



Board of Directors Special Meeting

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
190009 E 47th Avenue, Kennewick, WA 99337

Minutes

President Huffman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and Mr. Freeman called roll.

Directors Present:

Gene Huffman, President
David McKenzie, Vice President
Kirk Rathbun
Arland Ward
Griffin Hanberg

Staff Present:

Charles Freeman, District Manager
Stuart Dezember, Comptroller/Treasurer
Jason McShane, Engineering/Operations Manager
Dana Hernandez, Customer Service Supervisor
Melissa Olheiser, Accounting Supervisor
Ben Woodard, Assistant Engineering/Ops Manager
Lori Gibson, Engineering/Ops Executive Assistant
Matt Berglund, Public Relations Coordinator
Doris Rakowski, Executive Assistant

Other Persons Present:

John Crotty, Western Legal

CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA: Vice President McKenzie moved to confirm the agenda. Director Ward seconded. The motion carried.

WORKSHOP:

Department Head Reports:

Finance: Mr. Dezember reported regarding:

- Opportunities for Finance to integrate better with other departments. Past practices and procedures. Interdepartmental collaboration and communications. Taking on tasks currently done by other departments that would be better done by Finance.
- Challenge: Better notifications and communications with customers, including billing and foreclosure communications.

Land and Water Resources: On behalf of Mr. Defoe, Mr. Freeman reported regarding:

- Future of realty
- IT workload and staffing levels
- Challenge: Improvements to Start-up/Outage map

Engineering and Operations: Mr. McShane reported regarding:

- Challenges: Maintenance management program for infrastructure. TruePoint was good for customer and emergency response tracking, but not preventative maintenance planning. He said a new program would require upfront, set up, and maintenance costs, but would improve service and reduce running to failure.
- Challenge: Direct supervision in Operations.
- Engineering staffing increased in last year and operating well.

Discussion ensued regarding Operations supervision, combined with a computer program to facilitate preventative maintenance scheduling.

President Huffman said a person was needed to be accountable for running the program and Mr. Freeman said he planned to rewrite a job description, then hire an Operations Manager. This would be a high-level exempt administrator to manage projects and people and be accountable to implement such a program. This person would be outside of the physical work, hold staff and leads accountable, address issues as they happened, and deal with policy.

Organizational history of the Operations and Engineering departments and what was needed from an Operations Manager was discussed.

Outsourcing some maintenance tasks, such as grounds maintenance, was discussed.

Customer Service: Ms. Hernandez referred to a handout “Top 5 PSAs from 2012-2022” and reported regarding:

- Outage Trends for last 10 years
- PSA 176 (Hanson Park) had the most activity
- Twenty-two mainline repairs
- Date did not represent calls, which were not tracked by issue. After a service order was created for an issue, additional calls on the same issue were not tracked.
- Customer Service Specialists all say mainline outages generate the most calls.

Hansen Park challenges from 2000 to present were discussed, including method, type, and quality of construction over time, and pressure issues.

The possibility of tracking calls to the map in the future was discussed.

Valve replacement was discussed, including valve position at freezing. Three-way ball valves were better than gate valves. KID had been trying to replace all valves in the worst places, then switched focus to pipeline replacement with underground valves.

When and whether to bill owners for damage they cause to risers was discussed. The most common homeowner damage was from dogs tied to risers, mower damage, and fence building.

Vice President McKenzie said in his private line area, if a cause of damage was unknown, the group shared repair costs, but if one person caused the damage that person paid for the repair.

The current practice of field crews noting causes when known in TruePoint was discussed.

Recent damage caused by Ziply fiber installation was discussed. Mr. Woodard said repair cost averaged from \$2,400 to \$3,000.

Phone system challenges were discussed. Ms. Hernandez confirmed that Vocantas runs the customer service IVR line and Mitel runs the business line. She said Vocantas and Mitel did not work well together. Calls could not be transferred from the IVR system to voice mail, and Vocantas said from the beginning that they could not provide voicemail.

Mr. McShane clarified that Mitel was the VOIP service provider and Vocantas was integrated on top of that. An update had been requested. He noted that Vocantas had been bought out and wondered if the new company could facilitate integrating the levels.

Electronic billing was discussed. Mr. Crotty said a signed acknowledgement that the customer wanted electronic billing was needed and a hand signature was preferable.

Ms. Gibson noted that electronic bills were riskier as the customer had to go look for their bill.

Ms. Hernandez said there had been about 100 to 200 requests for electronic billing.

Ms. Hernandez spoke about processing return mail to update addresses and remail. Mr. Freeman suggested the Finance Committee discuss whether to charge for address updates. Ms.

