



# BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Via teleconference

The regular meeting of the Medford Water Commission was called to order at 12:23 p.m. on the above date via teleconference with the following commissioners, staff, and guests present:

Chair Jason Anderson; Commissioners Daniel Bunn, John Dailey, Michael Smith, and Bob Strosser

General Manager Brad Taylor; Executive Administrative Coordinator Yvette Finstad; Finance & Administration Services Director Tessa DeLine; Information Technology Manager Kris Stitt; Human Resources Manager Tanya Haakinson; Water Meter & Controls Supervisor Ken Johnson; Water Maintenance Supervisor Lester McFall; Capital & Special Projects Coordinator Andy Huffman; Water Treatment & Quality Director Ben Klayman; Interim Engineering Supervisor Brian Runyen; Staff Engineer Rachel Lanigan

Guest(s): Attorney Mark Bartholomew; Bret Mitchell\*; Rick O'Callahan\*; Tanea West Browning  
(\* Left early)

## 2. Comments from the Audience

Bret Mitchell and Rick O'Callahan, owners of Fire Sail Bulk Water Delivery, appeared to address the Board regarding the backup that occurs at the coin fill stations. Mitchell requested options to alleviate this, suggesting a metered source such as a hydrant for commercial sellers so that they may bypass the fill stations and shorten the lines for private homeowners. Commissioner Dailey queried Mitchell on his preferred location within the valley if a new dispensary was built; Mitchell preferred a southwest Medford location. Commissioner Bunn asked staff if there is a rate schedule that would apply to someone privately building a station; there is not one at this time. O'Callahan was unable to speak due to technical issues. Taylor asked for consideration to allow him to make his statement if he becomes available later.

## 3. Consent Calendar

3.1 Approval or Correction of the Minutes of the Last Regular Meeting of April 21, 2021

3.2 Resolution No. 1766, A RESOLUTION Awarding and Authorizing the General Manager to Execute a Contract in the Amount of \$515,000 with JRT, Inc. for the Relocated Entrance Project at the Robert A. Duff Water Treatment Plant

**Motion: Approve Consent Calendar**

**Moved by: Mr. Dailey      Seconded by: Mr. Bunn**

**Roll Call: Commissioners Anderson, Bunn, Dailey, Smith, and Strosser voting yes.**

**Motion carried and so ordered.**

## 4. Items Removed from Consent Calendar

None.

## 5. Review of Vouchers

Commissioner Dailey asked if Pacific Power invoice #042021-0104 was paid twice, as it appears twice on the list. DeLine will look into it for explanation.

## 6. Management Reports

6.1 Engineering Report (Capital & Special Projects Coordinator Andy Huffman)

- Engineering plan review fees
  - Current process – Plan review fees are based on staff time and are paid when project

is constructed. The developer's Engineer submits plans, MWC reviews and comments, the Engineer addresses those comments over multiple review cycles. When plans ready to be approved, a fee letter is sent to the Engineer, and the Developer pays the fees and constructs the project. If the project does not get built, MWC does not receive plan review fees. Staff time spent reviewing developer projects that do not get constructed is not charged to the developer, and is effectively funded by rate payers. In addition, the developer does not know amount of review fees until construction.

- Propose moving payment of review fees to the beginning of the process, and standardized fees based on typical required staff time. Engineer submits plans, MWC begins plan review process and conducts a completeness check; review fees determined and assigned at this time. This is not a new fee, just change in process. Standard plan review fees would be added to the proposed Charges for Special Services (along with changes previously presented at the April 21 Study Session), part of MWC's Regulations, and brought back to the Board annually. Staff seeks approval to bring Charges for Special Services to May 19 board meeting.

Commission Bunn asked about review turnaround time; Runyen replied that the goal is within one week. Staff is working with the City on inefficiencies in the process as well and will reach out at the appropriate time to coordinate. Commissioner Strosser suggested reaching out to the Builder's Association to inform them of the change in process, to help mitigate any issues. Board members approved moving forward with the proposal.

- Duff 65 MGD Expansion – Task Order 8 and beyond
  - The original contract fee was based on a percentage of anticipated construction cost. Comprehensive evaluation of process, storage, and hydraulic requirements to achieve 65 MGD out of the Duff plant have been performed. Refined evaluation has identified the criticality of transmission piping to 65 MGD capacity; this will be provided via 3 separate transmission lines. Task Order 8 is for design and construction services for this work. Additional reservoir storage at Duff is still needed to achieve 65 MGD from Duff, and is the only item not yet scoped.
  - Current contract accounting by task order was provided. Staff recommends approval by motion to approve Task Order 8 for Transmission Piping.

