

Prudence Island Water District

Minutes of meeting: June 27, 2009

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. Present were David Buffum, moderator; Patricia Richard, clerk; Richard Brooks and Leo Perrotta. Absent was Phillip Brooks.

Swearing in board members elected on June 20, 2009: David Buffum administered the oath of office to Patricia Richard, Clerk, and Leo Perrotta, Board Member. Phillip Brooks will be sworn in at the July 11 meeting.

Approval of minutes of meeting for June 6, 2009: Mr. Capron, system manager, said that he had misreported pumping figures for May 2009 at the June 6 meeting. Ms. Richard said that because she had been informed of that problem in advance of the meeting, the corrected annotation was reflected in the minutes. Motion to approve minutes of the meeting by Richard Brooks, seconded by Mr. Buffum, approved unanimously.

Resignation/appointment of district treasurer: Mr. Buffum informed the board that Ms. Richard agreed to serve as treasurer until the end of the year to provide continuity to district administrative tasks. Mr. Buffum said that the board needed to consider making the treasurer's office a paid position because of its labor-intensive nature. Ms. Richard informed the board that she had made this offer prior to being re-elected to the clerk's position, and that she was unwilling to hold both offices. She estimated that between work time and out-of-pocket expenditures she had donated a minimum of \$7500 a year to the district, and that she could not afford to continue doing so. She agreed to do both the clerk's job and the tasks related to everyday administrative operations through the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2009). She said that she expected any payment associated with the treasurer's duties to be discussed at the budget workshop and rate hearing to be held August 22, 2009. Mr. Brooks said that the charter permits the board to pay its officers, and asked if the treasurer's office would be a salaried position. Ms. Richard said that the position was not a job, but an appointed position and any money associated with it would be an honorarium and not a salary. She stressed that the district board was under no obligation to exercise this option, and could advertise for, interview and hire an office manager and pay them a salary. Mr. Buffum informed the board that he would present his official resignation from the office of treasurer at the next board meeting.

Purchasing/treasury: Ms. Richard said that she had received the Certificate of Deposit from People's Credit Union and that it matured on September 2, around the time that the payment to RI Clean Water Finance is due.

Ms. Richard informed the board that she had paid off the invoice from Hinckley Allen and Snyder dated Dec, 31, 2008 for legal services associated with acquisition of PIUC at the request of Sandra Mack, special counsel to the district. Mr. Brooks asked how much in total the district had paid for legal services associated with the acquisition. Ms. Richard estimated the figure to be approximately \$56,000. She said that this was not at all unusual, and that legal expenses associated with an acquisition of this type were typically about 50% of the purchase price.

Ms. Richard said that she would have the expense report for June at the next meeting. She reminded the board that the Conservancy lease was due in July and that she would also be paying RI payroll taxes for TDI and unemployment, which are due quarterly. She said that she has also received an invoice of \$1125 for legal services performed after the Dec. 31 invoicing date: some consultation with PIUC lawyer, deliverables in the form of complete acquisition binder and CDs, and attention to Portsmouth taxes. To be paid in July.

Mr. Buffum asked the status of the billing for RIDOH testing. Ms. Richard said that New England Medical Billing was still behind on invoicing.

Customer accounts: Ms. Richard reported having taken in approximately \$42,000 in customer receipts since the June billing. She said that she expected the second billing to go out on schedule on July 15.

Ms. Richard said that she had invoiced the job for connections on Hornbine Ave., and that the total was \$1404.50. Mr. Capron, the facilities manager, explained some of the details of the work. The board approved the charges as invoiced and directed Ms. Richard to bill the customer.

Bylaws: Conservation bylaws - Mr. Brooks said that at the previous meeting, Robin Weber had expressed concern about preserving the wetland in the Mill Creek area. He said that the location of the wells at Indian Springs had a detrimental effect on those wetlands, and suggested that the board consider developing wells at a higher elevation.

Mr. Capron presented the board with pumping stats from 1997 to 2001. He said that he was shocked by some of the production totals and had made notations on some of the figures that seemed unlikely to him considering the pumping capacity of the wells referenced. Mr. Capron also has been looking at the pumping totals from the Urish report dating back as far as 1988. Mr. Perrotta asked about current pumping stats. Mr. Capron said that the district is pumping an average of 500,000 gals per month. He said that there had been several leaks over the winter that skewed the figures. He said that he anticipated pumping in excess of one million gals per month in July and August. Ms. Richard said that she had been looking at pumping stats for the 12 preceding years and that she was concerned about winter pumping stats. She explained that she had calculated a monthly average for the 10-12 year period. She then looked at the customer list to see how many connections would be active during winter. She said that the winter population is low enough that it's a simple matter to pick them out from the database. She then took the stats available for average daily usage for single-family homes in Rhode Island and determined a theoretical number of active connections based on the monthly averages. She said that the number of theoretical active connections was twice as high as actual active connections, suggesting that the system was pumping approximately twice what estimated customer demand should be during winter. She said that the figures improved greatly in summer, suggesting that water usage by the transient community was quite low. She suggested that it was unlikely that the few customers using winter water turned into water hogs for those few months, and that the best explanation for the way the numbers were behaving is constant water loss from failing infrastructure. She also suggested that the figures were skewed by the high pumping stats earlier in the database and that the figures might improve slightly if she used 5-year averages, but that even at current pumping rates it was a cause for concern. She pointed out that conservation measures would not be particularly effective if a large volume of constant water loss was part of everyday operations. Mr. Capron agreed that the infrastructure was probably responsible for a great deal of water loss. Mr. Perrotta asked if the district had an inventory of piping system. Mr. Capron said he was updating the current system map. Mr. Brooks asked

about leak survey techniques. Mr. Capron said that the system had a significant amount of plastic pipe and that acoustic survey was not very effective because of that. General discussion of leak detection strategies: isolation, zone metering, zone pressure checks. The board concluded that attention to the infrastructure should be a high priority and that money for infrastructure remediation must be budgeted and a plan put in place to identify and fix deficiencies. While the board will continue to work on conservation measures, it acknowledges that the effectiveness of these measures relies on the stability of the infrastructure. Mr. Capron recommended that the first remediation project should be Governor Paine Rd.

Consumer Confidence Report - Ms. Richard presented the board with the 2008 Consumer Confidence Report. Mr. Brooks asked if the radiological testing report was available. Ms. Richard explained that those tests were taken in 2009, and the report covered only the previous year. She explained that ASRWVA actually put the draft CCR language together and that individual suppliers tailored the report to meet their needs. She said that RIDOH had suggested including information about the upcoming cross-connection control regulations in the CCR. Motion to approve for distribution to the public by Mr. Buffum, seconded by Mr. Brooks, approved unanimously.

Portsmouth Taxes: Sandra Mack forwarded email from Portsmouth tax office indicating that the situation regarding record of ownership of the large water storage tank has been resolved.

Technical

Systems manager's report:

Mr. Brooks asked if the #4 well was in service. Mr. Capron said demand would necessitate putting the #4 well in service in July.

Mr. Capron attempted to research the spike in salinity figures for IS#1 in 2005. Well had been offline for a considerable amount of time before testing took place. Ms. Richard said that she believed the figure might be a clerical error; Mr. Brooks concurred.

Installed 2 service connections on Hornbine, portable generator worked well.

Installed 2 curb stops on Governor Paine Rd. and replaced ball valve. Job was difficult; service lines are in encased in pvc because the piping rests on ledge; water main had to be moved slightly to allow for valve installation.

William Moclair estimates that labor for repair of telemetry will be approx. \$500. Surprised that telemetry was lost twice within a year. Fix existing transmitter approx. \$110. Mr. Buffum asked if Mr. Moclair can engineer the setup to prevent future burnouts from lightning strikes. Mr. Capron said that surge suppression was part of the system but was not effective. Ms. Richard asked what condition the surge suppressor was in, and if there was a better method for surge suppression than is currently being employed. Mr. Buffum said that in his experience surge suppressors needed to be replaced after a lightning event. Mr. Capron will make further inquiries with regard to surge suppression on the telemetry. Mr. Capron said that he had been able to maintain tank levels without telemetry by relying on pressure readings. When #4 well goes into service, tank level will be more difficult to control.

Ms. Richard asked if mechanical metering was in place on the #4 well. Mr. Capron said that he hoped to install the meter in advance of putting the well online, had to order a recording device that should be available in the coming week.

Groundskeeping tasks carried out at facilities, weed whacking on Governor Paine, Brown Lane, Hillside Ave.

5 water samples for coliform testing for RIDOH all came back clean.

Needs to replenish stock of Mueller valves from Vellano Bros. Board approved purchase of 2 valves.

Continuing work on PIUC files. Information about well levels and rainfall. Ms. Richard said that she had looked at rainfall/well level figures from monitoring over past 3 years and saw some indication that recovery rates were faster than previously discussed. Drought year rainfall was not considerably different in total than other years, but seemed to deteriorate rapidly when weather is dry. Mr. Brooks said that this was indicative of small size of aquifer.

Mr. Capron requested permission to devote some time to maintaining volunteer water monitoring stations on district time. The board approved the request. Mr. Buffum directed Mr. Capron to keep track of the hours spent doing those tasks.

Established regular monitoring of levels in #3 well, both static and during drawdown.

Cross connection control regs - DOH letter outlining timeline for compliance with adopted regulations, 10 components requiring considerable planning. Filed for extension for certification of compliance, plan must be in place by Dec. 31, 5 years to complete implementation. First 2 components, authority and policy statement to be considered at next meeting. Discussion regarding filling of surveyor and inspector/tester positions; hire outside personnel or train someone? Can facilities manager act as tester/inspector? Contact DOH for clarification.

New Business:

Correspondence: Customer letter explaining financial hardship and asking for increased time for payment of arrearage. The board granted the request.

Other: No other business

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Buffum, seconded by Mr. Brooks, approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned 3:10 p.m.

Patricia Richard, Clerk