

CANEBRAKE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, September 14, 2024
Minutes

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Canebrake County Water District was called to order by President Jerry Bucheit at 9:00 am in McKenney Hall. Please see Attachment 1 for the meeting Agenda.

ROLL CALL: Bucheit called the roll with Daryl Holmes Jr., Robert Mooney, Gunnar Ramstrum and Ellyn Hae in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Bucheit led the Pledge of Allegiance.

WELCOMING OF GUESTS: Guests in attendance at the meeting were: Chris MacDonald, Marsha Campbell, Bill Dimmock, Dave Maler

DEAN KUNS RETIREMENT

Announced the retirement of Dean Kuns. He has been paid through August 2024. Bucheit thanked Dean for his service to the community and water district. He has been a hardworking, careful individual. He saved us numerous times when we had issues with the water system. Mooney has met a many people through the years. Wanted to say that Dean has been a sterling, outstanding, always there no matter what time of the day it was wonderful man. Hae echoed Bucheit and Mooney saying it was an honor to work with him and hopes that we can do something to honor him. Bucheit asked to work on this with the community at the next CIA meeting to develop a fund. The CCWD will also contribute.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES JUNE 8TH, 2024

Motion to approve minutes: Hae: Second: Holmes: Minutes are unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT (6.08.24 meeting)

Failed to approve financial report in previous meeting. Motion to approve financial report: Hae: Second: Holmes: Report is unanimously approved.

PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT:

Ramstrum presented the Canebrake financial reporting for the period (Attachment 2). Ramstrum covered the financial dashboard and check register. Asks if we need to keep receipts when using CCWD credit card. Hae answers, yes. We keep the receipts in case of audit. Ramstrum reviews the attached documents for year-end close. We are down \$66K from last year. Audit has started. Ramstrum recommends we move the remaining \$7,000 from the Price account to minimize bank charges. Bank tried to charge and Ramstrum followed up and received a credit for the charges. Since it is a checking account, not generating revenue, combining the funds will decrease the bank sneakiness and minimize Treasurer workload. Will create a spreadsheet to track the usage of the \$7,000 to ensure it is used within the parameters of the Price gift and report back to the board.

Hae moves to move Priceline funds to Chase bank account. Holmes seconds. Motion carries.

Bookkeeper needs access to the transactions for the audit. Currently, must contact the Treasurer who then provides the information. The treasurer would like to provide them read only access to the account. Bookkeeper George Beck asked to allow access for both Christopher Beck and Debra Munsie.

Hae moves to allow Christopher Beck and Debra Munsie of Small Business Services read only access to Chase checking account. Holmes seconds. Passes unanimously.

Discussion of Property Equipment fee to owners. All agree we need to increase rate.

Ramstrum identified an institution that will assist with leak detection and grant writing. Name is Michael Sims. He is interested in coming out in September.

Ramstrum contacted two customers with balances over 90 days. Attachment 2 also includes how money was spent in the last year. Equates to a project once every two weeks. Bucheit thanks Ramstrum, the board, and volunteers for the great work conducted.

Ramstrum also calculated the number of miles of driving from the wells to the tank over time. The number of miles equates to driving around the earth three times. This ceases with the automated pumping system.

Motion to approve financial report: Hae: Second: Holmes: Report is unanimously approved.

GOVERNMENT FORMS AND CORRESPONDENCE (BUCHHEIT):

Bucheit states that the SDRMA insurance has increased from \$6,000 to \$6,621 due to adding two new pieces of equipment.

SDGE Bill: Estimated true up

Community Center \$31

Mooney Well \$59

EQUIPMENT REPORT:

Daryl Holmes Jr. presented the Equipment Report (Attachment 3).

Mooney asks for a small part repair on the Golf Cart.

Will fire up the backup generator in the next couple weeks. Would like to hook up to building the Travis Harr, Bill Dimmock and will ask Kathy Steuermann to participate and write up a SOP of how to hook it up in case of emergency.

Excavator is working well. Chris MacDonald has been very helpful in operating the equipment.

Wants to figure out the column issue on the Ford Ranger.

Track Steer is running great. Holmes washed and checked filters. Had a recall and software update. Hawthorne sent a representative and Chris MacDonald met to perform the update. We are at 50 hours now. At 500 hours both tractors will require a service for both tractors estimated at approximately \$3,000.

