

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
OCTOBER 15, 2024**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on October 15, 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 (attended remotely and left the meeting at 2:30 p.m.), Member Stewart (attended remotely), Member Hamilton, Member Kozak

**Also Present:** General Manager Wiley, Information Technology Specialist III Espino, Administrative Analyst Weber, Operations Manager Gutierrez, Alternate Harp, Alternate Cruz, District Secretary Quintanar

No members of the public were present in person, via teleconference or video conference.

4. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

***Motion:***

***To Seat Alternate Harp***

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

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

***Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Member Kozak***

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

There were no changes requested.

6. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

***Motion:***

***To approve the Agenda as presented.***

***Action: Approve, Moved by Alternate Member Harp, Seconded by Member Hamilton***

***Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 4)***

***Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Member Kozak, Alternate Member Harp***

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were none.

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. August 20, 2024

***Motion:***

***To approve the minutes as presented.***

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

***Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 4)  
Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Member Kozak, Alternate Member Harp***

**9. COMMENTS & REQUESTS**

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

Mr. Wiley reported about a recent Autopay billing error which effected 1,000 of RMWD's customers, billing them for both October and November. Service staff is working to reach out to these customers, reverse charges, and answer questions.

The Gopher Canyon Road Pipeline Replacement has been completed and tie-ins are being completed this week. The Dentro de Lomas Pump Station will be energized by SDG&E this weekend and will start up next Tuesday. Mr. Wiley also provided information on operational tasks associated the pump stations, and the next steps needed to continue the detachment process.

A Metropolitan Water District (MWD) Water quality issue resulted in taste and odor complaints as a result of algae growth at the Skinner Treatment Plant. Information is available on Rainbow's website. Recent MWD discussions also include fluoridation of water, and the EPA is reviewing the target levels for fluoride in drinking water.

Committee Members Stewart and Kozak commented on the importance of reaching out to those customers effected by the billing glitch and commended staff for their efforts.

Member Hamilton stressed the importance of explaining clearly regarding the detachment and suggested a comparative billing example to show how much our customers will be saving. Ms. Harp explained that staff is discussing messaging on monthly bills. Brief discussion followed regarding the cause of MWD's water quality issue. Chairman Shute commented on a massive cyber outage being experienced by Palomar Health, and encouraged vigilance with our systems and awareness training. Ms. Harp announced new accessibility requirements being handled by staff for the District's website. She also reported that, as part of staff's recruitment efforts, she's learned that Rainbow Municipal Water District has a great reputation.

**10. CROPSWAP PROGRAM UPDATE**

Ms. Weber reported a huge uptick in approved CropSWAP Program applications. There are 67 submissions to date, 55 projects approved, and 4 are in the pre-inspection stage. To date \$765,700 in funding has been approved for Rainbow Water's customer applications. Mr. Wiley added that the \$5M is being utilized quickly and additional funding opportunities will be discussed in the very near future.

**11. MONTHLY CALL ANALYTICS**

Mr. Cruz explained that reasons for customer calls were recorded over the past few months. By far, the most common reason for customer calls in August and September was to pay bills. Customers also called for clarification of billing charges, and several other call categories were included in the data collected, including Service Requests, Leak Adjustment Credits, Flume, Starting or Cancelling Service, Providing Updated Contact Information, Payment Plan Requests and misdirected calls. Mr. Cruz reported that staff's analysis of the data is that customers prefer to speak to a live person when paying their bills. Collection of the data is not automated, and very time-consuming for staff. Mr. Cruz commended the Customer Service Team for their efforts to collect the data while maintaining service levels. Discussion followed regarding payment methods available and future utilization of this kind of information to find innovative ways to relay

information and assist our customers in a proactive way. They also encouraged automation for the collection of the data, if available, and requested the information to be shared with the Board of Directors.

**12. COMMUNITY EVENTS UPDATE**

Ms. Weber reported on the North County Fire Open House held on October 12, 2024, where staff provided promotional items and answered customer questions. Several other agencies attended, and there was a steady stream of attendees. Next week, IT and Engineering staff will attend the Speakers Bureau to speak with computer science and chemistry students about careers in the water industry. We are also coordinating with Palomar College to incorporate water industry information into classroom curriculum.

**13. NEWSLETTER CONTENT PLANNING**

October articles focus on National Farmer's Day, Grant Programs for Ag Customers, a Fall Planting Guide, a water Footprint Calculator, and announcement of the General Election Ballot Box at the entrance of the District's headquarter building. Brief discussion took place regarding staff capacity to pursue grant funds.

November's newsletter will highlight detachment, value of water, and Bonsall High School classroom visits. December's articles will include a bill overview, information about Eastern Municipal Water District following detachment, rebates that are available through the Metropolitan Water District, and holiday reminders. Mr. Wiley added that EMWD has proposed distribution of a letter to customers explaining savings and charges on property tax bills. The District also has the option of emailing newsletters to customers who are signed up for Autopay, or others who might be interested.

**14. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES**

Ms. Weber provided recent articles published by Village News. Member Hamilton inquired about a press release related to the completion of the lift stations and kudos to all involved.

**15. LIST OF SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

At the next meeting, quarterly call metrics will be reviewed. Staff will also provide an update on messaging opportunities through monthly bills, and a detachment update.

**16. ADJOURNMENT -To November 19, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.**

The meeting was adjourned by Member Hamilton at 2:36 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson

Attest:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Terese Quintanar, District Secretary