



The regular meeting of the Medford Water Commission was called to order at 12:16 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 Director Tessa DeLine; Information Technology Manager Kris Stitt; Human Resources Manager Tanya Haakinson; Water Meter & Controls Supervisor Ken Johnson; Water Treatment & Quality Director Ben Klayman; Engineering Supervisor Brian Runyen

Guest(s): Attorney Mark Bartholomew; Medford Council Liaison Tim D'Alessandro; City of Central Point Councilor Tanea West Browning; Robert Annear (Late)

## **2. Comments from the Audience**

None.

## **3. Consent Calendar**

3.1 Approval or Correction of the Minutes of the Last Regular Meeting of August 18, 2021

3.2 Resolution No. 1785, A RESOLUTION Authorizing the General Manager to Execute an Emergency Metered Water Service Agreement with Bear Creek Golf Course

***Motion: Approve the 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**

The vouchers were circulated to board members prior to the meeting; Commissioner Dailey noted that he appreciated the notes on a late invoice. He asked about two payments: one to Oregon Medical Evaluations (DeLine will look into the payment and provide information at a later time) and to Reddy Ice (this is for ice for the trucks for the hot summer weather).

## **6. Management Reports**

- Finance & Administration Director Tessa DeLine – To help our customers struggling during the pandemic and to ensure access to clean water, Medford Water has not been performing shutoffs for non-payment of water service since Spring 2020 and have not assessed late fees. Approximately 1,100 delinquent customers have not paid the balance on their accounts for nearly 18 months; over 135 customers have balances over \$500. There is a limited number of staff at the service center to assist with shut off procedures; many are being redirected to other urgent activities such as bill projects, fee projects, or unexpected work projects and repairs.

Starting the week of September 6th, notifications will go out to delinquent customers advising them of the impending disconnection procedures, with information about interest-free payment plans to help get back on track. Normal collection process within the billing system will begin mid-September. At that point, delinquent customers will receive urgent notices, shut off notices and late fees on their accounts if arrangements

have not been made. Standard disconnection procedures will begin the first week of October 2021.

Commissioner Dailey questioned the start date for resumption of these activities; DeLine and Taylor clarified that these accounts are already 18 months delinquent. Notices regarding the resumption of shutoffs and availability of payment plans will go out in September, and the shutoffs will actually begin again in October. Commissioner Smith acknowledged that staff has put a lot of hard work into this, and the timeline may seem fast, but customers are given payment plan options which give them financial flexibility. The amount in question is just over approximately \$100k, noted Taylor.

- Water Treatment & Quality Director Ben Klayman – Precipitation levels have changed very little over the last month and are at 65% of average; 1/100 of an inch recorded on August 1st. 98% of the state is in severe drought or worse, and approximately 77% is in extreme drought or worse. Drought does impact spring flow, resulting in reduced springflow levels (we are sitting at historical minimum). The good news heading into fall is that demand is coming down and production is comfortably meeting demand levels.
- Human Resources Manager Tanya Haakinson – A new hire started last week and rounds out the team in the IT department. The recently hired Field Technician decided it was not the role for him and left after the first week.
- General Manager Brad Taylor
  - 100-Year anniversary discussion with Commissioner Dailey; staff will be working on drafting outline for book and plan to work with former staff member Laura Hodnett to help pull it and materials together. A broader communication plan for the 100-year celebration will be prepared as well.
  - WIFIA Update – Working to incorporate MWC Campus project into the application. Submitted draft Master Bond Agreement to EPA for review and then should be ready to come to Board to review/discuss. The City is reviewing a resolution to authorize the Board to issue debt; Taylor is attending the September 2 City Council meeting to share a WIFIA project overview, and the plan is for the resolution to be on the Council's September 16 agenda for approval.

Commissioner Dailey remarked on the weather forecast and how it related to the air quality standards that had been reported on at the last regular meeting. Haakinson stated that N95 respirators had been supplied to the groups that would need them if air quality hits levels over 200 (respirators would be mandatory at levels 201-501, as it is an OSHA rule). Supervisors and leads check the air quality level, added Haakinson when Commissioner Anderson asked.

Council Liaison D'Alessandro stated that he will be asking Taylor at the council meeting to speak on the issue of the water shortages our region faces, and water being obtained at the bulk filling stations for non-domestic use. Taylor thanked D'Alessandro for broaching the subject and noted that the Board will be taking up that policy issue in the fall, when more information is available about filling station use throughout the summer.

## **7. Propositions and Remarks from the Commissioners**

Commissioner Anderson remarked that he and Commissioner Strosser had met with Taylor regarding his annual review; they feel that our organization has experienced another trying year with the pandemic and water shortages, and that Taylor has not only met but exceeded expectations and deserves a merit increase, and has requested to decline such an increase. Commissioner Anderson asked for input from other board members on whether to abide by Taylor's wishes or to award a merit increase based on his body of work this past year.

Commissioner Bunn agrees that an increase is deserved, and Commissioner Dailey asked if there were standard increases for the process. The terms of the collective bargaining agreement identify an annual COLA of 1 to 3%; union employees received a 1.8% COLA as of July 1 based on an index review. A market pay calibration is being completed for non-union employees; this will drive any increases moving forward. Information will be brought to the Board in more detail when it is complete.

Commissioner Anderson requested that the Board receive a copy of the General Manager's review, the market analysis for the position, and the current compensation package; they will review it in Executive Session before the next regular meeting. Any modifications resulting from the market pay evaluation for non-union staff would be retroactive to July 1, 2021, noted Taylor when Commissioner Smith asked for clarification.

**8. Adjourn**

There being no further business, this Commission meeting adjourned at 12:50 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