Holmes indicated that Chris MacDonald is proficient in operation of the excavator. He is picking up boulders. Round of applause. Noted that Mr. Kelly is available to work if we need equipment and an operator. He charges \$150/hr. and \$300 fee for moving the equipment. Discussion of covering Priceline. Yes we can, in the future is the consensus. Holmes will get bid from Kelly on cost to cover the line.

Holmes ended his report by saying after being out here 10 or 11 times this summer he thinks the most important issue is to protect the Priceline. Chris MacDonald adds regarding the Priceline going around boulders is creating a "stress loop" which is beneficial to the line. You will see stress loops on Navy ships and geothermal plants.

Bucheit thanks MacDonald and agrees saying we hired an engineering firm which determined where stress loops were added to the line.

Bucheit contacted SC Fuels and they will deliver diesel fuel to fill our 50-gallon tank in Canebrake. Bucheit and Holmes will have updated fuel cards. Will call and ask for a fill and identify what the cost will be.

Also, Bucheit and Holmes will have updated fuel cards that will allow them to purchase fuel. Have seven, five-gallon gasoline tanks for the water manager truck.

Holmes will create a project log. One is for CCWD projects, and one is for homeowner property work. Attachment 4 is what serves as the current project log.

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS/ WATER DELIVERY INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE:

Bucheit presented the report covering the period June 8th, 2024 – September 14th, 2024 (Attachment 5).

Bucheit and Ramstrum speak to the need for people to submit the watering form because Bucheit spent hours looking for a leak that didn't exist. It was not a line leak, a customer let a hose run all night. It costs the district time looking for leaks when there isn't one.

Holmes speaks to the leak of all time. It was a 3-inch coupler hooked into Priceline. Lesson learned: if any PVC is faded, we will throw away and use new Romac only. The leak of all time was 550 gallon per 2 hours.

Discussion of repair of the leak of all time. Ramstrum thinks that the leak occurred due to geo-spatial shifting. He doesn't think it was just the coupling, there was no mobility. Have to make sure the thrust block has give. Thinks it was a threefold problem: bad plastic/bad coupling, 90-degree angle and bad thrust block. Dimmock does see this set up in the field, it is good practice, but do we need it? Maybe not. Since we do not have the water volume.

Types of Hired Help (Employee, Independent Contractor)

Bucheit presents the difference between an independent contractor (more than \$600, W-9, 1099) and employee (W-4, payroll taxes, worker's compensation, W-2).

Options:

1. Hire independent contractor
2. Hire part time employee
3. Hire part time employee to become water manager

Board member Reimbursement

Issue at Holmes house on 270 Smoketree Lane. The line had numerous breaks and Holmes agreed to unhook the water. After two months of no water, Holmes identified a worker Roberto Muñoz (worked at Hae's, Ackey's, Nellie's). Bucheit consented to use him as an independent contractor, Holmes and Muñoz completed the work. Bucheit arrived at 2:30 pm to complete W-9 and pay Muñoz, but Holmes had already paid \$250 in cash, and Muñoz was gone.

Mooney makes a motion to reimburse Holmes for \$250 paid to Roberto Muñoz. Hae seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Hire Part-time Worker

Holmes commends Muñoz for the work that he did and asked him if he was available for part time work. Muñoz indicated that he was available for one week per month. He is a US citizen, has a SS card, lives in Shelter Valley. He works one week at Stagecoach, he is willing to give that up. He will charge \$40 per hour if taxes are withdrawn.

Five-minute recess.

Dave Maler asks do you want to hire a part time employee at \$40/hour instead of a professional? Hae responds, yes. It is a good deal, and we need help. Sexton charges \$110/hour. He will be an employee, and we will direct him and work with him.

Ramstrum reads the bylaws that we have the right to hire employees. He points out that it will be a part-time employee. He will not be a salaried employee. We can use him for 62 days and be within Dean's salary. We will try him out on various jobs and see how it works. We are going to start with him digging holes. Ramstrum wants to underscore that we need help. We thought Dean would be healthy until March. Two people almost died this summer, Mr. Kunz had a stroke and Mr. Ackey had a significant laceration. Three other people had sun stroke numerous times. We need help. This is so important. Number one is people.

Bucheit states that if Holmes and Ramstrum have interviewed him and want to hire him, then he is hired.

Mooney states he wants other people as part time people. Others agree.

Marcia Campbell asks what kind of guarantees we can give him? Holmes responds we will try one week per month.

Bill Dimmock thinks he will be here full-time once people hear about him.

Bucheit will meet, provide him with paperwork and hire him when the paperwork comes back.

Ramstrum reminds that we need to contact State Fund to let them know that we are changing employees and will have a \$20,000 limit.

