

COOS BAY-NORTH BEND WATER BOARD  
P O BOX 539 – 2305 Ocean Boulevard  
Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

Minutes  
Regular Board Meeting

December 15, 2022  
7:00 a.m.

Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board met in open session in the Board Room at the above address, date, and time with Chair Bob Dillard presiding. Other Board members present: Dr. Charles Sharps, Greg Solarz and Carmen Matthews. Board Members absent: None. Water Board staff present: Ivan D. Thomas, General Manager; Matt Whitty, Engineering Manager; Bryan Tichota, Customer Relations Supervisor; Jeff Miller, Treatment Plant Supervisor; Reshma Parrish, Water Quality Technician; and Vince Stonesifer, Field Services Technician. Board Legal Counsel Melissa Cribbins was present. Michael Scott of Mason, Bruce & Girard was present. Charles Couture was present. Media present: None.

Chair Dillard opened the meeting at 7:00 a.m. and asked Mr. Whitty to lead the Board and assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Dillard asked if there were any corrections or additions to the November 17, 2022, Regular Board meeting minutes. Dr. Sharps moved the minutes be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Solarz and passed unanimously.

Chair Dillard asked if there were any public comments, and there were none.

Regarding consideration of the Modification of Agreement for Professional Services with Mason, Bruce and Girard, Mr. Whitty stated Mason, Bruce & Girard has completed the scope of work for the timber cruising professional services agreement. The agreement included a clause requiring a modification of the agreement if costs were going to exceed the estimated amount of \$37,000.

As of July 1, 2022, MB&G had utilized 95% of the contract amount of \$37,000. At this point MB&G had not yet received the LiDAR data from Northwest Management. They subsequently received the data in August and found the tree species could not be discerned from the LiDAR data. MB&G then utilized their on-site cruising data to adjust the species composition for the stand. This work was not anticipated in the original contract.

The additional work contributed to a project overrun with an increase of \$16,726.94 resulting in a total fee of \$53,726.94. MB&G did not request any modification to the agreement before they did the additional work. They are now requesting a modification of the contract amount after the fact.

Mr. Scott stated they decided to do a hybrid approach where the conventional cruise would be able to provide a very good idea of the species distribution that is on the ground. The conventional cruise was done and then the LIDAR flight was done in Summer of 2021. MB&G were expecting the LIDAR inventory to come back from Northwest Management last summer. They were a couple of months behind schedule for delivering the final LIDAR product. When MB&G received the report it was not accurate. The conventional cruise that MB&G did beforehand was crucial to be able to amend and correct the inaccuracy in the species prediction.

In addressing the over budget issue, Mr. Scott stated it was not communicated clearly to him that this project was actually a not to exceed amount of \$37,000, and he was not involved in the contracting. It was his understanding that this was just a cost estimate, and did not realize there was a requirement to notify the Board ahead of time. Despite this oversight, MB&G accepts the responsibility this was not done properly in notifying the Board in advance.

Mr. Scott stated MB&G are requesting to increase the not to exceed amount to \$53,726.94. This amount includes all of the invoices that have been submitted prior to October and then half of what would be invoiced for October.

Mr. Dillard stated the new figure is quite an increase over the initially agreed upon price. The Board of Directors have some responsibility to our customers and feels this should be negotiated. Mr. Dillard inquired what the percentage is of a project before being brought back to the Board of Directors. Mr. Thomas stated a project of this amount is anything over 10% which would have been \$40,700 and so it would have to come back to the Board.

After a brief discussion, it was the Board's consensus to address this after discussing in Executive Session. The Board members thanked Mr. Scott for his information and attending the meeting.

Mr. Thomas introduced Jeff Miller, the utility's new Water Treatment Plant Supervisor. Mr. Miller presented staff's request for FY23 Turbidimeter Upgrade.

The last two years, the Board has approved staff to upgrade six turbidimeters located at the Pony Creek Water Treatment Plant. Replacement is vital because of the need to move away from the now obsolete Hach 1720E to the newer Hach 5300sc series.

