

Indian Creek-Westridge Community Services District Board Meeting
August 8, 2023
Christian Science Church, West Line Street and Grandview Drive, Bishop, CA

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Board Chairperson Luis Elias. Present were Directors Jeff Anderson, Casey Dean, Ted Williams; District Manager Terry Tye; District Operator Don Buser; Assistant Operator Kim Derr; District residents Tiffany Lau and Sarah Petersen; Inyo County Fourth District Supervisor Jen Roeser; Bishop Fire Department Interim Chief Pat O'Neil; ICWCSD Engineer Tim Rudolph; David Tanksley; Fairview/Watterson area residents Glen McWithey, Marilyn Philip; Tooley's Mobile Home Park part owners Lynn and Bill Gannon.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the May 2, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously (moved Williams, seconded Anderson).

Fairview/Watterson Rd. Request/Proposal for Fire Protection Water Supply: Supervisor Roeser thanked the ICWCSD board and Mr. Tye for their time and consideration. Since last July Ms. Roeser has been gathering information from a variety of sources, including the City of Bishop and USDA. In the near future she plans to convene a meeting of all relevant parties, such as county, fire chief, Fairview residents, and ICWCSD to discuss possibilities for obtaining a water supply for fire protection.

Mr. Tye gave detailed information about the costs if water was supplied by ICWCSD. He is familiar with current costs due to extensive work that was recently done in the district. The estimated cost of pipes, valves, hydrants, etc. is about \$461,000. There would also be costs associated with permitting, licensing and easements.

Mr. Tye reviewed the handout prepared by Mr. Rudolph with a diagram of the proposed project's lines, connections, easements and hydrants.

There was a discussion about water pressure and the possible need for a pressure booster pump, which runs on electricity and would require a backup power generator. Mr. Tye mentioned that the generator ICWCSD purchased cost \$120,000.

Mr. Tye's estimated total for the project is at least \$700,000.

Mr. Tye explained that the ICWCSD Board agreed to assist to provide water to the Fairview neighborhood on the following conditions: No money would be allocated; all administrative work and costs, permits, easements, etc., would be completed by outside agencies; ICWCSD would only supply water for fire suppression, e.g., fire hydrant or water tank; no water supply for personal use, i.e., no new service connections, customers or billing; water supplied would be at the usual rate of \$1.24/1000 gallons measured by flow meter. ICWCSD staff would provide maintenance, such as checking valves, at a predetermined hourly rate.

Mr. Rudolph suggested that Fairview residents could form a community service district (CSD) that would provide water and fire service for a maintenance fee to the residents. Ms. Roeser said she spoke with County and DWP about how to form a CSD.

Mr. Tye mentioned that it would be less costly for Fairview residents to form a district, sink a well (estimated at \$150,000), and add service lines, etc. There was a discussion of ways the City of Bishop might assist with service lines that would include lines for drinking water.

Mr. Tye said that ICWCSD pumped half a million gallons of water to suppress the Fairview fire.

Ms. Gannon mentioned that some Fairview residents have their own well. Mr. Rudolph advised that any new lines should be installed at the distance required by the fire department.

In response to Ms. Roeser's inquiry, Mr. Elias said that sinking a well would probably not have Owens Valley Groundwater Authority implications.

Mr. Tye suggested that if Fairview residents sink a well, they could consider using it for drinking water as well. Mr. Rudolph commented that the state might require separate wells for drinking and fire suppression, and that grants would probably be given to areas with water of poor quality, which Fairview does not have.

Mr. Tanksley stated that a well for fire suppression would not have to meet quality requirements. The cost of a well is approximately \$80,000 to \$100,000. A generator and other costs would have to be incurred. The state water control board might offer grants.

Mr. Rudolph suggested that the effect on property insurance rates be considered during deliberations.

Mr. Elias suggested that, at a minimum, residents could install an elevated storage tank and institute a volunteer fire department.

Ms. Lau asked about looping. Mr. Tye responded that this would probably be outside the system. A valve could be placed on Indian Creek Drive to prevent cross contamination. This would add to the cost of the system.

Mr. Tye encouraged Ms. Roeser to contact the California Department of Water Resources about consolidating systems.

Ms. Roeser mentioned that she is looking into funding available in two recent federal infrastructure bills.

Mr. Gannon said that the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) helps fund safety equipment for mobile home parks. Mr. Rudolph stated that these funds usually require matching funds up front.

There was consensus that it will take a long time to develop any form of fire protection mechanism.

Inyo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan: Mr. O'Neil distributed information about a community meeting scheduled for August 10, 2023, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Operations and Maintenance Report: Mr. Buser presented the report. The following lists some

of the work that was done. Eleven valves, some new, some replacements, were installed. Four bollards were installed. Asphalt was cut and slurry was poured. Bacterial samples were submitted. Planning was done for hydrant installation and location. Drained main line.

Finance Report--Quarterly, Delinquents, Recap of Capital Projects Completed in May and June: Mr. Tye gave a detailed presentation that included explanations of all expenses. He is happy with the results of the projects. The county helped with some of the costs.

The balance in the bank stands at \$708,383 including an O & M total of \$392,262 and Capital Funds of \$316,121. Seventy-two customers prepaid for the year.

Mr. Tye did not have exact numbers from the CPA but estimated that \$4,000 to \$4,500 is currently owed. Two customers are responsible for \$3,000 of that amount. He has a lien of them.

Work Done Over the Past Thirteen Years: Mr. Tye presented an overview of work done by the district in the last thirteen years. On charts he showed the location of every project, which included replacing or adding valves, hydrants, and pipelines. Three well pumps were replaced. The backup power generator kicked in at times, including during the Fairview fire.

Mr. Tye reported that the district is in fantastic condition.

July 1, 2023 marked the fifth anniversary of the last rate increase. Another increase probably will not be needed for some time.

Ms. Petersen asked about metering. Mr. Tye said that metering will most likely be required eventually. When he looked into it, the cost was \$600,000-\$800,000, which would bankrupt the district. Rates would be doubled, or customers could buy their own meter. The district would then have to read the meters and pay for accounting. The estimated cost of a meter is \$1,600, plus excavation, for a total of about \$3,000.

Mr. Elias recounted that people used to have their own wells. Presently there is one property with a well that doesn't have a service connection.

OVGA Update: Mr. Elias reported that the Owens Valley Ground Water Authority meets once a year, in March. OVGA has enough funds to sustain it for now. Eventually it will have to develop a funding mechanism. The main focus is to develop a database of wells in the Owens Valley.

Succession Planning: Mr. Williams requested that the board consider planning for Mr. Buser's and Mr. Tye's eventual departures. Mr. Tye said he will develop a plan. A challenge is timing the recruitment of replacement staff because the need is not imminent. Mr. Dean stated that he has a D2 from the county. Mr. Derr encouraged him to consider working for the District. Mr. Dean explained that his future work situation is currently unclear.

Another challenge is that the two positions provide no benefits and relatively low wages. Mr. Elias said that in the forty years he has been on the board, staff was typically composed of local residents. He would like to continue the custom. Mr. Derr agreed.

Mr. Tye said that at the board's request he could ask the California Rural Water Association if we can send out feelers. Mr. Dean said he frequently receives information about openings. Mr.

Elias suggested sending out feelers to agencies where people work on water issues. Ms. Petersen stated that the state D2 list is the best resource for recruitment.

Next Meeting: November 14, 2023

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.
Minutes submitted by Stephanie Sheltz.