



## LAKE WHATCOM WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

1220 Lakeway Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98229

### REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

## Minutes

*May 31, 2023*

Board President Todd Citron called the Regular Session to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Attendees:** Commissioner Todd Citron (v)      General Manager Justin Clary  
Commissioner Bruce Ford      Finance Manager/Treasurer Jenny Signs  
Commissioner Jeff Knakal (v)      Operations & Maintenance Manager Jason Dahlstrom  
Commissioner David Holland (v)      Recording Secretary Rachael Hope

**Excused Absences:** Commissioner John Carter

Attendees noted with (v) attended the meeting virtually.

#### Consent Agenda

##### Action Taken

Knakal moved, Holland seconded, approval of:

- Minutes for the 5.10.23 Regular Board Meeting
- Payroll for Pay Period #10 (04.29.2023 through 05.12.23) totaling \$48,644.93
- Payroll Benefits for Pay Period #10 totaling \$53,488.96
- Payroll for Pay Period #11 (05.13.2023 through 05.26.23) totaling \$47,572.38
- Payroll Benefits for Pay Period #11 totaling \$53,179.33
- Accounts Payable Vouchers totaling \$202,612.46

Motion passed.

#### Resolution No. 891 Leak Adjustment Policy Revision

District Administrative Code section 2.10.6 defines current policy pertaining to water leak adjustments. The leak adjustment policy was most recently revised by the Board of Commissioners via adoption of Resolution No. 870 in April of 2021. Clary recalled that at the April 26, 2023 regular meeting, the Board discussed the District's current water leak adjustment policy and indicated a general desire to revise the policy to be more supportive of customers. The Board requested an analysis of customer relief provided by the current policy relative to various other policy considerations, which staff presented.

The Board directed staff to perform an analysis of customer relief provided by the current policy relative to a 50% credit, as well as the effects of a multiplier on prior billing period charges (200%, 500%, etc. of the same billing period for the prior year) with the remainder of the bill relieved by the District. Following discussion during the May 10 meeting, the Board directed staff to prepare a resolution for its consideration reflecting requested updates to location, term, reduction amount, and policy effective

date for leak adjustments. Staff presented the Board with the proposed draft resolution as well as a summary of all 2023 leaks to-date, with a comparison of the relief/impact to customers of the proposed revisions relative to the current policy. Discussion followed, in which the board directed staff to bring back the resolution amended to a 50/50 split at the next board meeting for adoption.

#### **Retrospective Rating Plan Agreement Approval**

Clary explained that the District has participated for several years in the Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts (WASWD) Retrospective Rating (Retro) Program. The Retro Program offers qualified members a potential cost-saving benefit through the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). The program is a risk pool that rewards employers who minimize their industrial insurance losses. Through Program participation, the District has received refunds on L&I premiums when total claims for the pool members are less than the L&I premiums paid by the participants.

The WASWD Retro Program administrator, Archbright, began working with WASWD several months ago to revise the existing agreement between WASWD and each pool member. Clary highlighted included revisions to the Board, and discussion followed.

#### **Action Taken**

**Ford moved, Knakal seconded, to authorize the General Manager execute the updated Retrospective Rating Program Agreement with the Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts, as presented. Motion passed.**

#### **District Engineer Recruitment Personal Services Agreement Approval**

The District Engineer position is an integral member of the District's management team. Bill Hunter, District Engineer, has resigned after 18 years of service. To increase the breadth of reach and facilitate a large pool of qualified candidates, the general manager recommended the use of GMP Consultants, a Washington State-based firm specializing in the recruitment and hiring of public employees, to assist the District throughout the recruitment and hiring process. Discussion followed.

#### **Action Taken**

**Knakal moved, Ford seconded, to authorize the General Manager execute the personal services agreement with GMP Consultants for recruitment of a District Engineer, as presented. Motion passed.**

#### **COVID-19 Vaccination Policy Discussion**

Clary recalled that on February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee issued Proclamation No. 20-05, declaring a state of emergency throughout Washington State because of the COVID-19 pandemic. On August 9, 2021, Governor Inslee issued Proclamation No. 21.14, mandating that all State employees become fully vaccinated from COVID-19 by October 18, 2021, unless they qualified for a bona fide medical or religious exemption. On October 13, 2021, the Board adopted a mandatory vaccination policy in the form of Resolution No. 877; mandating COVID-19 vaccinations for District staff, volunteers, and on-site contractors.

Recognizing that on May 5, 2023, the World Health Organization determined that "COVID-19 is now an established and ongoing health issue which no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern," Governor Inslee rescinded COVID-19 vaccine requirements for Washington State employees on May 10. With most governmental agencies rescinding vaccination requirements, staff provided this agenda item at the board's request for formal review of the District's associated policy. Discussion followed.

**Sewer Lift Station Renovation Program Presentation**

The District owns and operates a sewer collection and conveyance system serving the Sudden Valley and Geneva communities, as well as much of the north shore of Lake Whatcom. The system is comprised of approximately 75 miles of sewer mains supported by 27 sewer lift stations that pump wastewater generated by District customers out of the Lake Whatcom watershed to the City of Bellingham’s (City) sewer conveyance system for treatment at the City’s Post Point wastewater treatment plant.

Much of the sewer system was constructed in the 1970s. While significant operational life of much of the sewer mains remains, the operational life of lift stations is much shorter (approximately 25-30 years). As the lives of the original lift stations began expiring in the late-1990s, the District began planning for systematic renovation of its lift stations. Since the first renovation was completed in 2000, the District has expended significant resources in the renovation of its lift stations, averaging 1-2 improvement projects per year. As the District is now approaching the tail end of the first round of renovations, Clary provided a presentation on the District’s lift station renovation program, including anticipated next steps. Discussion followed.

**General Manager’s Report**

Clary updated the Board on several topics, including a recent functional exercise with Whatcom County Emergency Management staging an 8.6 magnitude earthquake and walking staff through the steps that would be taken. He also highlighted the upcoming Division 30 Hazard Tree Removal project and progress on the Division 7 Reservoir project. Discussion followed.

**Engineering Department Report**

Clary provided an update on District projects, including kickoff of the Euclid lift station renovation project in the coming weeks, current projects out to bid, and completion of the Pinto Creek PRV replacement project by District staff.

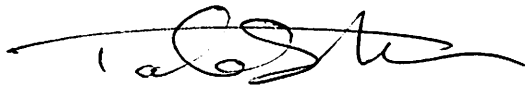
**Finance Department Report**

Signs highlighted trends in revenues and expenditures and reported that 60+ day arrearages continue to remain low, as well as touching on upcoming US Treasury notes coming due and recent conversation with the District’s investment advisor.

**Operations & Maintenance Department Report**

Dahlstrom reported on field crew operations, including the crew’s excellent safety record, increased usage with seasonal temperatures rising, water main flushing in Sudden Valley, and surveying of sites to update the Firewise facility plan created in 2022. Discussion followed.

With no further business, Citron adjourned the Regular Session at 9:33 a.m.



Board President, Todd Citron

Attest: 

Recording Secretary, Rachael Hope

Minutes approved by motion at  Regular  Special Board Meeting on June 14, 2023  
Date Minutes Approved