



## M I N U T E S

A regular meeting of the Sunrise Water Authority Board of Commissioners was held on **Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.** The meeting was held remotely, by teleconference through WebEx.

**Board Present:** Chris Hawes, Chair; Andy Coate, Vice Chair; Kevin Bailey, Secretary; Wayne Barstow; Gary Barth; Kevin O'Meara

**Board Absent:** none

**Staff Present:** Wade Hathhorn, General Manager; Kim Anderson, Government Relations Manager; Tim Janssen, Engineering Manager; Christin House, Customer Service Manager; Denise Bergstrom, Finance Director; Cindy Wolff, Administrative Assistant

**Visitors Present:** Sherry French, CRW Board; Paul Gornick, OLWSD; Laural Casey, OLWSD District Recorder

### **CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER**

Hawes called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

Wolff performed roll call. All commissioners were present.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Barth made a motion to approve the agenda and Bailey seconded. Wolff performed a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

### **ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE FOR KEVIN O'MEARA**

O'Meara read the oath of office into the record.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS & LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS**

Hawes explained that Chair Ernie Platt had passed away since the last meeting and best practice would be to hold elections for a new Board Chair.

Barstow made a motion for Hawes as Chair and Bailey seconded. Wolff performed a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Hawes explained that now that he is no longer the Vice Chair, there is a need to fill that seat as well. Bailey nominated Coate for Vice Chair and Barstow seconded. Wolff performed a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Hawes noted that Platt left vacancies for several liaison assignments, but given the current COVID pandemic, no one is going to meetings and the vacancies can be addressed at a later time. He added that Platt left vacancies on two Boards that require voting representation, CRWSC and NCCWC, and that those should be filled especially in light of it being budget season.

Hawes explained that NCCWC meets the following night and he and Coate have been alternates to that Board. Hawes said he'd like to fill the vacancy and have Barstow step in as an alternate in his place. He called on each commissioner for comments, there were none. Barth made a motion for Hawes to fill the vacancy on the NCCWC Board and Barstow to be added as an alternate. Bailey seconded the motion. Wolff performed a roll call vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Hawes described the CRWSC and its quarterly meeting schedule. He suggested Barstow fill the vacancy on the CRWSC Board and Coate serve as alternate. Bailey made a motion for Barstow to serve on the CRWSC Board and Coate to serve as alternate. Barstow seconded the motion. Wolff performed a roll call vote and the motion carried unanimously.

## **1. CONSENT AGENDA**

Hawes asked if there was any discussion about any item and called on each commissioner for an opportunity to speak. There were no comments. Barth made a motion to approve the consent agenda consisting of the items listed below, and Coate seconded. Wolff performed a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

- 1.1 Approval of Minutes
- 1.2 Appointment of Budget Committee Member
- 1.3 Acceptance of Water Mains and Related Facilities for Deer Ridge Subdivision
- 1.4 Award Contract for Highway 212 8-inch Main Abandonment Asphalt Restoration
- 1.5 Financial Statements

## **2. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **2.1 Adopt Resolution 2020-03, Establishing Emergency Authorities**

Hathhorn explained that this resolution would provide a process for declaring a state of emergency and allow the agency to take certain action. Hathhorn gave each commissioner an opportunity to ask questions or make comment. O'Meara asked what would happen if the current state of emergency extended beyond April 14. Hathhorn said it could be extended. Bailey commented that it reads well. Coate commented that it was direct and well defined.

Bailey made a motion to adopt Resolution 2020-03, Establishing Emergency Authorities, and Barstow seconded. Wolff performed a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

### **2.2 Adopt Resolution 2020-04, Declaring an Emergency**

Hathhorn stated that now that the Board had adopted a resolution to establish emergency preparedness procedures, it now has the authority to declare an emergency through separate resolution. He commented that the Board could make amendments to the dates outlined in the resolution, or they could be re-evaluated at future meetings as necessary. He added that special weekly or biweekly meetings may be necessary to address items that arise as part of this emergency.

It was noted that the "introduced and adopted this 17 day of March" language hadn't been changed from the sample that was used to create the resolution. Hathhorn commented that the Board could entertain a motion to extend the declaration through the end of April rather than the April 14 date provided in the resolution. Barth asked if it could be left in effect until the Board revokes it. Hathhorn said yes. Bailey agreed with Barth's suggestion. Coate asked if Hathhorn would have the authority to revoke the emergency declaration if he wasn't able to get the full board together to vote on it. Hathhorn commented that he didn't believe he'd have the authority to do so without Board approval, so the Board may have to be more flexible.

Hathhorn provided each commissioner with an opportunity to comment. Barth suggested the resolution state that Hathhorn would convene the Board at the earliest opportunity to revoke the emergency declaration when it's no longer needed. O'Meara agreed. Hawes suggested changing section 5 to read "remains in effect until terminated by Board action."

