



LAKE WHATCOM WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT
1220 Lakeway Drive
Bellingham, WA 98229

REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Minutes

April 28, 2021

Board President Laura Abele called the Regular Session to order at 8:00 a.m.

Attendees: Commissioner Laura Abele General Manager Justin Clary
Commissioner Todd Citron District Engineer/Assistant GM Bill Hunter
Commissioner Bruce Ford Finance Manager/Treasurer Debi Denton
Commissioner Leslie McRoberts Operations Manager Brent Winters
Recording Secretary Rachael Hope District Legal Counsel Bob Carmichael

Excused Absences: Commissioner John Carter

Also in attendance: Robert Johnson, City of Bellingham
Tadd Giesbrecht, Brown and Caldwell
Chad Schulhauser, City of Bellingham
Mike Olinger, City of Bellingham

All attendees participated remotely by phone or video conferencing.

Roll Call

General Manager Justin Clary performed a roll call to identify those in attendance, and then verbally confirmed that the meeting was noticed in accordance with Resolution No. 859 allowing remote meeting attendance as well as in compliance with current statutory requirements. It was confirmed that all participants were able to be heard and hear each other clearly.

Consent Agenda

Action Taken

Ford moved, Citron seconded, approval of:

- Findings of Fact – 1834 Lake Louise Rd Appeal
- Findings of Fact – 2377 North Shore Rd Appeal
- Payroll for Pay Period #08 (04/03/2020 through 04/16/2021) totaling \$44,674.52
- Payroll Benefits for Pay Period #08 totaling \$51,141.84
- Accounts Payable Vouchers totaling \$83,639.50
- 1st Quarter 2021 Payroll Taxes totaling \$9,314.87

Motion passed.

City of Bellingham Resource Recovery Project Update Presentation

The City of Bellingham owns and operates the Post Point Wastewater Treatment Plant, which receives and treats all of the District's wastewater through an interlocal agreement between the City and District. The solids handling process equipment (incinerators) at the facility are reaching the end of their useful lives and require replacement. Based upon the City's policy for climate action and community feedback on various replacement options, a digestion process with energy recovery has been identified as the preferred solution.

Clary explained that since the last presentation to the Board in early 2019, the City and its consultant have been proceeding with design, permitting, and cost estimating associated with this project (referred to as the Resource Recovery Project). Also since the February 2019 presentation, the Washington State Department of Ecology announced the initiation of development of a Nutrient General Permit that will limit discharge of excess nutrients, particularly nitrogen, to the Puget Sound from domestic wastewater treatment plants. The Post Point WWTP will be regulated under the General Permit. In anticipation of expected new limits, the City has incorporated nitrogen removal processes into the solids handling plans, as well as begun planning for phased incorporation of additional nitrogen removal processes over a 20-year planning horizon. These measures have been incorporated into the Resource Recovery Project.

Tadd Giesbrecht of Brown and Caldwell presented an update on the City of Bellingham Resource Recovery Plant Project, which was largely consistent with a presentation provided to the Bellingham City Council on March 8, 2021. Discussion followed.

Resolution No. 873 Integration of Investment and Fixed Asset Management Policies into Administrative Code Title 2, Fiscal Management Policies

Denton explained that historically, the District's Investment Policy and Fixed Asset Management Policy have been maintained separate from the Administrative Code. Based upon Board direction during the February 10 and March 10 work sessions, Resolution No. 873, fully integrates those policies into the Administrative Code.

There are no proposed changes to the Fixed Asset Policy, which was last revised by the Board via adoption of Resolution No. 855. Aside from clerical/readability revisions to the Investment Policy, changes to the policy that were directed by the Board during its work sessions included incorporation of glossary of terms, inclusion of a general obligation bonds of a Washington State local government as an authorized and suitable investment, and revision from a two-year to a five-year maximum maturity for investment in securities.

Action Taken

Citron moved, Ford seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 873 as presented. Motion passed.

Resolution No. 874 Revision to Voluntary Billing Suspension Policies in Administrative Code Title 2, Fiscal Management Policies

Denton introduced this agenda item regarding section 2.10 of Title 2 of the District Administrative Code, which deals with voluntary billing suspensions. Historically, the District has provided a service to customers for voluntary temporary suspension of billing when that customer will be away from their home for an extended period of time (e.g., Canadian customers that reside in their homes for only part of the year, or those that travel south each winter). While the intent was to provide such relief, there are instances where connections have been under voluntary billing suspension for multiple consecutive years. Without any form of collection of rates to maintain the District's infrastructure in a manner that will allow for effective service once that connection resumes service, the remainder of the ratepayers are burdened with paying that connection's proportionate share. During its February 10 and March 10 work sessions, the Board discussed this topic;

ultimately directing staff to prepare a resolution capping the consecutive number of months a connection may be under voluntary temporary billing suspension at four. Discussion followed.

Action Taken

McRoberts moved, Ford seconded, to adopt Resolution No. 874 as presented. Motion passed.

General Manager's Report

Clary updated the Board on several topics, including the District's continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff vaccinations, staffing updates including upcoming interviews with the Finance Manager finalists and a new temporary laborer onboarding, and a potential forthcoming discussion on a potential cell tower vendor lease at a District facility. Discussion followed.

Engineering Department Report

Hunter highlighted several areas, including four projects that will be starting up in May: Agate Heights Water Treatment Plant improvements; Dellesta sewer lift station renovation; Edgewater sewer lift station renovation; and Flatcar sewer lift station PLC replacement. He also noted that District staff have been coordinating with the Sudden Valley Community Association on the building and development process in preparation for a potentially busy construction season.

Finance Department Report

Denton presented the Board with the Quarterly Financial Report for the first quarter of 2021, highlighting how revenues and expenditures were tracking, as well as the relatively small impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on account delinquency.

Operations & Maintenance Department Report

Winters gave a brief report on field crew operations, including work with District Safety Coordinator Rich Munson on deployment of the Donesafe safety software program, which allows the creation of customizable safety checklists the crew can access directly from their field tablets. Discussion followed.

With no further business, Abele adjourned the Regular Session 9:23 a.m.



Board President, Laura Abele

Attest: 

Recording Secretary, Rachael Hope

Minutes approved by motion at Regular Special Board Meeting on May 12, 2021
Date Minutes Approved