Electric Upgrades

Travis Harr will conduct the work as identified in Table 1. Holmes indicated that we are getting a super great rate. Ramstrum notes that we need to add a piece of equipment to minimize solar flares. Also need a briefing the hardware he will obtain and why.

Table 1: Travis Harr to offer electrician services

Replace Community Center Fuse Box labor \$500, estimate hardware \$800 to 1200

In place of some tractor work at his house, free electrician services to:

- Redo Peterson Fuse box to safe standards
- Redo Mooney Fuse box to safe standards
- Upgrade Hut lighting to safe standards
- Install Mooney WIFI electronics for pump

Hae moves to approve \$500 labor to conduct those items listed in Table 1 above.

Holmes seconds. Motion carries.

Water District Season Projects 2024-2025/ Special System Valves

Attachment 6 presents the history of leaks in our water district and a summary of season projects. We saw seven leaks this summer alone. Holmes indicates that the one thing that fails the most in the poly line are the compression fittings. He had five in the line near his home alone.

Bucheit suggests that we start with eliminating the poly on Smoketree Lane using a 2" PVC feeder line off the main. Another issue is pressure. We have explosive pressure surges because there is air in the line. Will add air release valves eliminating any more

breaks/shakes as air will be released. Ramstrum discussed our map with an engineer at the air release valve company and they identified six locations to site the valves.

Vacuum breaker valves. We need air in the system when there is a lot of flow. This happens when we are pulling the water down as we need more air into the line otherwise it drops to a negative pressure. The PSI strength is cut in half at 110 degrees. (<https://pvcfittingsdirect.com/temperature-and-pressure-ratings-of-pvc/>). The valves will also allow blow offs to release chlorine faster.

Can purchase a combination clay valve used by other districts will last decades.

Kathy Steuermann suggests changing some of the valves.... V 7, V10 V12 V13. This will help isolate the pipeline for repairs and we won't have to shut off the whole system.

We want to find leaks using thermal imaging sensors. We still have a significant amount of daily seepage. It will improve as we change out poly lines and the saddles. It decreased from 120 gallons to 100 per two hours because we found leaks at Banks and Adams.

We have had a high turnover of well motors. They last 1 to 3 years. Mr. Sexton indicated he added check valves on the Mooney pump, so the water is only going one way. Sexton and Ramstrum used the "well report" to align the Horsepower between the pump and motor as Peterson well has done.

The clay valve company suggested placing an air release valve in front of the pump in case there is air shooting up out of the well, so it doesn't go into our system. The air/vacuum combos.

Mooney asks can we put Sexton on retainer and obtain a better rate? Ramstrum tells Mooney that Sexton uses an emergency system. If a homeowner is without water and it is hot, he will service that client first. And he understands that we need him for every month.

Water Submittal Form (year-round or summer only)

Hae thinks it should be summer only. We can learn our seepage rate, find leaks, and create low impact on the lines by maintaining a lower level in the tank. The Ryan Report shows we have been leaking 30,000 gallons per month since 2008. We have done a fantastic job at reducing that rate, but we have to let go of asking the community every time you water to submit a form at least in the winter.

Marcia has a challenge to the form. The board modifies the form to help.

Watering Submittal Form Dates will be May through September.

OLD BUSINESS:

Hold Harmless Forms

Hae sent form to Sharon Sherman for review. She will review. Bucheit suggests we use what we have until Sharon gives comments.

Update on Hiring Replacement Water Manager.

Based on previous discussion, the board is moving forward with part time help, however, can post in Monster, Angie's, Craig's list.

Mooney asks to we need a Water Manager? He thinks we do. We need to have someone here full time. We have unresolved issues.

Ramstrum responds, we are having 35 incidents per year. We need help now. Muñoz will be the first. We have fundamental system flaws that have been causing repeat breaks over decades. It's good to search so the community sees that potential water managers will want significant amounts of money. We want to learn what reality is.

Holmes thinks we need to go with the part time one week per month and see if it works. Maybe we don't have to hire a water manager, or maybe we do? Ramstrum's work has eliminated a significant portion of the water manager duties, maybe this will be enough? The last comment Kuns made to him was, "you are taking all my jobs away."

Ramstrum responds that the thing about Kuns is that he could fix things. He was frugal. He would figure out the repair and drive to El Centro, get the parts and do the repair. Now that we do not have him, we had to create an inventory of parts, buy tools, and create SOPs. We need a Board Member to oversee and a worker. Now we have Muñoz, Fillmore, Dimmock, MacDonald, Campbell.

