

WEST SLOPE WATER DISTRICT

Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting & Public Hearings for a Proposed Water Rate Increase and Adoption of District Budget

June 15, 2022

Meeting Summary

CALL TO ORDER

Present on Virtual Meeting: Chair Andy Smith, Commissioners Ramesh Krishnamurthy, Susan Meamber, Paul Schuler, and Carol Wild

Management Staff: Michael Grimm, General Manager; Lucy Dawes, Finance & Customer Service Manager; Wendy Irwin, In-coming Finance & Customer Service Manager

Absent: None

Public: Marjorie Taylor, Jane & Chuck Palmeier, and Vici Wolff (all West Slope WD customers)

1.0 – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called to order the regular meeting of the West Slope Water District Board of Commissioners at 5:03 P.M., Wednesday, June 15, 2022. The meeting was held through Zoom remote teleconferencing technology. The public was made aware of the meeting through the District’s website (the meeting agenda and Zoom meeting link were posted on the website). Chair Smith welcomed the members of the public to the meeting.

2.0 - PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Grimm stated the public comments received by the District were in regards to the proposed water rate increase and will be read into the public record once the public hearing is opened by the Chair.

4.0 – CONVENE PUBLIC HEARING ON WATER RATE INCREASE

Chair Smith opened the public meeting for the proposed water rate increase at 5:08 PM. Chair Smith read aloud the first written comment received by the District on the proposed water rate increase:

“I know I’m not the only one who feels the strain, the pressure, the hopelessness of ever getting ahead. I also know my words will not sway the increasing fees put upon us, but I feel the need to express my feelings. First of all, it took a little mind power to determine exactly how much more I will be paying, when my bill only shows a dollar amount for “water consumption” and the notice explains the increase in units used. Aside from that, I was excited when I got a raise in April, but it didn’t get me far. As a minimum, say all utilities have gone up \$5 per month, and I’m spending \$50 more per month for gasoline, that’s basically my raise. I’ll

try to just be grateful that I got the raise in order to pay all the increased fees, but my tired and broken body would sure like to work a little less here soon.

Gaylene Runey
8320 SW Canyon Drive

Chair Smith read aloud the second comment received by the District:

Water is an important resource for our survival. Although everything that we need is costing more, it is important to maintain the safest and cleanest water system as possible for our health. When maintenance is necessary to deliver clean water, then it is necessary to pay for the cost of the work. So we are writing in support of Consumption Charge and Monthly Minimum Charge increases at this time.

John and Sue Thomas
8295 SW Fairway Drive

Mr. Grimm gave a brief summary of the District's plan to set aside capital funds now for future capital improvement program projects. The proposed water rate increase is the first step toward that goal to replace aging infrastructure that is not earthquake resilient. Ms. Dawes mentioned following this year's proposed water rate increase, subsequent water rate increases are forecasted to be only 3% annually for the next eight years. Jane Palmeier commented putting money aside at this time for future capital projects to replace the District's water pipes as they age is a prudent thing to do and gave her support for the proposed water rate increase. Vici Wolff agrees saving money for future projects makes good sense and asked if the District has a project to work on this year. Mr. Grimm stated the District has a pipe project on Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy scheduled for this fiscal year that will significantly draw down the District's capital reserve for future projects, so replenishing the fund as it is drawn down allows work to continue in the next fiscal year. Chair Smith mentioned the District is working on an asset management plan project to identify high priority projects within the District. Mr. Grimm gave a brief summary of the artificial intelligence / machine learning based project with Fracta to build the asset management plan.

Having received no further testimony from the public, Chair Smith closed the open public hearing on the proposed water rate increase at 6:01 PM. Commissioner Schuler made a motion to approve Resolution #06-2022 regarding the proposed water rate increase. Commissioner Wild seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

5.0 – CONVENE PUBLIC HEARING ON DISTRICT BUDGET

Chair Smith opened the public hearing for the adoption of the District's budget at 5:08 PM. There were no public comments received related to the District's budget. Chair Smith closed the open public hearing on the District's budget at 6:03 PM. Commissioner Schuler made a motion to adopt Resolution #07-2022 to adopt the District budget as referred from the Budget Committee and make appropriations for FYE June 30, 2023. Commissioner Krishnamurthy seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

3.0 – CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Schuler asked if there were other options for the District for investing money (Capital Reserve, Equipment Reserve, SDCs funds) to yield a higher ROR over that of LGIP. Ms. Dawes stated there are state regulations regarding where a special district is allowed to invest public funds, and the District would need to have its own investment policy. Ms. Irwin stated

she would look into the issue and report back to the Board in the future. Commissioner Krishnamurthy asked questions about the use of bereavement and administrative leave by District employees which were answered by Ms. Irwin and Mr. Grimm. Commissioner Wild made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda Items 3.1, 3.3 through 3.4 and 3.6 through 3.8. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Krishnamurthy made a motion to accept Agenda Items 3.2 and 3.5. Commissioner Schuler seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

6.0 – DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

6.1 – General Managers Report

Mr. Grimm highlighted several key issues from the General Manager's report:

- Wholesale water purchase agreement work with Portland and the FCS Group continues to move forward as we work on minor but significant points in the agreement
- AKS will have a bid package together for the District to review so the project can be advertised to bid by early July. Supply chain issues will continue to hinder most CIP projects throughout the nation until at least May 2023. District staff will continue to work through the issues to implement the project
- Through attending the AWWA Annual Conference, discussions were held with executive staff from Fracta and 120Water. Many presentations at the conference validate the benefit using machine learning / artificial intelligence based analyses for asset management programs. Commissioner Krishnamurthy asked about the metrics that Fracta is using to determine the asset failure analysis, and Mr. Grimm replied Fracta is working with District staff to share that information
- The date for the District's 100-year anniversary celebration is set for Saturday, September 10

6.2 – Board of Commissioners – Officer Roles

Mr. Grimm asked the Board to affirm the proposed rotation of the Board Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary officer roles. The Board affirmed the annual rotation practice for the Board such that Commissioner Schuler will serve as the Chair, Commissioner Meamber will serve as the Treasurer, and Commissioner Wild will serve as the Secretary of the Board.

7.0 – COMMISSIONERS COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Krishnamurthy shared his experience on a Clean Water Services tour in Washington County including a watershed tour upstream of Hagg Lake to Lee Falls. During the tour, he met elected officials from other utilities as well as some Washington County commissioners. Commissioner Wild stated she attended the Regional Water Providers Consortium Board meeting June 1. The meeting included a presentation on the 25-year anniversary of the Consortium, a resolution to continue with youth education programs suspended during the Covid pandemic that are set to resume again, and a confirmation of the Board's executive leadership. The next meeting is set for October 6, and it will continue to be held as a virtual meeting. Mr. Grimm mentioned the Consortium hosted a regional tabletop exercise on June 2 for managing a region-wide water curtailment event. Commissioner Wild shared the timeline of the Consortium's beginnings and how today's Consortium is the catalyst for very valuable regional collaboration and partnerships. Commissioner Schuler stated he also attended the AWWA Annual Conference in San Antonio for three days and saw first hand the value of the live event for relevant technical sessions and the chance to meet major product vendors like McWayne Pipe, Mueller meters, and US Pipe as well as smaller companies like 120Water and Fracta and other industry consultants.

Commissioner Meamber asked about work with customers who have difficulty paying utility bills. Chair Smith gave a brief summary about the ARPA money that was received by Washington County and has since been distributed to the public. Ms. Dawes explained the District has no customer assistance program of our own designed to cover a customer's water bill. For the District to have its own program, the District would need significant administrative oversight to create and manage the program and ensure the equitable disbursement of funds to customers. The District continues to work one-on-one with customers to craft mutually agreed-upon payment plans when customers have difficulty paying their water bills. Commissioner Meamber asked if there were a list of other community assistance agencies that the District could refer customers toward for assistance. The Board had no additional topics to be raised at this meeting, and there were no suggestions for new topics at future Board meetings. Mr. Grimm reminded the Board that the July Board meeting will be held on the 2nd Wednesday not the 3rd Wednesday as usual, so the next meeting will be Wednesday, July 13 at 5 PM. One anticipated agenda item for the July meeting will be the Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy project. Staff can provide an update on Community Assistance's work with a few District customers regarding water bill assistance.

Commissioner Krishnamurthy asked for a status update of the 100-year celebration event September 10, 2022 at the next meeting.

Chair Smith recognized this meeting as the final board meeting for Ms. Dawes prior to her June 30 retirement. Commissioners Schuler, Krishnamurthy, Wild, and Meamber as well as Chair Smith all individually expressed their thanks and commendations to Ms. Dawes for her great service to the District for 7 years. Ms. Dawes thanked the Board and commented how she has enjoyed working in the District doing a wide range of tasks and interacting with the customers and the Board on an on-going basis. The Board collectively agreed the meeting went well tonight. Commissioner Wild thanked Chair Smith for his leadership and his great ability to keep the Board's discussions on track during the meetings over the past year as Chair.

8.0 - ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Schuler moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Meamber seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Chair Smith adjourned the June 15, 2022 Regular Board of Commissioners meeting at 7:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved:



Michael W. Grimm, P.E.
Acting Secretary