Staff has obtained current pricing for the FY 23 replacement of three turbidimeters in the amount of \$11,478. Parts and materials to connect and sync the new units are approximately \$2,900, totaling a cost of \$14,378. Staff budgeted \$14,000 for replacement of the meters in the FY 23 budget. Staff will use in house labor to install the new turbidity meters.

The Water Board maintains a contract with Hach for other instrumentation calibration and repair. Staff is recommending a sole source purchase for the turbidimeters to keep continuity of instrumentation program at the plant. Mr. Dillard asked how this price compared to last year. Mr. Thomas stated it was comparable. After a brief discussion, Dr. Sharps moved to authorize a sole source purchase for three Hach TU5300sc turbidimeters,

parts, and materials in the amount of \$14,378. The motion was seconded by Mr. Solarz and passed unanimously.

Regarding purchase of Springbrook Interactive Voice Response Outbound and update in Shut-off notification methods, Customer Relations Supervisor Bryan Tichota stated this is a system he has been looking at for several years, and has been looking for the right opportunity, after doing the system software upgrades, to include the IVR Outbound. Currently doorhangers are delivered by hand. The Water Board delivers on average of 566 shut off notices per month. Cost of delivery has risen over the past few years from \$8 to \$12 per notification. With rising cost, staff have researched alternate ways to deliver notification to customers who are eligible for shut off notification.

The utility is currently using the IVR which is the customer interactive credit card payment system that has worked great. The IVR Outbound is the other half of this. This is a notification system which is integrated into as part of Springbrook. This would allow staff to send the notifications out doing a robo call, text message, phone call, email. CSR's have been working diligently to document a phone number and email address for each customer.

Mr. Solarz asked when a customer needs to be contacted will they be contacted only one way or also by a phone call and text. Mr. Tichota stated it would be best to have all three available to contact the customer to show due diligence in the utility's effort of notification. Each contact in this package is approximately thirty four cents.

Mr. Solarz asked if a door hanger would still be used. Mr. Thomas stated just for the first three months, but after that the door hanger would not be used.

Since the Water Board is already a Springbrook customer, the IVR can fit into the Water Board utility billing operation seamlessly and securely. IVR messages come in blocks and roll over to the next contract period if messages are not utilized. Staff estimates approximately 20,000 messages annually. Springbrook offers a block of 20,000 messages at a cost of \$7,260.

Staff will primarily use the IVR for pre shut off for non-pay notifications. Using the IVR for this purpose would save \$2 per shut off notification. This method of notification will save an average of 2.75 staff hours per day and 13 miles per day spent for delivery of door hangers.

Staff plans to begin IVR notifications in February or March 2023. Staff will utilize both door hanger and IVR notification methods for a period of 3 months while phase out of the door hanger occurs. During this time, staff will notify customers of the phase out on water bills, delivered cut off notices, past due notices, Water Board web site, press releases, City Facebook, and in person at the Water Board Service Center.

Recent feedback received from the Public Utilities Commission asked the Water Board to consider moving from a 24-hour to a 48-hour shut off for non-pay notification. This change can take place with the implementation of IVR (approximately May or June 2023). The amount of \$8,000 is included in fiscal year 2023 budget for an IVR system.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Solarz moved to authorize the General Manager to purchase the Springbrook IVR Outbound services for \$7,260 and accept the proposed changes in methodology to shut off notifications. The motion was seconded by Dr. Sharps and passed unanimously.

Mr. Thomas presented staff's request for Solicitation of Quotes for Installation of Automated Meters. Over the last two years, the Water Board has implemented a meter replacement program to replace aging infrastructure that has reached or exceeded its maximum life expectancy. The Water Board chose to implement installation of automated meter reads (AMR) to increase workload efficiencies of meter reading. The first 960 meters installed are working appropriately and an additional 1,250 are in stock, ready for installation.

Staff planned and budgeted monies in the FY 2023 budget to hire temporary staffing or contract for meter installation services. After consideration of current staffing levels, staff concluded installation of meters by contractor to be more efficient for this group of 1,250 meters.

