

PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 1
OF ASOTIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
MEETING MINUTES
May 25, 2021

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President Greg McCall presiding, the Public Utility District No. 1 of Asotin County Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held by teleconference in accordance with the Washington State Governor's Proclamation 20-28, dated March 24, 2020, due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Proclamation 20-28.15, dated January 19, 2021, extending the original and subsequent Proclamations.

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ROLL CALL: PRESENT Commissioners: Greg McCall, Don Nuxoll and Judy Ridge.

Staff: Tim Simpson and Bob Sischo.

MINUTES OF MEETING AND VOUCHER APPROVAL

MOTION by Commissioner Judy Ridge and seconded by Commissioner Don Nuxoll to approve the consent agenda approving the minutes of the May 11, 2021 Regular Meeting and payment of Electronic Payroll Vouchers #5948EFT – #5964EFT in the amount of \$35,948.30 and Electronic Accounts Payable Vouchers #21040301, #21051101, #21052001, #21052002, and #21052003 and Accounts Payable Vouchers #41791 – #41827 in the amount of \$93,447.44. The question was called for on the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Valleyview Drive Property Sale

The manager reported that the buyer completed their physical inspection of the properties and provided earnest money in the amount \$1,000.00 on Friday, May 14. This is an indication that the sale of the property is moving forward. A formal inspection of the homes was conducted on Wednesday, May 12 and the results of the inspection are pending. Commissioners inquired regarding items that were in need of repair that the manager was aware of. He stated that the majority of issues would likely come from the 1940 home and would include the core components of electrical, plumbing and roofing.

In-Person Board Meetings

The manager stated that Proclamation 20-28.15, dated January 19, 2021, extended the prohibition against open public meetings and provided very little guidance on holding public meetings. He referred to the November 2020 proclamation for guidance and other documents for counties that are in Phase 3. He stated that both cities and the County are conducting in-person meetings. If the Board held in-person meetings, attendance would be limited to 50 percent capacity, which would be 20 people, and overflow would need to be provided into either the foyer or breakroom allowing people to join via teleconference in order to participate. The Commission directed that the Tuesday, June 8 meeting will be in-person.

NEW BUSINESS

There were no items presented under New Business.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Development Activity – the manager reported that the updated plans for the 4th Avenue Legacy Estates Development were reviewed by staff and additional comments and plan requirements were provided.

Capital Improvement Projects – the manager reported that the crew completed the tie over of existing customer service lines to the new main water main on Washington Street from Chestnut to Libby Streets and Birch Street from Washington to Webster Streets. Paving for this project started yesterday and will conclude today. Yesterday, the operations crew began the next project on Webster Street between Chestnut and Libby Streets installing 1,285 of 6-inch PVC water main to replace a 6-inch steel main.

Operations Activity – the manager reported that the operations crew has installed several more, new services. Our electrician is struggling to identify the issue with the generator and new motor starter operating Well No. 7. An electrical engineer for the generator manufacturer, an engineer for the motor starter manufacturer and a retired electrical engineer have been discussing the operational issue with our electrician trying to pinpoint if the generator or motor starter parameters are causing the problem. The well ramps up to full speed and then shuts down due to overvoltage from the generator. Colt Heger and Travis Hagen earned their Washington State Water Distribution Manager I certification.

Administrative Activity – the manager reported that he has engaged Sammamish Data Systems to complete redistricting of commissioner district boundaries once the census data is made available. Due to a commissioner election next year, the redistricting will have to be completed by December 31, 2021. The manager stated that he notified Bob Sischo, Director of Finance and Administration that on Thursday, May 13 the U.S Department of Treasury provided guidance regarding coronavirus state and local recovery fund monies. Asotin County will be receiving \$4.4 million of the \$1.48 billion allocated to counties in Washington State. Director Sischo contacted Chris Kemp, Asotin County Chief Operating Officer, the same day requesting their consideration of any opportunities for the PUD to work with the County to utilize the funding to alleviate our arrearage for utility accounts for their citizens and our customers. Ms. Kemp responded stating that the County Board of Commissioners would be having a work session the following week to discuss some of the interim guidance received and conduct planning. She stated the PUD was on her initial list of entities needing assistance. Ms. Kemp contacted Director Sischo on Thursday, May 20 with a request for customer data and set a date for a meeting with her and the County Commissioners the week of June 14th to discuss the fund request further. Interim guidance will be reviewed by the U.S. Department of Treasury in July. Director Sischo stated that a plan will be developed and approved by the PUD Commission regarding the criteria for application by customers.

COVID-19 Update – the manager reported that the total dollar amount of accounts currently past due is \$73,000. Active accounts are \$60,000 of the total amount. Accounts that are over 120 days past due amount to \$31,000 with \$22,000 of this amount for active customers. 93 door tags for billing cycles 1-3 were generated May 10th and 47 payments were received. 169 door tags for cycles 4-6 were generated yesterday and will be distributed this week. Staff received a call from Community Action Partnership (CAP) on May 13th stating that the agency has a pool of funds on hand that have been underutilized for utility payments. CAP received \$90,000 from Asotin County. Those funds are still not able to be forwarded directly to the PUD by CAP without being requested by individual customers. Staff reviewed current outstanding accounts receivable and notified customers by phone of the available resources through the agency. Staff recorded which customers were contacted, as well as actual funds received from CAP for the customer, in order to identify the effectiveness of the outreach. 56 customers have been called and only 20 answered their phones either due to full voicemail boxes or people not wanting to answer because they thought we were seeking payment. The total amount of payments received from CAP is \$3,583.40 for 9 customers. The next step is to send letters to these customers notifying them of the available funds. In addition, staff will work with CAP to develop an insert for PUD billing statements notifying customers of the availability of funds.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Ridge joined the virtual Northwest Public Power Association (NWPPA) Annual Business meeting on Wednesday, May 12. She reported the meeting focused on utility experiences during the pandemic and the disconnect moratorium which has been the biggest challenge. Most utilities stated that they have not opened for business. A panel of electric utilities discussed the future of power resources and NWPPA stated that they received a clean accountability and financial audit.

Commissioner Nuxoll will join virtual Public Utility Risk Management System meetings on June 2-3.

Commissioner Ridge will join a virtual Public Power Council meeting on Thursday, June 3.

OTHER:

Commissioner McCall asked the manager questions regarding the location of the proposed county jail on 6th Avenue and the extension of water and wastewater utilities to the facility. The manager stated that staff have worked with the County and their consultant regarding sewer capacity on the sewer main on 6th Avenue and extension of the water main from Evans Road or 6th Avenue. In addition, PUD consulting engineers have reviewed the capacity of the sewer main in relation to the daily use at the facility. He stated that there is adequate capacity to serve the jail.

Commissioner Nuxoll stated that he has received complaints from constituents regarding the letter the City of Clarkston is sending to its sewer customers where they state that the customer had "excessive" usage during the months of January and February, which is what the city monthly sewer billing is based on. He stated that PUD customers have questioned their authority to state what is excessive and asked why water is not "available" during those months. The manager stated that we have received complaints every year from customers regarding the letters and we have asked the city on multiple occasions to change the content of the letter. Staff at the city has also directed customers to us, which unintentionally creates the perception that the PUD is responsible for their sewer billing, creating distrust amongst our customers with the annual sewer evaluation report developed for the city. After discussion of the issue, the Commissioners directed the manager to write a letter to the city stating that the PUD will no longer enter into an intergovernmental agreement for development of the annual sewer evaluation report.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.