Hae agrees whole heartedly with the approach, but how do we deal with the issue of what happened with Birgit? She submits a form, gets here and her water is off, and she thinks it is the CCWD's fault? It wasn't, but we need a way for people to get help.

Marcia Campbell states that as we fix the problems in the system, we won't have these disasters.

Bucheit asks the Board to table the discussion for now. He asks that we try the part time solution with Muñoz and if we find that Munoz is not sufficient, we will revisit.

Ramstrum invites the board to keep looking for more part time help.

Procurement/Donation of Mr. Bill Fair's trailer.

Mooney wants long term approach to offer a house to the Water Manager. Board will meet to look at the trailer at 3pm.

Changes to Rules and Regulations (water rate increase)

Hae reviews changes to rate increase. Language is changed as follows:

4. COST OF WATER SERVICES

a.) MINIMUM MONTHLY CHARGE. A minimum bi-monthly charge of \$80.00 shall be made for each active meter.

b.) METERED WATER. In addition to the minimum bi-monthly charge above, the rate for water metered shall be as follows:

The first 5000 gallons used bi-monthly shall be charged at 1.9 cents per gallon. 5001 – 10,000 gallons will be charged at 4.5 cents per gallon. All usage over 10,000 gallons shall be charged at 6 (six cents) per gallon.

Mooney moves to adopt and Hae seconds. Motion passes.

Steel Tank Liner

Deferred to next meeting.

Choose date for "Get to Know Your Water System" and Choose date for "Priceline & Tank #3 Completion Celebration"

Board decides to combine the two events. Will work with Bill Dimmock to choose date.

NEW BUSINESS:

Proposed changes to Rules and Regulations (new meter cost increase,

electronic payment, fines for not reporting water usage, late fees)

Bucheit asks the Board to consider the new meter charge language in the rules and regulations to clarify language and increase the fee as fees in other districts are from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Language would be changed as follows:

3. WATER METERS

f.) CHARGES FOR NEW METER. A fee of \$8,000 for a new water meter and service where there is no pre-existing meter.

g.) NO FURTHER CHARGES. Once connection fees and meter installation fees have been paid and service has been established, no further connection and installation charges are made, and the service is available to later occupants upon payment of proper charges.

h.) TRANSFER OF SERVICE. There is no charge for transfer of service. New owner is responsible for any outstanding balances from the previous owner.

Hae moves to adopt new language above, Holmes seconds. Motion passes.

Gunnar proposes to change meter reads from six times per year to three times per year. This will cut the effort in half. Will save \$2,000 per year @ \$40/hr. He would like to align the meter reads with the Board Meetings and change rules and regulations to give one week to complete. Customers will continue to be billed bi-monthly for access fees. And usage will be billed with the access fee every four months.

Marsha Campbell raises the issue that the customer will not see that they have a leak and will have a large bill to pay three times per year. Ramstrum notes that it will be cheaper for the user as the larger range of dates will allow a lower average. In the summer, the Board looks for leaks and will spot with tank level reader. We also need to train users how to look for leaks. We want the community to be involved with their water system. Will develop a how to check for a leak and more for the Knowledge Page.

Holmes wants to do anything we can to minimize workload so we can focus on fixing line and closing holes.

Hae moves to adopt, Holmes seconds. But the language is complicated. Board tables for now. Will bring proposed language to next meeting. Allow the community to comment.

Ramstrum proposes to align all water sample collection dates to Board Meetings. Hae notes that it would leave a three-month period without a sample. She does not think that is wise. The other dates look good and are aligned. So just leave it as it is and we will collect in December unaligned with the Board Meeting.

Bucheit proposes a fine for leaving a hose on during the summer. We need to teach Canebrakers how to use the water system. Mooney proposes giving timers to each Canebrakers. Hae applauds Jerry for the extra effort trying to find leaks, but we need to let the concentration on finding leaks go. The Ryan Report in 2008 showed a 30,000 gallon water loss per month. It is time to focus on as Holmes said, fixing lines and closing holes.

Mooney asked about the water bill errors. George found the problem and sent new bills to all customers.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Chris MacDonald letter (Attachment 7). Ramstrum responded to the letter (Attachment 8).

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Hae took the RCAC Webinar on Prop 218 and Meetings in June 2024.

ADJOURNMENT:

Board decides to move the Tech Talk Special Meeting for another date.

Motion by Mooney, second by Holmes to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:13 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Saturday, November 9th 2024, at 9 AM
McKenney Hall

Attachments
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