



WATER COMMISSION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Via teleconference

The regular meeting of the Medford Water Commission was called to order at 12:19 p.m. on the above date via teleconference with the following commissioners, staff, and guests present:

Chair Daniel Bunn; Commissioners Jason Anderson, John Dailey, Greg Jones, and Michael Smith

General Manager Brad Taylor; Executive Administrative Coordinator Yvette Finstad; Principal Engineer Eric Johnson; Information Technology Manager Kris Stitt; Water Meter & Controls Supervisor Ken Johnson; Water Treatment & Quality Director Ben Klayman; Finance & Administration Services Director Tessa DeLine; Human Resources Manager Tanya Haakinson; Interim Water Maintenance Supervisor Lester McFall

Guest(s): Attorney Mark Bartholomew; Central Point City Manager Chris Clayton; Robert Annear

2. Comments from the Audience

Central Point City Manager Chris Clayton thanked the Commission for the collaboration and communication regarding the events of last week.

3. Approval or Correction of the Minutes of the Last Regular Meeting of September 2, 2020

The Chair put forth the question on the approval of the minutes of the last regular meeting. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

4. Review of Vouchers

Commissioners reviewed the vouchers; no questions were received.

5. Management Reports

Management staff presented a report on the fire response and activities of the previous week.

- Incident timeline
 - Tuesday, September 8, 2020, at approximately 11:00 a.m., the Almeda fire starts; at approximately 2:00 p.m., the Obenchain fire starts; management team convened 2:15 p.m.
 - Board apprised of situation and all communication to media conveyed prior to release
 - After hours communication plan established
 - Tuesday, 4:55 p.m. – ICS Alert Level 1 opened; increased sustained system demand and gravity reservoirs reaching levels of concern
 - Tuesday, 8:30 p.m. – Media release restricting certain non-essential water uses issued
 - Tuesday, 10:30 p.m. – Increased flow on BBS-1 to help meet system demand with possibility of air entrainment
 - Tuesday, 11:13 p.m. – Media release issued to notify public of air in water due to increased pipeline flow to meet high demand
 - Tuesday overnight
 - Monitoring of distribution system, onsite monitoring of Charlotte Ann Pump Station serving Charlotte Ann Water District (CAWD); staff in continuous communication with Medford Fire Department with system updates
 - Continuous communication with Duff Treatment plant operators; plant was operating at 100%, Duff operators extremely concerned about system demand and dropping levels in Capital Hill Reservoirs

- Investigation of water pressures in the CAWD led to issuance of a Boil Water Advisory for the CAWD 192 Customers at 1:43 a.m. Oregon Health Authority apprised as well as the CAWD Board.
- Wednesday, September 9, early morning – Reinforcement of Emergency Water Usage Restrictions: media was called and asked to run informational banner to remind community to conserve water; cities and school districts were called to confirm message of conserving water and to not irrigate, as were the Top 25 Users.
- Wednesday, 5:00 p.m. – Through all the steps taken, water levels were maintained and ultimately brought back to normal operation.
- Thursday, September 10 – Emergency Water Usage Restrictions downgraded to Voluntary Level, and Boil Water Advisory for CAWD lifted
- Friday, September 11 – Assessment of the CAWD viable customers: out of 192 metered services, 61 services may still serve a viable business or residence.
- Tuesday, September 15 – Voluntary water usage reductions no longer necessary; media release issued
 - Alameda Fire and System Demand Emergency Under Control
 - Springs operating at pipe and three-quarter capacity (~22 mgd)
- Air in BBS Line #1 caused temporary issues with some instruments
- An increase in customer call volume was observed
- Detailed stories
 - Fiber break at Duff – Friday, September 11, at approximately 3:00 a.m., fiber connectivity between the plant and intake was lost. It was determined that there was a break in the line; service restored to SCADA by 7:30 a.m. Working on getting new fiber installed and investigating the cause of the break.
 - Alameda fire communications – Used text groups and Microsoft Teams to share information with the ICS team, crews used radio and phones to stay connected; phones were rerouted to customer service staff working from home; added a message to our Customer Service IVR line to share updates with the public, and website and social media updated with relevant information; cell networks were often overloaded during the week.
 - Partner City Collaboration – Cities of Ashland, Talent, and Phoenix; routine communication established early in the incident regarding operational status and curtailment messaging.
 - September 9-10 – Commission operations staff also aided Phoenix and Talent with leak repairs, meter shut offs, and boil water advisories. September 12 – Flushed distribution systems in both cities.
 - Obenchain Fire – Wednesday September 9, 2020: Crews working near the BBS transmission lines became concerned with heavy equipment activity. Commission staff met with fire suppression crews and reached out to the Jackson County EOC; following this, fire efforts were successfully prioritized at BBS.
 - MWC employee response – Great examples of teamwork, community, supporting others, dedication, late hours, pitching in, getting the job done, and going above and beyond, sometime while the employees themselves were evacuated from their home.
 - HR/Safety – Roll call link was instituted, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) information provided, along with links from Jackson County Emergency Services and CIS for Wildfire support. N95's/Appendix D's were made available for crews.
 - Rancheria Springs – The UV facility could have played a larger part in helping to meet demand, but when the power went down at BBS and the generator at Rancheria was started, the internal breaker was not compatible with the additional power load. The breaker has been replaced, tested, and is operational.
 - Duff plant backup power – Fortunately, Duff did not lose power; the backup power project is ongoing, and the 3 gensets are being manufactured. Will be online for next season.
 - Information Technology – Billing system has been upgraded to CIS Infinity version 4; switchover to the new system completed last weekend. Cleaning up minor issues currently.
- Fire follow up efforts – Assess transmission pipeline infrastructure for fire damage, VOC contamination from plastic pipe, changes in river water quality, Partner City coordination, customer support, and lessons learned.

- Our Vision, Mission, and Values guided us through this event and were demonstrated by our organization throughout.

6. Propositions and Remarks from the Commissioners

Commissioner Bunn emphasized that staff responded really well to the unusual situation, to the agreement of the other commissioners.

7. Adjourn

There being no further business, this Commission meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m. The proceedings of the Medford Water Commission meeting were recorded and are filed at Medford Water Commission's office, along with the complete agenda of this meeting.

Yvette Finstad
Assistant Clerk of the Commission