

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

Minutes  
Regular Board Meeting

September 3, 2020  
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 Solarz presiding. Other Board members present: Bob Dillard, Melissa Cribbins and Dr. Charles Sharps. Water Board staff present: Ivan D. Thomas, General Manager; Jeff Page, Operations Manager; Matt Whitty, Engineering Manager; Karen Parker, Administrative Assistant; Board Legal Counsel Jim Coffey was present. Janet Riley of Comp-u-Talk was present. Media present: None. Chair Solarz opened the meeting at 7:00 a.m. and asked Dr. Sharps to lead the Board and assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Solarz asked if there were any corrections or additions to the August 20, 2020, Regular Board meeting minutes. Mr. Solarz noted a correction needed in the first paragraph changing Chair Dillard to Chair Solarz. Dr. Sharps moved the minutes be approved as corrected. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dillard and passed unanimously.

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

At 7:04 a.m. Chair Solarz directed they go into executive session for the purposes of discussing information of programs relating to security pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(n)(E). They returned to open session at 7:28 a.m.

Regarding proposed Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Professional Services for development of a Water Master Plan, Mr. Thomas stated the Water Board currently operates under a Water Master Plan that was submitted to the Oregon Health Authority on February 22, 2012. This Water Master Plan consists of the compilation of six prepared documents dating back to 1996 as follows:

- Water Management and Conservation Plan – 2011
- Distribution System Rehab and Replacement Financial Strategy – 2012
- Water Distribution System Hydraulic Study – 1996
- Distribution System Condition Assessment and Replacement Plan – 2012
- Pony Creek Treatment Plant Expansion Project- Concept Design Report – 2010
- The Water Board's Annual Report and program budget dating back to 2011.

Staff has prepared a draft of a Request for Qualification for Master Planning Services and proposes to advertise to contract with a qualified consultant to do master planning for the Water Board. Mr. Coffey has reviewed the RFQ and his comments have been incorporated within the document. Mr. Thomas stated the importance of having a comprehensive master plan rather than having it spread out over several years. While some of these documents prepared for prior planning efforts are still very relevant, the Water Distribution System Hydraulic Study is in dire need of an update.

A new hydraulic study would also allow completion of a computerized water system hydraulic model for future planning purposes. In addition, it would be a goal to complete a Water Master Plan that is a single point of reference for capital improvement projects and planning purposes over the next 10-20 years.

It is staff's desire to enter into a professional services contract with a qualified firm who can demonstrate competency and experience in Water Master Planning including but not limited to water quality evaluations, water supply, water treatment, and water distribution planning, hydraulic modeling, development of capital improvement planning, risk assessment and seismic resiliency.

This is a Qualification Based Selection (QBS) Request for Qualifications (RFQ). This RFQ process will be used to select the most qualified firm or individual. Price, hourly rates, pricing policies and number of hours proposed, and/or overhead will be negotiated per the Water Board's Public Contracting Rules.

Dr. Sharps commented the RFQ was very lengthy and questioned if it needed to be so extensive. Mr. Thomas stated it could be less extensive however staff chose to be more specific and give detailed coverage to the scope of work. Mr. Thomas received feedback from some firms on the RFQ, as well as from Mr. Coffey. Mr. Coffey stated when the new law went into effect for public contracting when requesting services from an engineer in an amount over \$100,000 you must request qualifications first.

Mr. Solarz questioned why water quality evaluation is included when the Water Board has gone through a tremendous upgrade. Mr. Thomas stated this is not just water quality from the treatment plant, but may also be out in the water distribution system if problems arise.

Dr. Sharps asked what staff estimates the cost will be for these services. The initial estimate was between \$250,000 and \$300,000. Mr. Thomas stated it is included in the current fiscal year's budget in the amount of \$284,000. The cost could increase depending on determination of the scope of work, and it could also go into another budget year. Staff will know more once negotiations are made with a qualified firm.

Motion was made by Dr. Sharps authorizing staff to advertise the Request for Qualifications for a Water Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cribbins and passed unanimously.

Mr. Thomas gave an update regarding revenue stating from April through August 2020 the utility is down by approximately \$97,000. The month of August brought in \$84,000 more compared to last August but this may be misinforming because Bandon Pacific Seafood used a large quantity of water in July and made their payment in August.

Ms. Cribbins asked if the majority of delinquent accounts are residential. Mr. Thomas confirmed this. There are 696 customers that are past due more than 60 days which normally would be entered into the collection process. Out of the 696 customers that are past due, approximately 32 of those customers owe more than \$1,000. The last report in June there were 29 customers owing more than \$1,000.

Regarding enforcement of future collection activities, Mr. Thomas stated some other utilities are making a payment plan for their delinquent customers, and as long as they keep current with their water bill, they would not be shut off. Letters were sent out to past due customers and calls were made to those who owed more than \$1,000 which resulted in getting some back payments in the door. Ms. Cribbins asked what percentage of customers paid. Mr. Thomas said about one-third of the customers made payments. Staff has been discussing enforcement of collection activities to begin on October 1<sup>st</sup> and Mr. Thomas asked the Board for feedback on this issue.

Dr. Sharps said he feels collection activities should commence soon. Mr. Thomas stated if the Board agreed to enforce collection activities as of October 1<sup>st</sup>, this would give staff time to get notification out to delinquent customers. Staff's recommendation would be to only cut off a customer who has not made a payment plan or paid in full, and to waive cut off fees and notice fees through December 31, 2020. Mr. Thomas said he will be speaking with Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA) regarding the Water Board sending them any customers with certain issues who are not able to pay, and ask ORCCA to meet with the customer regarding relief funding, and then send the customer back to the Water Board with funds for payment.

It was the Board's consensus for staff to notify delinquent customers that enforcement of collection activities will begin October 1, 2020 and they need to communicate with staff to make a payment plan.

Mr. Solarz asked if staff has an expense curtailment plan due to the fact revenues are down. Mr. Thomas stated there are \$1.9 million in active capital funds (spent on capital projects) which should increase throughout the year, and \$1.5 million in restricted reserves. Staff can make adjustments postponing certain projects, two positions will not be filled (meter reader and a distribution position) and keep spending to a minimum. After a brief discussion, motion was made by Ms. Cribbins authorizing staff to commence collection activities as of October 1, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dillard and passed unanimously.

The Board's next regular meeting was set for Thursday, September 17, 2020, at 7:00 a.m.

Updates were given as follows:

- FY 2020 Financial Audit – Consultant will be on site soon to begin audit
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street Main Replacement – The new water main is installed and tied in, samples have been taken and waiting for results.
- Siren Test – A test of the Pony Creek Dam Warning System will take place on Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Press releases will be sent out. Public safety and medical facilities will be notified.
- Flanagan Pump Station – All parts have been received and will be scheduled to begin in September.
- McDaniel Street Water Main Replacement – A request for quotes has been drafted and will be sent out next week.

At 8:15 a.m. Chair Solarz 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 8:31 a.m.

There being no other business to come before the Board, Chair Solarz adjourned the meeting at 8:31 a.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_, 2020

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Greg Solarz

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