Commissioner Anderson asked for confirmation that the total of all task orders is still under the original contract amount; Huffman confirmed that the amount spent is under the approximately \$6.2M original budget. This \$2M task order is for design, geotech, survey, and predesign for the three transmission lines: 17,000' of 36" pipe in Table Rock Road, 7000' of 18" pipe in Merriman down Table Rock to Conrad Control Station, 7000' between Table Rock and Highway 62. Commissioner Dailey inquired if this work is contingent upon other new reservoir space. Taylor clarified the low-level pressure zone reservoir is a critical component of getting the grid set up to push 65MGD out of the plant. These mains were not in the original project because it was not conceptualized at that time, but are bundled with what is going on at the plant because of the hydraulics and interconnectivity.

**Motion: Approve Task Order 8 for Transmission Piping Design.**

**Moved by: Mr. Bunn                      Seconded by: Mr. Strosser**

**Roll Call: Commissioners Anderson, Bunn, Dailey, Smith, and Strosser voting yes.**

**Motion carried and so ordered.**

\*Out of sequence\*

Rick O'Callahan returned to the meeting, and as a continuance of Item 2 echoed Mitchell's comments. He has spent time speaking with Taylor and McFall, regarding his leased property in

White City and receiving water from MWC, which was transported off-site; this is considered resale of water. They are looking for an alternative, and believe the new pump station in Jackson County is going to be good, but it is not prepared for the demand it will see. Commissioners will address these comments near the end of the meeting under Item 7.

\*Back in sequence\*

6.2 Operations Report (Water Meters & Controls Supervisor Ken Johnson/Water Maintenance Supervisor Lester McFall)

- 2004 Vac-con has come to end of its useful life; a new one will be procured by ORPIN. The Commission also has a 2014 Vac-con; these machines are heavily used day and night. Taylor noted that procurement of 2021 12-Yard X-Cavator needs to be undertaken early, as it has been difficult to get equipment and materials due to the pandemic; this vehicle is in proposed budget, but is above the General Manager's authority at \$480-500k. Board members gave a thumbs up to getting the order process started now.

6.3 Water Treatment/Quality Report (Water Treatment/Quality Director Ben Klayman)

- Watershed Report – Precipitation 70% of average after warm and dry April; snowpack is 52% of average. Springflow setting new historic lows each week, but Willow Lake is full and overflowing. EPID does not plan to request early diversion.
- Treatment plant record production continues; we would normally just be starting the season, but are already in full swing. The plant has produced 300MG, 100MG more than last year this time. This larger production is a result of limited springflow.
- 100% compliance with all water quality regulations
- Taylor added that last summer it became very apparent as we tried to push water out of the plant that we have pressure issues in getting water out into the system. The urgency of the conveyance projects relate to the work being done to incrementally get the plant past 45MGD. With the springs conditions that we are seeing, Duff is being put in a position that it never has before.

Commissioner Anderson asked if curtailment would be necessary this summer. Taylor responded that curtailment is not anticipated under normal operations, but atypical circumstances (such as fire, power outage, etc.) may make it necessary.

6.4 Finance Report (Finance & Administration Services Director Tessa DeLine)

- Payroll Processing Services – The purpose of this change of process is to provide resiliency, efficiency, and stability for our organization. Other key factors: user-friendly timekeeping platform and an employee self-service portal. Selection criteria included price, functionality, ability to work with existing GP software, and ease of use. After reviewing 3 vendor platforms, the company tentatively selected is NetChex. We are currently working on contract details and are looking towards a July 1, 2021 go-live date.
- Audit Services RFP – One firm applied for the auditing services contract: Isler CPA. RFP indicated that it was for a 5-year contract with optional 1-year extension; staff would like board direction for the next steps.

Commissioner Bunn inquired which firms the RFP was sent to; it went to Moss Adams, KDP, Merina, and Isler, per DeLine. Commissioner Dailey queried DeLine on which firm the City uses and whether we are subject to rules regarding periodic change of auditors. Moss Adams (out of Medford) is the City's audit firm, confirmed DeLine, who noted that they did not reply to the RFP due to an inability to service, possibly during the pandemic. We are not required to change auditors after a specific period of time. Board members agreed on a 3-year term before soliciting proposals again, allowing for time to get through debt issuance. Commissioner Bunn suggested

disclosing the bond rating and consideration of issuance of debt to the auditor ahead of engagement in case there are any compliance issues to be aware of.

