



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

REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Minutes

August 25, 2021

Board President Laura Abele called the Regular Session to order at 8:01 a.m.

Attendees: Commissioner Laura Abele
Commissioner Todd Citron
Commissioner John Carter
Commissioner Bruce Ford
Commissioner Leslie McRoberts
General Manager Justin Clary
District Engineer/Assistant GM Bill Hunter
Current Finance Manager/Treasurer Jenny Signs
Operations Manager Brent Winters
Recording Secretary Rachael Hope

Also in attendance were Keith Stewart of Gray & Osborne and Brian Smith of Wilson Engineering. 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.

Changes to Agenda

Clary expressed that Commissioner Ford had requested some discussion of the District's COVID-19 vaccination policies, and the topic was added under Item 8: Other Business.

Consent Agenda

Action Taken

Carter moved, Ford seconded, approval of:

- Minutes for the August 11, 2021 Special Meeting/Work Session
- Minutes for the August 11, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
- Payroll for Pay Period #17 (08/07/2021 through 08/20/2021) totaling \$47,168.99
- Payroll Benefits for Pay Period #17 totaling \$49,707.69
- Accounts Payable Vouchers totaling \$60,481.22

Motion passed.

Sudden Valley Water Treatment Plant Master Plan Alternatives Analysis

Hunter briefly explained that this is the second in a series of meetings and agenda items with the purpose of discussing plans for the Sudden Valley Water Treatment Plant over the next 20 years. In July 2020, Gray & Osborne (G&O) completed a condition assessment in which engineers evaluated the SVWTP from a process, structural/architectural, mechanical, and electrical perspective. Following the condition assessment, G&O was contracted to perform an alternatives analysis to help the District select and prioritize specific short- and long-term improvements to the treatment equipment and processes currently in use. For each major system, G&O developed alternatives that were documented in the form of separate technical memoranda and presented to the Board during regularly scheduled board meetings.

Since then, G&O and District staff have worked together to develop a series of phased improvements to the plant that accomplish the preferred alternatives over the 20-year planning horizon. This preferred set of alternatives was presented to the Board during a work session held on August 11, 2021. The purpose of today's discussion was to facilitate discussion and further consider recommended alternatives. Keith Stewart of G&O was present and available to answer questions and provide guidance. Discussion followed.

Rocky Ridge/Lakewood Sewer Lift Stations Improvement Project Design Award

Hunter apprised the Board that the District's current Capital Improvement (System Reinvestment) Program and that the 2021 Budget identifies the initiation of design and permitting associated with the renovation of the Lakewood and Rocky Ridge sewer lift stations (District Project No. C2112) with construction activities anticipated to be completed in 2023.

The District issued request for qualifications (RFQ) for design/permitting services associated with this project through publication in the Bellingham Herald on June 30, 2021. The District received responses from three consultant teams and a proposal review team was created to review the submittals. The selection committee ultimately recommended awarding the project design to RH2 Engineering, partly due to their familiarity with the electrical configurations and controls of District pump stations following previous projects.

Action Taken

Citron moved, Ford seconded, to authorize the general manager to enter into negotiation of a professional services agreement with RH2 Engineering for design and permitting services associated with the Rocky Ridge/Lakewood Sewer Lift Stations Improvement Project. Motion passed.

District COVID-19 Policy Discussion

Clary recalled that following Governor Inslee's recent mandate of COVID-19 vaccines for Washington State Employees, Commissioner Ford requested to further discuss whether this proclamation would influence the District's stance on employee vaccinations. Clary highlighted the current employee exposure plan and policy associated with masking and vaccines. Commissioner Citron requested that a full agenda item be added to a future meeting for further discussion of the Board's position on mandating vaccines for employees.

General Manager's Report

Clary updated the Board on several topics, including the District's continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a recent meeting with 40th District State Representative Alex Ramel regarding the Puget Sound Draft Nutrient Permit. Discussion followed.

Engineering Department Report

Hunter highlighted several areas, including Department of Health-approved expanded capacity of the Agate Heights Water Treatment Plant following recent upgrades, staff’s work on an application for the 2021 Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant, and upcoming valve replacements at the Geneva Reservoir. Discussion followed.

Finance Department Report

Signs reported that as of July 31, revenues and expenditures are tracking to budget. She also recounted that permitting revenues continue to come in higher than projected, and discussed staff’s monitoring of past due accounts, including upcoming courtesy notices in development.

Operations & Maintenance Department Report

Winters gave a brief report on field crew operations, including recent wildfire smoke program training, operations at the Sudden Valley Water Treatment Plant, installation of new water services, and deployment of the District’s new construction water policy. Discussion followed.

Executive Session Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) Reviewing the Performance of a Public Employee – 30 Minutes

Abele recessed the Regular Session to Executive Session at 9:26 a.m. It was estimated that the Executive Session would take 30 minutes. The purpose of the Executive Session was to discuss the General Manager’s annual performance appraisal by the Board. Abele recessed the Executive Session and reconvened the Regular Session at 9:41 a.m. No action was taken.

With no further business, Abele adjourned the Regular Session 9:41 a.m.



Board President, Laura Abele

Attest: 

Recording Secretary, Rachael Hope

Minutes approved by motion at Regular Special Board Meeting on September 8, 2021
Date Minutes Approved