

CANEBRAKE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Saturday, March 9th, 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. Also in attendance was Dean Kuns, Water Manager.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Holmes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**WELCOMING OF GUESTS:** Guests in attendance at the meeting were: Bill Dimmock, Frank Colver, Tom Stucke, Lisa Moreau, Mike Hammond Steve Fillmore, Myrna Wosk, Jim Ward, Alice Anda

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES JANURARY 13TH, 2024**

Minutes are unanimously approved.

**PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Ramstrum presented the Canebrake financial reporting for the period (Attachment 2). This included the asset dashboard with Ramstrum identifying the biggest issue being the Water Manager's projected retirement in March 2025. Ramstrum covered the cash register, and then presented the financial dashboard. He also conducted a review of two vendors. Fergason (a plumbing parts vendor) and SDRMA. Ramstrum recommends we purchase from vendors online as we can obtain the same quality products (Spears) at a much lower price. Ramstrum also worked with Dean and developed a parts inventory list. In Ramstrum's review of SDRMA, he clarified that if it is a Water District project, volunteers are covered. Jim Ward points out that volunteers are not covered on private property projects. Steve Fillmore suggests that the CCWD obtain a government account with Amazon.

Ramstrum also researched if the CCWD is allowed to offer individuals a tax deduction when they donate to the CCWD (Attachment 2)? The CCWD could become a 170 C1. It needs further research. Hae indicated she will pursue.

Hae makes a motion to approve the Financial Report. Holmes seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

### **GOVERNMENT FORMS AND CORRESPONDENCE (BUCHEIT):**

Fluoride Level. Both wells were sampled, and a full spectrum analysis was conducted of the Mooney well (Attachment 3a, Attachment 3b). The Mooney well remained high at 7.8 mg/L and Peterson is much lower at 2.9 mg/L. After the analysis, the Water Manager has only pumped from the Peterson well. A sample was also taken from the corner of Ocotillo Lane and Canyon in February and the level is 2.6 mg/L (Attachment 3c).

Bucheit completed the annual Water Rights Certification for the inner pasture spring.

SDRMA. We are covered on all vehicles and volunteers for CCWD projects.

SDGE usage report. The “true up” for 2023 was acquired and CCWD accrued an annual cost of \$27 at Mooney Well, and \$260 at the Peterson well. Hae and Bucheit accessed the online account.

### **EQUIPMENT REPORT:**

Daryl Holmes Jr. presented the Equipment Report (Attachment 4).

Excavator. CCWD took possession on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The CIA and the private donations from the community as of the writing of the CCWD minutes totaled \$20,975. The CCWD would like to thank the following people.

- **CIA MEMBERS**
- **RON AND BONNIE AKEY**
- **PETER AND MARY BANKS**
- **DAVID CODY**
- **ANDREA COLLINS/ NICK GRAY**
- **FRANK COLVER**
- **BILL AND ANN FAIR**
- **KEITH FOULDS**

- DARYL AND BETTY HOLMES
- DARYL JR. AND CHARLENE HOLMES
- ROBERT AND COLETTE MELER
- MARIANNE (DOLLY) MILLER
- SHARON SHERMAN
- KATHY STEUERMANN
- JOY AND TOM STUCKE
- DAVE TOLER

Mooney proposed creating an area when we improve the sheds to memorialize donations. Hae concurred.

Holmes also noted that the excavator is slow. Tom Stucke is going to let the CCWD try to use his trailer. The excavator can be towed with the dump truck. However, the CCWD will be best served with our own licensed trailer allowing us to deliver it to Lakeside for service or repairs. The estimated cost of a trailer is approximately \$4K to \$5K. Overall this is far less than the quoted \$1,500 hauling fee from our location in Canebrake to Lakeside and back.

Holmes also discussed security. Will start with a big chain and connect to bulldozer. Dean suggested closing the shed. Frank Colver suggested a hidden kill switch. Steve Fillmore offered to donate a wireless security camera. Bill Dimmock indicated he would research trailers as contractors are migrating to trailers that hold two pieces of equipment.

Thumb Attachment. CCWD used an attachment for the excavator claw for the first time at Frank Colver's to pull a 20-foot telephone on to sawhorses.

Hold Harmless. Update existing form and have homeowners sign before project work commences. Forms will be stored in logbook since this type of work is not covered by the SDRMA policy.

Dump Truck. Needs new brakes. Expects to be \$1,500. Holmes will work with Josh Klein to bleed lines. Bucheit asks Holmes to obtain an estimate and we will work it into the budget.

Track Steer. To date, there are 22 hours on the machine.

## **SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS/ WATER DELIVERY INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE:**

Dean Kuns presented his report covering the period January 12, 2024 – March 9, 2024 (Attachment 5). Thanks to all the volunteers in the process of purchasing and installing the vault and cage for Water Tank #3. Tank #3 is operating normally with no issues.

Discussion: Do we leave the old vault from Tank #2 or do we bypass it? Dean recommends removing the vault and bring the 3" directly to the new vault. Will be a next season job.