Referring to Commissioner Dailey's question on the voucher list, DeLine confirmed that the invoice in question was not paid twice; a portion was paid via check, and the rest via credit card. The reporting in the system makes it appear twice in this case.

#### 6.5 I.T. Report (Information Technology Manager Kris Stitt)

- Project Updates
  - Point of Entry (POE) Building/Springs Fiber – Hunter Communications has secured easements from BLM and is moving ahead. POE needs phone and data; phone connected to an auto dialer. The network feeds data back to SCADA. Primary connection will be fiber (once installed); satellite service will provide secondary data and phone service.
  - Customer Service Website – Evaluation team has made a recommendation and is moving ahead with SOW; additional information will be provided at next meeting.
  - Asset Management – Working with Woolpert to refine SOW. Will return with resolution on May 19.

#### 6.6 HR Report (Human Resources Manager Tanya Haakinson)

- Personnel Manual Policy Update – Updated Sections I and II of the personnel manual; employee Q&A Zoom meetings this week.
- ADA Coordinator – Public – Currently incorporating into HR duties and will cross-train for back-up and future duties.
- OR-OSHA Permanent Rule (COVID) – As of May 4, OR- OSHA not quite yet ready to move forward with rule. While waiting on any new changes to proposed rule, the temporary rule provisions will continue.

Commissioner Anderson requested a summary of rule; Commissioner Dailey inquired if there had been any cases at the Commission. Haakinson noted that there had not been any employer-related cases, but there have been cases that were contracted from outside the organization. Following established protocol, these people were back to work following a quarantine period.

#### 6.7 General Manager's Report (General Manager Brad Taylor)

- WIFIA Application Update – Working on getting application submitted; making good process and submission is expected soon.
- HB 2616 – Provided written and oral testimony on Bill in public hearing last week, and outreach to committee members continues. If bill is posted by Friday, it indicates it is still in play.

Commissioner Anderson requested an update Friday as to the status of HB2616.

- Charlotte Anne Water District and Whispering Pines – A number of agencies involved in working with them. Things continue to happen, but the outcome is not clear. Will keep board members posted.
- Upcoming Board Schedule – 5/19 Annual Budget Part 2 and Development Policy Review/Discussion; 6/2 TBD

### 7. Propositions and Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioners addressed Mitchell and O'Callahan's comments with regards to wait times and building another fill station. Commissioner Bunn remarked that water from hydrants is not potable (due to the Low Lead Act), this is the reason that MWC cannot allow drinking water to be pulled from hydrants. He also observed that the water fill stations are primarily for citizens in more

unincorporated parts of the valley, while our purpose is to supply municipal water. We are not the right branch of government to address the issue. Commissioner Dailey asked if the automatic flushing device installed near Griffin Creek School would provide an option to sell water being flushed instead of discarding it. Commissioner Strosser mentioned that some time ago, the blowoff water was offered to agricultural interests, but they did not want it, instead preferring finished drinking water. Board members wanted a sense of how much of the problem is due to agricultural use of finished water as opposed to domestic use, as was the intention when these stations were built. Per Taylor, the report provided to the Board by the County in December 2020 may provide more information on this question.

Commissioner Strosser stated that the County fees are significantly higher, and he has received irate calls regarding this disparity from water haulers. Many prefer to use the Medford station for this reason, adding to the backup. Per Johnson, the County wanted to recoup cost of their new facilities. Regarding the quantity of water used for the flushing activities mentioned by Commissioner Dailey, Klayman replied that it would only help if it is in a very specific area on the line that serves the school. We do not flush at all in the summer while they are using water for irrigation, but he can bring back data on the usage. It would be prudent to evaluate other locations where we can use more volume/flushing.

Following this discussion, Commissioner Anderson suggested that if the Board has listened to constituents and is not inclined to build a new station in the city nor allow them to pull off hydrants, they could be referred to the County. Taylor will give the County Administrator forewarning that we will be referring these issues to them and are happy to consult if they decide to move forward with an additional station. There is more conversation to come, but Board direction is consistent to address this problem, which is a combination of the County and the Commission being careful about providing water outside of an incorporated area. Commissioner Strosser added that the County is more sensitive to issues we have raised recently and can discuss how they might want to approach it.

## **8. Adjourn**

There being no further business, this Commission meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m. The proceedings of the Medford Water Commission meeting were recorded and are on file along with the complete agenda of this meeting.

Yvette Finstad  
Assistant Clerk of the Commission