

Indian Creek-Westridge Community Services District Board Meeting  
August 13, 2024  
Christian Science Church, West Line Street and Grandview Drive, Bishop, CA

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Board Chairperson Luis Elias. Present were Directors Casey Dean, Sarah Petersen, Ted Williams; District Manager Terry Tye; District Operator Don Buser; District Operator Kim Derr; Linda Bull, technical support consultant; Dean Lewis, IT Specialist.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the May 14, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously (moved Dean, seconded Williams).

Mr. Tye stated that Mr. Buser now works one day a week on Fridays, and monitors wells during weekends.

**Operations and Maintenance Report:** The following are some of the activities Mr. Buser reported. Handled service call about flooding at PaMe and Birch. Submitted bacteria tests. Received call about flooding in backyard of 365 Wildrose; referred to Bishop Creek Water Association. Met with Mr. Tye regarding changes in schedules of District personnel. Responded to nighttime alert about motor saver not working at wells 5 and 6. Berger Electric assisted; system eventually operated normally again.

**Quarterly Finance Report:** Mr. Tye presented the report. The balance in the bank stands at \$781,127, including an O & M total of \$404,900 and Capital Funds of \$376,227.

**Board Report from Compensation and Rate Increase Committee Meeting Held May 26, 2024:** The committee was composed of Mr. Mappus, Mr. Tye and Mr. Williams. Committee members kept board discussions in mind as they broached the two difficult topics. Mr. Tye went over the recommendations that were included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Petersen asked if sources of outside funding had been explored. Mr. Tye explained that after several years of pursuing a grant, the state reneged on a condition and the grant was not approved. Loans have not been considered due to the interest that would have to be paid.

Mr. Elias asked if the suggested rate increases might be overshooting the mark. Mr. Tye said they are not, and that they cover specific legal requirements.

Ms. Petersen asked if state sanitation inspectors asked about meters. Mr. Tye said they did not. An inspection was done in May. The report will probably be ready in about six months, and Mr. Tye thinks the District passed "with flying colors." The previous inspection was done in 2017. Mr. Tye will send that report to Ms. Petersen.

**Board Consideration of Committee Recommendations for Staff Pay Increases and Customer Rate Increases.** Mr. Tye reported that the following matters have to be addressed:

- Staff compensation amount and its date of implementation.
- Rate increase and its date of implementation.

Mr. Dean agreed with the suggested compensation and rate increases.

Mr. Tye clarified that the rate increase covers staff compensation increases.

Mr. Williams asked if rates could be reduced in a few years if costs become lower than expected. Mr. Tye responded that fees could be lowered.

Mr. Tye explained that if the board approves the recommendations, it would be the first step of the process that was detailed in the agenda packet. There would be a special meeting for District customers, when they would have the right to reject the rate increase for meters.

The recommended salary and rate increases, to be implemented October 1, 2024 and January 1, 2025 respectively, were approved unanimously (moved Dean, seconded Petersen).

### **Board Review and Approval of Public Hearing Notification to Be Distributed to**

**Customers:** Mr. Tye said that the meeting scheduled for October 23, 2024 will be open to all District customers. Mr. Tye reviewed requirements for rate increases that were included in the agenda packet. The District has access to ten hours of free Inyo County legal counsel, so Mr. Tye consulted with one of them, Christy Milovich, in the development of the ordinance about increasing water rates, included in the agenda packet. Mr. Tye reviewed the engineering report from Tim Rudolph and the revenue projection analysis from Holland and Allred, CPA. Both were included in the agenda packet. These reports are recommended but not required. County counsel recommended including the engineering report in the notice to customers.

There was a review of the Notice of Public Hearing Considering Rate Increase. There were minor revisions since the agenda was distributed. The public hearing is scheduled for October 23, 2024, at the Jill Kinmont Boothe school. Each property has one vote.

Mr. Tye will ask Holland and Allred staff to send the notice to customers with the billing scheduled for September 1, 2024. He will also place a notice about the October 23 meeting in three September editions of the Inyo Register, ask local radio stations for air time to publicize the meeting and the issues, and post the notice on the District website.

Mr. Tye explained that customers have a right to protest against the rate increase. If there are not at least 51% of votes against the increase, the board will be asked to vote to implement the increase at the November meeting.

Mr. Derr asked what will happen to the staff compensation increase if customers do not approve the rate increase. Mr. Tye responded that the board voted to approve the committee recommendations, so if a rate increase is not approved by the public, staff salary increases will not be affected. Mr. Elias suggested a separate board vote on the salary increase but after discussion the consensus was that this was not necessary. Ms. Petersen and Mr. Casey made it clear that they want to make sure staff is properly compensated at the market rate. Other board members agreed.

Mr. Dean mentioned that the proposed rate of \$110/month is lower than some local districts are currently charging.

There was a lengthy discussion about how to present the rate increase to the public. Mr. Tye plans to make it clear to the public that they can protest the increase. He will be transparent about the customers' role in the process. Ms. Petersen supported this.

Mr. Tye went over the procedure for conducting a public hearing, which was in the agenda packet. Mr. Williams wants it clear on notices and at the start of the public meeting in October that the votes are one per parcel, not one per person.

**Board Vacancies:** Mr. Elias reported that there are four board vacancies coming up in November. Three people have filed for the positions: Casey Dean (incumbent), Randy Gillespie, and Sarah Petersen (incumbent). Mr. Elias's seat also expires in November, and he plans to file for the position. Mr. Mappus declined to continue after November. The deadline to file was extended to August 14, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Tye explained that if no one else files by the deadline, members will be appointed without an election.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.  
Minutes submitted by Stephanie Sheltz