Coate made a motion to adopt Resolution 2020-04, with the stated amendments, and Barth seconded the motion. Wolff performed a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Hathhorn commented that all approved documents from tonight's meeting would be sent out for Board signatures via DocuSign.

### **2.3 Temporary Suspension of Shutoffs and Managing Delinquent Accounts**

Hathhorn summarized the current processes and policies related to delinquent accounts and shutoffs and introduced House for questions from the Board. Coate commented that water is a valuable part of the sanitation process and shared his support for suspending shut-offs as long as the declaration of emergency is in effect.

House shared that the number of shut-offs were down to 3-5 since going to monthly billing and about a week after the "stay at home" messaging began due to COVID, they were up to about 20 or 25. Hawes suggested sending out a doorhanger along the lines of "given the circumstances, your water will be not shut off, but you need to contact the office to make a payment arrangement." House liked the idea. Coate asked if it would be possible to send something like a questionnaire or similar that would allow customers to indicate to staff that they're unable to pay their bill and staff can connect them with federal assistance. Hathhorn said it's unclear what funds will be available and he didn't know of any programs that currently exist for assistance with water bills.

Hawes said it sounded like the commissioners were in consensus about not turning off water during this crisis and asked if they'd be comfortable tasking House with preparing language around the idea of "you need to call us if you can't pay your bill." O'Meara agreed and added that it is likely to become a significant problem, though fortunately it isn't summer yet so hopefully that impact won't be as big. Bailey agreed that there needed to be some kind of process for notifying staff but the threat of a potential shut-off should remain in place so the leniency doesn't lead to abuse. Barstow, Barth, and Hawes shared their consensus.

Barth made a motion to temporarily suspend Sections 4, 5 and 7 of Policy 8-02, Late Payment and Turn Off Policy, until such time as the emergency declaration has ended. Bailey seconded the motion and Wolff performed a roll call vote. The motion carried unanimously.

## **3. STAFF REPORTS**

### **3.1 Manager's Update**

Hathhorn described the agency's response to the COVID-19 crisis, specifically noting the move to remote work and how the agency's process to moving to cloud-based software over the past five years has helped facilitate that.

House asked to move back to the last item for a point of clarification on whether late fees should be suspended. Hawes shared his preference for having fees accrue with the potential to waive them later. Coate commented that we agreed to not do shut-offs, we didn't agree not to charge late fees. Barth agreed, adding that the decision to waive fees can be made later, but that's the incentive for customers to call the office to make other arrangements. Hawes polled the Board. Barth, Coate and O'Meara agreed. Bailey agreed with the concept but expressed concern about how Sunrise would be perceived if it charges fees and other utilities do not. Barstow agreed to the idea of accruing fees and considering forgiveness of the fees when the customers call in to make arrangements. Hawes asked if House and Hathhorn had enough direction from the Board to figure it out from there. Hathhorn said yes and that no additional action was needed from the Board. Coate asked if staffing was adequate to handle those calls. Hathhorn said yes.

Hathhorn returned to discussing crisis response. He noted that the Board may have to meet weekly or biweekly and the Commissioners had spoken to Hawes and agreed to reserve Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. for meetings as needed until further notice.

Hathhorn explained that the architect interviews had been temporarily suspended, as had Bergstrom's work on procuring new banking services.

Hathhorn said that the rate hearing will be picked back up when the timing is appropriate and said that some commissioners had been asking about the impacts of putting it off. Hathhorn summarized that the proposed rate increase was centered on raising an additional million dollars of revenue and we will adjust operations to accommodate not having a rate increase at the present time. He noted that we are now doing just essential services and discretionary projects to maintain the integrity of the system and continue serving water to our customers.

Hathhorn explained that there are new rules arising regarding temporary leave in association with the COVID crisis and official guidance is forthcoming.

### **3.2 Engineering & Construction Reports**

Hawes asked if anyone had comments and gave a short time to respond. No one responded.

### **3.3 Operational Reports**

## **4. BOARD BUSINESS**

### **4.1 Board Calendar**

Hawes asked if anyone had comments and gave a short time to respond. No one responded.

### **4.2 Liaison Reports**

Commissioners provided updates from the meetings of other agencies that they attended.

### **4.3 Information Items**

French commented that CRW's meetings would be remote until further notice.

### **4.4 Future Agenda Items**

Hathhorn discussed Ernie Platt's passing. Hawes commented that Platt was proud of this Board and this organization and it's a testament to Platt how well the organization has functioned in this crisis.

Hawes adjourned the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

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CHRIS HAWES, CHAIR

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KEVIN BAILEY, SECRETARY