

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
61750 CHOLLITA ROAD, JOSHUA TREE, CA 92252
WEDNESDAY, June 3, 2020, 11:00 AM**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER at 11:12 AM

(1) In Attendance:

- 1) Physically: GM Mark Ban, VP Unger
- 2) Via ZOOM/teleconference: Director Tom Floen
- 3) Via Phone/conference call: Kathleen Radnich

(2) Public: Jane Jarlsberg was present via Zoom; no other public was in attendance via physical, teleconference, nor conference call.

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

5. LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Vice President Unger/Director Floen

(1) State and County COVID-19 update: Rebecca Unger

- 1) According to the State guidance opening “list” of entities, JBWD is listed as “industry.”
- 2) To open, we must comply with the County’s guidelines regarding disinfecting, masks, social distancing and tracking.
- 3) VP Unger urged all to take advantage of the COVID-19 testing occurring at CMC, that was free. She reported it takes a week to get the tests back. Should you test positive, you should self quarantine for 2 weeks.
- 4) She asked if we were up to a public meeting by June 10th’s public budget meeting at the District Board Room (GM Ban assured her we were ready.)
 - I. Jane Jarlsberg asked if the budget meeting would also be open to CAC members, and the public.
 - II. GM Ban shared it would be recorded, and on Zoom, and that CAC members were welcome (and the public).
- 5) GM Ban reported JBWD’s crews were out working—all with safety equipment as required.
- 6) GM Ban announced we were officially moving forward with business as usual. He noted that Sarah Johnson (HR) has prepared a 35 page document on what employees (et. al) need to do to stay in compliance.
- 7) GM Ban stated that plans to remodel the front lobby (to assist in compliance) will start immediately, making it easier and safer for our customers.
- 8) Director Floen shared the impact of Sarah’s recent report revealing how devastating it would be to lose just one employee to such an illness.

(2) Bill Assist Program (United Way Low Income Program)

- 1) This program has been replenished with \$6,500.
- 2) Radnich did not have the current statistics, but should be receiving them shortly.

- 3) V.P. Unger asked if we had upped the pay-out to \$100.00, yet? GM Ban said, “not yet.”
 - 4) Jane Jarlsberg asked if that money also goes to increased bills resulting from leaks. GM Ban clarified that there was a different assistance program for those situations.
- (3) State Legislative: Floen/Radnich
- 1) Director Floen shared that Section 65583.2 of the Government Code has to “fair share” the cost of low-income housing, which there was a huge need for, and noted that (from an L.A. Times article) the push was not for rural housing, but to establish more housing in the urban areas.
 - 2) He questioned that, if our waste water planning could be impacted based on population growth—or lack of) compared to former growth projections. With the new census right around the corner, he cautioned that we might want to pull those numbers into consideration.
 - 3) Radnich shared that it was reported at the Water Conference last August that the Governor wanted 60,000 homes built by 2020 in San Bernardino County alone. The BIA (Building Industry of America) President, responded that this was an unrealistic request for California, due to all the “over compliance requirements” California has that other states don’t have. He claimed they were costly, and impeded progress, causing building delays generally 3-5 years longer than other states. He especially noted “environmental impact” study delays.
 - 4) Director Floen also shared that another consideration in the article —against rural home building vs. urban—was long commutes to work impacting air quality.
 - 5) V.P. Unger clarified that not being incorporated, was potentially good as we have no tax base for “tax sharing for low-income housing”. She also pointed out that new studies are often done in-between the census reports.
 - 6) Also, it was mentioned that many old hotels and motels were being converted for the homeless—something Joshua Tree also does not have a ready supply of.

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION & OUTREACH REPORT – Kathleen Radnich

- (1) The Tier Drop newsletter goes DIGITAL starting in July, using Constant Contact. The benefits are savings in postage, paper, ink and time constraints, and allows for endless space, unlike an 8 1/2x 11 sheet of paper. Paper copies will still be made available in the lobby.
- (2) Fall native plant sale is set for Sunday, September 27th, from 2-4PM, and will include the free seed and plant give-away, as well. It will not be an extensive Water Education Day Event, as COVID-19 restrictions are still driving the reopening of government agencies (many of which participate.)
 - 1) Water Education Day is slated for Sunday, March 28, 2021.
- (3) Demo garden uses: Director Floen (and VP Unger) inquired about alternate uses for our Demonstration Garden, as it seemed to be underused. True, it has been locked up due to the COVID-19 shutdown, but there was reflection of the memorial service we held there (President Fuller’s), and suggestions for VFW to use it, etc.
 - 1) Radnich pointed out the limitations of “crowd space” within the garden itself, but that ideally, utilizing the parking lot (as was done for President Fuller’s memorial) was an option to work around that.

- 2) Radnich noted that the Board can change usage designations at their discretion, but presently the garden was established for “educational” purposes only.
- 3) Radnich also spoke of JTNP tourists and tour busses being drawn to the garden prior to visiting the National Park, then spoke of a potential grant to enhance this (see next item.)
- (4) Radnich applied for a BLM Grant that would realize 12 static garden signs that would teach the steps on wildcrafting. Radnich shared JBWD had already cleared the first review (which was hugely encouraging.) We will get the final results before July.
- (5) Radnich also applied for two grants to MWA/AWAC: funding for our District tours and funding for Water Education Day. The results will be announced in June, as well.
- (6) Leak Detection Class: Radnich has arranged for a Zoom (+ office presence) virtual leak detection class offered free from AWAC on Thursday, July 30th, from 10AM-11AM. This class will be open to all of the Morongo Basin, and goes with our July newsletter’s DIY Leak Detection Check List for any and all (whether they take the class or not.)
- (7) Z107.7 Graduation Campaign: JBWD will be a main sponsor for the Z107.7 virtual Graduation event for three schools. We will have a promotional clip that will be very positive and thereafter, afforded 30 thirty-second commercial ads to use before July 1st.
 - 1) The 30 ads may be used for anything, i.e.: to announce our District’s reopening of the front office, plus our July class on leak detection, for example
- (8) Radnich completed a 5-minute “home video” on planting native plants in the ground. This does present a unique technique, and will wholly support our fall and spring native plant sales (customers always ask about the right way to plant the plants.) Additionally, AWAC has requested all members to provide a DIY video on some conservation topic. They will post it and link it to other sites.
- (9) Radnich shared that the Inland Empire Legislative Group (of which she monitors) wanted an update on how the COVID-19/SB998 water shut-off prevention mandate was impacting water agencies. For JBWD, she reported that we hadn’t seen any huge upsurge in non-payments, but expect that to change with the high water use summer season upon us. As was, we had significant rain in April, which would be reflected in our June bills.

7. STAFF REPORT – GM Ban

- (1) Swamp / Evaporative Cooler Study: Radnich deferred to GM Ban, who reported there was a delay in getting the donated test meters, but that they should be on the way any day now. We would substitute ours while waiting for the replacement stock. This will allow for several hot months, albeit only one year’s worth, of data to be collect. GM Ban felt this will still be helpful.
 - 1) GM Ban noted that the RCD will do all the installations, removal and data collecting.
 - 2) Aqua metrics has agreed to be a test “sponsor,” by donating the meters for use.
 - 3) The project has been downsized due to the Quail Village apartments opting out.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- (1) Solar Project Update
- (3) Waste Water program

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – August 5, 2020.

10. ADJOURNMENT: 12:23 PM

Respectfully Submitted,



Mark Barr, General Manager and Board Secretary