

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
NOVEMBER 19, 2024**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on November 19, 2024, was called to order by Chairman Shute at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Chairman Shute presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:** Member Shute, Member Hamilton, Member Kozak, (Member Stewart Joined at 1:15 p.m., remotely)

Also Present: General Manager Wiley, Technology Specialist III Espino, Administrative Analyst Weber, Chief Financial Officer Aragon, Alternate Harp, District Secretary Quintanar, Customer Service Supervisor Cruz

Also Present Via Teleconference Or Video Conference Safety and Risk Management Officer Johnson, Construction and Meters Supervisor Lagunas, CIP Program Manager Williams

4. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

None were seated.

5. **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

6. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Motion:

To approve the Agenda as presented.

Action: Approve, Moved by Member Hamilton, Seconded by Member Kozak

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 3)

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, Member Kozak

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no members of the public present.

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. September 5, 2024

B. October 15, 2024

Motion:

To approve the September 5, 2024, and October 15, 2024, Minutes as presented.

Action: Approve, Moved by Member Hamilton, Seconded by Member Kozak

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 3)

Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Shute, and Member Kozak

9. COMMENTS & REQUESTS

- A. General Manager's Comments
- B. Committee Member's Comments

Mr. Wiley reported on the well-coordinated efforts to successfully complete and commission the three pump stations required to operate Rainbow Water's systems independently from the SDCWA, by November 1, 2024. The Notice of Completion was filed with the Counties of San Diego and Riverside and the first Exit Fee payment has been made. Kudos were expressed for SDG&E's coordination and efforts, and to the Board of Directors and all staff involved with this endeavor. Brief discussion followed regarding information to share with our customers.

Member Kozak noted that discussions about forever chemicals, are on the horizon. Chairperson Shute added that it will be important to explain to our customers how healthy our water is. He also relayed appreciation for the Customer Service team for their assistance with a customer experiencing unexplained high water usage.

10. CROPSWAP PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Weber and Mr. Wiley provided an update. Funding has been exhausted for the first-come-first served projects and there is currently a wait list for funding that is being pursued. Some agencies have not utilized all their allotted funding, which has to be allocated by next year. We have 76 submissions from customers in our service area, to date, and Ms. Weber relayed the types of projects applied for.

11. DISCUSSION OF FINANCIAL OPTIONS FROM ONE TIME SAVINGS FROM EARLY DETACHMENT FROM THE SDCWA

Mr. Wiley provided background information and the options discussed by the Board of Directors and two other Standing Committees to date. There is about \$770,000 in fixed cost savings due to the early detachment from the SDCWA that can be utilized in several ways. One option would be to refund customers as a one-time rebate or a monthly rebate spread out over six months. Member Kozak opined that his preference would be to divide the savings between reserves and water purchases, and to relay to our customers what we are doing to financially strengthen the District. Member Stewart relayed agreement and Chairman Shute expressed that although a rebate sounds good, it may be problematic or confusing to customers expecting additional savings and rebates. In addition, contributing to capital improvements needed will result in cost avoidance down the line. Member Hamilton voiced favor of contributing to the reserve fund.

12. CUSTOMER SERVICE CALL METRICS

Mr. Cruz reported that average hold time has been under one minute, consistently. Average talk time increased in October due to the billing discrepancy. The District received 1,500 calls in October, concentrated within a few days. Staff successfully kept this high volume of calls to about

a minute each. Brief discussion followed, contemplating reasons for increased call volumes over the years, despite excellent outreach. Mr. Cruz concluded that the average hold time for surrounding agencies is 3-3.5 minutes. The Committee encouraged the addition of tools on our website to assist customers.

13. COMMUNITY EVENTS UPDATE

Information is being shared about the December 18, 2024, blood drive. We will also have 2025 calendars available in the office, in December, and another poster contest is being launched in January. She also announced the Bonsall Chamber Christmas tree lighting ceremony on November 30th, from 3-5:00 p.m. and she encouraged everyone to attend.

14. NEWSLETTER CONTENT PLANNING

The current newsletter was shared, which included information about the detachment from the SDCWA, Customer Feedback, the December Blood Drive, and more. In December, we will include a rate update, information on the Value of Water, how to read your bill, Bonsall Highschool Classroom Visits, and holiday reminders. Mr. Kozak suggested inclusion of a summary of what the District has done for its customers that have resulted in savings, through grant funds and detachment, in the December publication. In January we will have a bill overview, information on the Calendar Contest, rebates from Metropolitan Water District, and a customer survey.

15. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES


Ms. Weber reported that a Press Release was prepared regarding the detachment from the SDCWA, and that we've received positive media coverage regarding our response to the Garden Fire. CBS 8 did a feature on the District's response and ABC 10 also covered the event. The District provided aerial footage and sound bites highlighting the Heli-hydrant, and Mr. Wiley reported that a second potential site has been identified as a fitting location for another Heli-hydrant. Funding for a second Heli-hydrant is being pursued.

16. LIST OF SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The Committee requested an update on Heli-Hydrant planning and an update regarding Item 12, Customer Call Metrics. Mr. Wiley also announced that EMWD may visit the District in January, and he will keep the Committee updated.

17. ADJOURNMENT - To Monday, December 16, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Shute at 1:58 p.m.



Terese Quintanar, District Secretary



Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson