has been away for a week so not much new has been done with the committee in a little more than a week. He noted the opportunities available to the district are limited until it has a master plan. It would also be helpful to have a partner non-profit organization, like the school or the Mapleton Community Foundation.

Emergency Committee

No update.

Finance Committee

No update.

Operations Committee

West said that she covered everything earlier in the meeting.

Administration Committee

Doran-Lee said she now know what she is assigned.



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Doran-Lee brought up the Lane County emergency notification system that the board had looked into previously. She wanted the contact information so she can move forward with that process. Walker said that the district may already be signed up for that but may need a better process for activating it in an emergency. Anderson said that this would be part of the Emergency Response Plan. Doran-Lee also noted the need for people to update their phone numbers.

Kelly raised the issue of the Three Rivers Casino Skid. West said that it is not available because they are still using it. They said they would let the district know when it is available. Donnelly asked if he could get a contact at the casino. He thought it would be a good idea to have Terrusa look at the skid while it is still installed.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

These minutes were approved at the June 10, 2024 Regular Meeting.