Currently, there is \$216,000 in the meter replacement fund that is unallocated. Estimates for contract installation of meters are approximately \$50 per meter or \$60,000 - \$75,000 total dependent on the final scope of work. Staff anticipates a contractor can install the meters in approximately 3 – 4 weeks versus 3 – 4 months with temporary staffing. The total estimates for temporary staffing are \$35,000 - \$45,000.

Dr. Sharps commented he is disappointed staff wouldn't be doing the installation. Mr. Thomas stated the one thing that impressed staff about the contractor portion of this, which is not quite double the cost but it is more than double the efficiency, is the time it takes for the contractor to install all the meters.

After a brief discussion, Dr. Sharps moved to approve the solicitation of quotes from qualified contractors to install 1,250 water meters and AMR units and bring back to the Board for award of the contract to the lowest responsible bidder. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed unanimously.

Updates were given as follows:

- Tank cleaning and diving: Advanced Divers were here from Washington and they came in and cleaned the 9 million gallon tank, cleaned the chlorine contact basin, high level tank, and the low lift sump at the Treatment Plant. They also dove at the intakes of Merritt Dam and Pony Creek Dam to make sure there were no obstructions to the intakes and those were clear. Advanced Divers will provide a report and videos. They did not find anything out of the ordinary.

Mr. Charles Couture was present as a representative of the Shorewood neighborhood and states the Water Board needs to address the water quality and pressure of the homes at higher elevations, and added he knows there are 5 customers with low pressure. Mr. Thomas stated the Water Board is meeting all standards which are set by the Oregon Health Authority.

Mr. Couture previously attended a Board meeting on November 17, 2022 and stated he had spoke with Mr. Foroudi (who lives in the Shorewood neighborhood) and Mr. Foroudi's filters were full of sand. Two Board members met with Mr. Foroudi to discuss his issue, and staff has spent many hours testing.

Mr. Thomas stated on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Water Board staff cleaned the Shorewood tank and got some sediment from the bottom of the tank, which is expected. The tank looks really clean. There was very little sediment, actually it was hard to get a sample of sediment out of the tank. The sample was sent off to a third-party lab for testing. The reason we took this approach was because we are testing for the entire Shorewood neighborhood, not just for one customer. Mr. Thomas commented this should suffice based on the information we have to date. The test that is being ran is a well water test. They do not make a test for municipal water systems of this nature so we are going to test for the 35 most common metals and nutrients in water. In addition, staff also got a sample of water from the sample station which is right beside the Shorewood tank and the same test will be ran.

Mr. Thomas asked Mr. Couture if there was a large enough of an issue for the people of Shorewood to form a group and acquire funds needed to make improvements that are above and beyond what the Oregon Health Authority requires. Mr. Couture answered that his home was fine and did not have pressure issues or water quality issues. Mr. Thomas stated that if the Water Board increases the pressure in the Shorewood distribution system, then the system will need to be re-engineered and will include large engineering and infrastructure costs. At this time it is not necessary, when the Water Board can individually address any customers who want service above and beyond what the Oregon Health Authority requires. Mr. Thomas stated he spoke with two customers in the same row of homes on Hillcrest Lane this past week, and asked them if the Water Board offered assistance for private side pressure upgrades, would they be interested in paying the Water Board back over time for those upgrades? The answers he received were "no".

Mr. Thomas summarized in saying that if the people in the Shorewood community wish to split up the costs and pay for improvements that are above and beyond the requirements of Oregon Health Authority standards, then the Water Board may be willing to assist.

Mr. Thomas commented any time a customer has a problem or question, the Water Board will work with them individually, and they are always encouraged to contact staff at the Water Board.

The Board's next regular meeting was set for Thursday, January 5, 2023, at 7:00 a.m.

At 8:00 a.m. Chair Dillard directed they go into executive session for the purposes of discussing potential litigation pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(h) and personnel issues pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(a). They returned to open session at 8:15 a.m.

Mr. Solarz moved to authorize the General Manager to negotiate a change to the contract with Mason, Bruce & Girard up to the limits of his contracting authority. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matthews and passed with Mr. Dillard opposing.

There being no other business to come before the Board, Chair Dillard adjourned the meeting at 8:17 a.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Dillard, Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_