

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
61750 CHOLLITA ROAD, JOSHUA TREE, CA 92252
WEDNESDAY, August 5, 2020, 9:30 AM

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER at 9:30AM

(1) In Attendance (Via Zoom):

- 1) Director Tom Floen, V.P. Unger, GM Ban, K. Radnich
- 2) CAC Members via ZOOM: Jane Jarlsberg, Frank Coate, Barbara Delph
- 3) Public: Stacy Doolittle

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- (1) Approved: Director Floen (1st) / V.P. Unger (2nd)

3. PUBLIC COMMENT —none

4. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES from April 1st, 2020

- (1) V.P. Unger requested item #5, Section 3, Pg. 3 to be removed as it was not stated correctly, and removal would not impact the discussion's message. Minutes were approved with the requested correction: Director Floen (1st) / V.P. Unger (2nd).

5. LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Vice President Unger/Director Floen

- (1) V.P. Unger reported that the COVID-19 Ad Hoc committee did not meet—but JBWD is doing all that is required to comply.
- (2) Director Floen discussed the recent Housing law, put in place by Obama but removed by Trump that may entice “profit building” here, in the desert, for low-income housing.
- (3) AB 508, which allows for SWRCB to consolidate under-performing Water Districts for non-compliance. Director Floen pointed out that the State is notorious for imposing standards that are hard to meet, especially for smaller Districts. V.P. Unger agreed, and added that the State controls water rationing along with demanding incorporated towns to provide a certain percentage of low-income housing.
- (4) V.P. Unger sees a State law coming on water rationing. Director Floen added that a 2018 Article in the ACWA publication spoke on the need for increasing the flow of water to the Delta, and that the State Board is now demanding more water for Salmon in the Delta. This diversion of more water to the Delta could mean less water for us.
- (5) Radnich reported on four other legislative initiatives:
 - 1) SB 45 (Allen) & AB 3256 (Garcia) All Climate Resilience bonds have been removed from the November ballot (as funding was uncertain due to everything else going on.)
 - 2) SB 414 (Caballero) Water Systems consolidation/Small System Water Authority Act of 2019—It is being worked on by LAFCO & the State and is a 2-year effort in process.
 - I. Radnich asked if we had a Board Member monitoring LAFCO. V.P. Unger, responding that we did not, felt that should be brought up at the next Board Meeting.

- 1) Of interest, it was suggested we open the "kitty" up to be a donation option for people who contribute to the United Way, or to those who just want to donate to this cause. The committee expressed interest in this, so Radnich said she would check into it.
- (7) Morongo Basin Emergency Preparedness Committee
 - 1) Radnich was notified the August meeting was cancelled (like the last meeting in April) due to COVID, but also due to the Apple Fire.
- (9) AQMD/MBCA
 - 1) We have been approached to be a test site for air quality in the Morongo Basin. Other entities (BDVWA, MVCSD Fire Dept. 29 Palms City Hall, and two private entities: one in Desert Heights, and the other in SW Landers, are already set up as test sites. GM Ban stated he has to connect with the AQMD Director to clarify some concerns before committing (like having all our big equipment possibly skewing the readings with their localized exhaust, etc.) He is also reviewing the MOU.
- 10) Virtual Leak Detection Class
 - 1) We had 14 registrants, plus Radnich. At the last minute, one lost access to a computer, dropping it to 13. Of those, only 9 logged in for the class.
 - 2) Many were elderly, so it is unknown if the ZOOM component challenged them. Regardless, the presentation was emailed out to the registrants, after the fact.
 - 3) There is no official course evaluation, but one female attendee thought it was worth their time. V.P. Unger, who also attended, commented she felt it was good, basic information provided, and the ability to ask questions was good.

7. STAFF REPORT – GM Ban

- (1) GM Ban reported on the potential of the JT Retreat Center connecting to JBWD. There were many considerations to be addressed before this could occur, but they are all being explored. If they tie into the JBWD water system, they would still be allowed to use their well water for irrigation. One requirement would be for them to "harden their system" as it is fraught with leaks. Because they have their own well and aquifer, they are currently part of the Water Master (with HDWD.) However, their water is high in nitrates and have been informed they can no longer use it as potable water.
 - 1) Frank Coate asked if they'd be required to put in a back-flow device. GM Ban said, "yes".
 - 2) More discussion followed, but there are many unknowns at this point. GM Ban will keep us updated.
- (2) Gm Ban shared that our California Irrigation Management Information Station (CIMIS) station (located at CMC) is the only one in the Morongo Basin and reports data to California to help determine water use guidelines for the area.
 - 1) Maintaining the system is and has been time consuming for staff.
 - 2) A retired State CIMIS inspector has agreed to take the monitoring and maintenance burden for us at a cost of \$400-500/year. This is cheaper than using our staff and the District's gardener.
 - 3) Additionally, HDWD and TPWD has agreed to split the cost three ways.