



BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

Medford Police Department Prescott Room  
219 S. Ivy Street, Medford, Oregon 97501

The regular meeting of the Medford Water Commission was called to order at 12:16 p.m. on the above date at Medford Police Department Prescott Room, with the following commissioners, staff, and guests present:

Chair Michael Smith; Commissioners Jason Anderson, John Dailey, Bob Strosser, and David Wright.

General Manager Brad Taylor, Executive Administrative Assistant Amber Furu, Engineering Manager Brian Runyen, Information Technology Manager Kris Stitt, Water Operations Manager Dan Perkins

Guest(s): MW Attorney Mark Bartholomew, Medford City Council Liaison Nick Card, Central Point Councilor Kelley Johnson\* (\*Via Zoom)

**3. Comments from the Audience**

Newly appointed Central Point Councilor Kelley Johnson introduced herself to the Board, she has replaced Tanea Browning.

**4. Approval or Correction of the Minutes of the Last Regular Meeting of December 6, 2023**

**Motion: Approve the minutes of the last regular meeting as presented.**

**Moved by: Mr. Dailey**

**Seconded by: Mr. Strosser**

**Roll Call: Commissioner Anderson, Smith, Strosser, Dailey and Wright voting yes.**

**Motion carried and so ordered.**

**5. To Allow a Service Connection Under Resolution 1058 Section 7 and to Waive Collection of System Development Charges (SDCs) for a Temporary Irrigation Service for the City of Central Point Bear Creek Greenway Restoration**

The City of Central Point is in need of a temporary irrigation service for the Bear Creek Greenway Restoration. This is one of the areas burned in the 2020 Table Rock fire. Freshwater Trust, whose mission is to preserve and restore freshwater ecosystems, is working with the City of Ashland on a water quality program and has donated shrubs and trees throughout the Bear Creek watershed. Irrigation needed for the initial establishment of the shrubs and trees is anticipated to be three to four years. Typical restoration projects use approximately 500 thousand gallons during the first season and will decrease each year after the plants are established. The proposed service location is outside the Medford Water service area defined by resolution 1058. Section 7 allows for Board approval in this case and is consistent with other previous allowances, such as Griffin Creek Elementary School and Madrone Trail School.

Commissioner Anderson asked if there are alternative options if the temporary service is not permitted; Central Point could extend their water line to do this, we would still be selling them water but through the wholesale channel instead of retail. Commissioner Wright inquired if Central Point would eventually extend their system; this area does not need irrigation. The purpose of this meter is for establishing the vegetation and the intent is to revegetate the area with native species that do not need irrigation, so that it will grow on its own. Commissioner Smith inquired about security of the meter with access to the meter not visible and located in an area often cited for illegal camping; will it be secured in a way that people cannot just turn the water on. Taylor explained we cannot prevent water theft. It is an irrigation system that people could figure out a way to get water from, it is something that will need to be watched and monitored. The actual meter location is hooked to the hydrant which is a locked mechanism. Commissioner Anderson asked why Central Point does not use Bear Creek as its irrigation source. The challenge is Bear Creek is restricted from further appropriation during the months of the year where irrigation is critical; Central Point potentially could get a waiver but needs to have something in place to support this moving forward. Commissioners agreed that

City of Central Point will attempt to obtain a waiver for the temporary use of Bear Creek, should they be unable to obtain the waiver, Medford Water will be happy to help provide the connection.

***Motion: To Allow a Service connection to the City of Central Point for a temporary Irrigation Service.***

***Moved by: Mr. Wright      Seconded by: Mr. Anderson***

***Roll Call: Commissioner Anderson, Dailey, Smith, Strosser, and Wright voting yes.***

***Motion carried and so ordered.***

Kelly Johnson responded the Fresh Water Trust was able to answer all our questions, this is a really great program and is about making sure the vegetation is being established until it can take care of itself, and then knowing in the months that we have water issues, we have another way to supply it. Commissioner Strosser noted we want to be there for Central Point, but it is conditioned on using the water from Bear Creek and then having this in place if that does not work out.

## **6. Leadership Team Reports**

- Brad Taylor, General Manager
  - pH Adjustment Communication Update – Communications have started for our pH Adjustment project. November and December we put an article in our newsletter, we put a message on our billing statements, we have created a webpage, and bill inserts included for both paper and paperless customers also started in December. Currently we are working on sending direct mailers to approximately 10,000 customers. Water Quality will connect with our “critical customers” by going to their properties in person to deliver the pH adjustment mailer and FAQs in person. Also, beginning this week we will start messaging on our website and social media followed up with a press release in January. This is all ahead of when we are planning on doing the first adjustment in late January or early February.

Commissioner Smith commented on social media conversations around the pH Adjustment project; we are monitoring social media with the thought of redirecting people to the appropriate places to get more information.

- MW Operations Center Update – The total project cost is estimated at \$49,024,000; we are in the third quarter and have a lot of work to do but are still working on ways to bring the cost down. We are on target to stay within the identified project budget. Commissioner Dailey asked if there is a particular driver running up costs; one area is higher insulation cost and being able to get the building to a net zero. The amount of solar panels is in question along with the cost of flooring driving the increase in cost. It is possible we have to pull back and reevaluate reaching net zero. Construction costs are estimated at \$37.3 to \$41 million, the difference between the two estimates is the difference in a 3% cost of escalation and a 6% cost of escalation, we just do not know what it will be when construction starts.

Commissioner Strosser asked are the square footage estimates the results of a space needs analysis that looks to the future; Taylor confirmed that they are.

- Upcoming Board Schedule - January 3, No Study Session; January 17, Watershed Management/Source Water Protection; February 7, Water Efficiency; February 21, Website Improvements.

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

Commissioner Anderson stated he met with the City of Medford City Manager on ways to open up communication between them and Medford Water. The City Manager offered to present at

a study session and talk about ways to align our goals. Commissioners, staff, and Medford council liaison Nick Card discussed this as a good idea. It was also agreed to explore a joint study session between the Council and Commissioners. Staff will work on a date for the study session and explore the idea of a joint study session with City.

**8. Adjourn**

There being no further business, this meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m. The proceedings were recorded and are on file along with the complete agenda of this meeting.



Amber Furu  
Assistant Clerk of the Commission