

**CSA7 Customer Advisory Committee
June 26, 2020 – 43rd meeting**

By videoconference

Meeting was called to order at 11:20 AM

Attendees:

Cyrus Yocum, Eric Black, Heather McAvoy, Joanne Lehner, Patricia O’Neal (committee)
Ann Stillman, Chris Hunter, Mark Chow (county)
Fred Deubert (sub-committee)

Announcements:

Patricia announced that the State Governor’s orders approved remote voting prior to our March meeting. There is no quorum present for this meeting.

1) March meeting minutes

Approval of the minutes was postponed until a quorum is present.

2) February, March, April Budgets. Third quarter capital improvements expense report. County funded capital expense report.

Two customers contacted County staff expressing concerns for possibly not being able to pay the water bill and help paying their bill due to Covid19 job losses. The County typically offers payment plans when possible and will work with them and they were given information about alternative resources. Shutting off water is now disallowed by the State.

Mark reviewed the budgets. There were significant costs related to the petroleum truck spill on Alpine Road which will be mostly reimbursed by the trucking company. Repeated sampling has found no contamination of the water supply. Expenses continue to exceed revenues.

Discussion of the many reasons for the high cost of water infrastructure construction including management, insurance, document prep, the bidding process, compliance reporting, design contracting, contractor profit and others. Cuesta’s situation is not comparable as they have a larger customer base, a homeowner’s guild, and can do some of the work themselves. The cost of treated water has escalated tremendously across the U.S. in the last ten years (reference article distributed by Terry Adams).

Mark reviewed the parts of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that have been completed as well as expenses for hauling water during the winter storms, as well as jobs that are in progress or yet to be started. The first test well site identified by the 2015 feasibility study was found to be in close proximity to existing septic systems to comply with current regulations so another must be found. The driller is no longer available so a new one must be found. The previous driller found a problem with access due to a tree. Recoating the flocculation tank as part of the plant improvements will mean that the plant will be offline for a period of time, requiring trucked water. A new pipe connection for delivery of treated water from tanker trucks and permanent electrical generator will be needed. This will be a benefit in the future for backup power and emergency water pumping.

3) Capital improvements, improvement schedule, compliance

A consultant team has been selected to design the new water main and northern distribution system and it is expected that preliminary plans would be drafted in the next two months. Caltrans must be involved for approval. An environmental impact report (CEQA) may or may not be required. DDW will also have to review, approve, and possibly modify plans along the way.

DDW is being notified whenever there is a break. Discussed the inefficiency involved in restarting pumping when the operator only visits the plant twice a week. The existing contract with Bracewell will expire in October 2020. An RFP for a water system operator will be advertised and proposals received will be evaluated for a new Operator contract. The last RFP yielded one proposal (Bracewell). Mark will talk to Bracewell to see if there may be alternative ways to determine turbidity and restarting the pump more quickly. Discussed the new lead sampling requirement which costs about \$300 per sample. Issue of whether this is based on a bogus test result is moot since the sampling still has to happen.

4) Rate Increase

Mark will come up with figures for the next meeting. Question of how to include customers in the process. The last rate setting process, which included community meetings, cost approximately \$30,000. Mark agreed to come up with a rate increase to cover maintenance and compliance only, no capital improvement charges at this time. We can decide about outreach at that time. Hopefully we will have a quorum.

5) Water audit

Patricia received water usage data from Mark with information redacted that made it impossible to do an accurate audit. She reassured Mark that no personal information would be relayed to potential grant sources, only aggregated data. He will send the unredacted information.

Eric left the meeting at 12:55 PM.

6) Website

No information

7) Meter mapping

David Bevin not in attendance

8) Public comment

Heather asked what to do with the public outreach letter. It must be approved by the entire Committee, so she will contact committee members via email to get their approval.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM

Minutes by Cyrus Yocum, Secretary