Hernandez said information from the County was not always accurate and homeowners should not be billed for County errors.

Ms. Hernandez reported level of service issues from March to May since customer service lost its fourth position. Calls in April experienced long holds and were not always answered. Overflow calls could not be transferred to the answering service; it had to be all calls transferred or none. She said Mr. Crawford thought transfers might be possible after an upgrade. Discussion followed.

Automatic payments from bank accounts were briefly discussed.

Executive: Mr. Freeman introduced the topic of level of service.

Mr. McShane spoke about outage notifications as piloted with the Red Mountain service area. E-blasts, sent by Mr. Berglund notify customers of scheduled outages expected to last for more than 48 hours, letting customers know what happened and the plan to get water back on.

Ms. Olheiser asked if that could be integrated with the GIS map and was told it could not be done at this point as KID had an extremely complicated system.

Communicating with customers regarding timing of yearly water startup was discussed, as well as educating the public about how water gets from the river to customers. It was noted that Mr. Berglund works on this through social media.

Also discussed were factors determining when conditions require hiring help from contractors, such as farmers' varying needs for startup dates based on weather conditions. Mr. McShane noted that KID declared an emergency on May 13th this year.

Ms. Gibson asked that staff be provided a script for communicating with customers.

Mr. McShane said operational testing allowed some areas to be started earlier. He said the inline reservoir would alleviate some of this challenge.

Ms. Hernandez reported that customer had issues when the startup date on the map was missed.

Ms. Gibson suggested eblasts when systems came up might reduce some calls.

Testing capacity of inline storage in different areas of the district was discussed. It was noted there was no in town storage in areas such as Edison Street and its laterals. There needed to be enough water to adequately flush an area, then test.

At 10:43 a.m. President Huffman called a break. The meeting resumed at 10:55 a.m.

Mr. McShane displayed "Drought Schedule".

Mr. Freeman reported about Chandler automation. Previously, KID offered to pay for additional USBR staffing. A lot of water was lost in 2015 because USBR did not adjust the gates. Automation should have fixed that and calling on storage was the next option. KID has ability to take excess flows in its contract.

Mr. McShane displayed "KID Drought Condition Levels" and "2015 Revised Watering Schedule". He spoke about previous practices and challenges addressed, for example noting in TruePoint individualized schedules for people unable to use scheduled time slots. Scheduling resulted in leveling off peaks and dips to reduce spill and reduce instantaneous needs from the river (demand

side management). He discussed of inverse relationship of demand to strictness of watering window – with short watering times people felt they needed to water more to not lose out.

In 2015, KID asked big agricultural users to allow KID to use their storage. The storage was drawn down and refilled. Large users were off when the river was down, providing a buffer.

Recapture wells were added after 2015. The program is on hold until State ground water studies show what the district can draw. Cost was about \$1 million for approximately 3 CFS, not including power and maintenance costs. It was not a lot of water for the cost at about 6 AF per day.

Mr. McShane displayed a graph from June to the end of 2015. He explained that we learned in 2015 that KID had the ability to call on storage, then run with the river after exhausting storage.

Mr. McShane said next drought graph would be different. As the Integrated Plan is implemented, base flows from the river will continue to drop. More storage or production would be needed.

Mr. McShane displayed a graph of pro-rated percentages for KID and spoke about target flows. He said automation allowed KID to take flows over target flows outside business hours and was likely to continue to benefit KID.

Mr. McShane spoke about district storage increases. He said KID storage was now at about 120 to 145 AF, both off-channel and inline. Lining was doubling district-wide storage.

In response to a question from Director Rathbun, Mr. McShane spoke about use of gates for more storage. He said \$100,000 for a gate was a cheaper option than tanks at about \$6/gallon. He said permanent gates were often better than temporary gates.

Mr. McShane spoke about 2015 drought mitigation drought projects of which a handful remained. He said Cherryhill West pump consolidation was a drought project.

Mr. McShane said KID spent close to \$22 million on drought mitigation since 2015. He spoke about the importance of storage to collect water during off peak times. He said central storage could not be refilled during the year while using it and must be refilled during the off season.

At 11:35 a.m. President Huffman announced a break and at 12:30 p.m. open session resumed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: On behalf of the presiding officer, Mr. Freeman announced that the board would go into executive session for two hours to discuss with legal counsel potential litigation, in the form of litigation or legal risks of a proposed action or current practice pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)(iii).

At 2:33 p.m., the meeting returned to open session.

Director Rathbun moved to adjourn. Director Ward seconded. The motion carried.

Attest:

Witness:



Gene Huffman, Board President
Minutes approved August 12, 2022



Charles Freeman, Board Secretary

Prepared by Doris Rakowski