Bucheit has identified a source for 6' steel culverts. Will check to see how many and how long they are. Holmes thinks we need about 20 feet.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, Brad Hoyt an expert in heavy equipment visited Canebrake and trained our people. He will be coming again, and Holmes will announce the date. All are welcome to attend.

Mooney commended Holmes for his fine work and all applauded.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### Water Filtration System for McKenny Hall

The APEC 90 gallons per day Reverse Osmosis (RO) Unit has been delivered. Discussion on placement in the kitchen or outside. There are people in line that are interested in using it. Myrna Wosk asked how much water it wastes in filtering the water. Hae indicated 30%. But, for these minutes, Hae looked it up. Our unit, it filters out one gallon of water for every one gallon of filtered water. The wastewater will flow into the McKenney Hall septic tank. Currently system wide, the CCWD has 1,257 gallons of water seeping every day. In the worst-case scenario, we will release 90 gallons per day into the McKenney Hall septic tank of water with concentrated total dissolved solids.

### System Status Signs

Signposts have been placed at all three entrances. When in effect, a sign will be mounted in place to let Canebrakers know the water system status. In the event of an emergency, emails will also be disseminated, and notices posted at the mailboxes and at the community center.



Example of 1 of 3 Boil Water Signs at Entrances in Case of Emergency

Hae presented the revised Alternative Customer Notification to be submitted to the County (Attachment 5). Myrna Wosk is concerned that she will not see the entrance signs, nor read her email, nor will she see the notices posted at the mailboxes and the community center. She would like a paper notice attached to her door. Hae will poll the community to determine if there are other people that want the piece of paper attached to their door. Those on the list will be papered, in addition to being emailed in the event of a water issue.

### Safety Training Committee

Mooney with Dean Kuns and Chris MacDonald developed a Safety Training Process for CCWD Volunteers (Attachment 6). Bucheit, Holmes and Bill Dimmock also reviewed.

Mooney will continue to work on process and bring a suggested onsite working procedures to the next board meeting for Heavy Equipment Operators.

Holmes raises do we need to buy supplies? Mooney would like to wait until the second segment to identify types and amounts.

Mooney is commended for his good work, with hearty applause and Mooney also thanks Dean and Chris.

### Water Rates

An in-depth discussion of the water rates is included in the January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 minutes. Ramstrum presented two slides (Attachment 7). Slide One covers what projects the

CCWD needs to implement for our 60-year-old system in the next five years. Items such as new water valves for the 25 vaults. Primarily so the main doesn't need to be closed when we are working on a branch. The existing valves are stuck or don't close.

A new liner for the 40,000-gallon steel tank will be necessary in the next five years, replacement of the black poly pipe and more. Ramstrum visited Borrego Springs. They have much higher rates. People pay an access fee from \$94 to \$126 per two months. We presently pay an access fee of \$60 per month.

Myrna Wosk asks if a gift was given, could the CCWD replace 10 valves this season? Ramstrum said it would cost \$3,000 to \$5,000 for the parts and we could get a bid for the labor.

Ramstrum proposes the CCWD raise the access fee to \$80 per two months and raise the usage rates as follows:

- Tier 1: 1.9 cents/gallon (<5k gallons in two months)
- Tier 2: 4.5 cents/gallon (5-10k gallons in two months)
- Tier 3: 6.0 cents/gallon (>10k gallons in two months)

Jim Ward, for the good of the order did some math, if a customer uses 1,000 gallons in a two-month period, the cost will be \$99. If a customer uses 5,000 gallons in the two-month period, the cost will be \$175.

Ramstrum moves to increase rates to \$80 per meter every two months, increase Tier 1 to 1.9 cents/gallon, Tier 2 to 4.5 cents/gallon, Tier 3 to 6.0 cents/gallon and to review the rates in 2025. Hae seconds. Unanimous.

Hae indicates that we need to send a paper notice regarding the rate increase to every property owner to comply with Prop 218. If we get the letter out quickly, we can comply with the 45-day waiting period and allow the CCWD to receive community comments at the May board meeting.

A hearty round of applause for Ramstrum.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### Discuss Obtaining Credit Care From Chase Bank

Mooney suggests setting a limit on our credit card. Holmes needs \$5,000 for purchases. Board all agree to ask for a \$10,000 limit on credit card per billing cycle.

Mooney moves to apply for a Chase Bank credit card with a \$10,000 credit limit per billing cycle. Hae seconds. Unanimous.

### Discuss Options For Water Manager Replacement

Bucheit summarizes that Kuns will retire March 2025. We need to consider recruiting a Water Manager or identify a new strategy. Kuns said he would be available to watch and supervise, but not participate in physical labor. The reality is if CCWD brings in a new outside Water Manager, it will need \$50,000 as a minimum. The Holmes have offered a RV to house, but it doesn't have electricity. Another option would be to have Canebrakers take responsibility for a week at a time, that could benefit the CCWD financially, or is there someone in the community that wants to take on the job?

Holmes talks how the CCWD is trying to streamline and decrease the water manager duties overall, for example driving water samples. Ramstrum talks to shadowing Kuns and trying to eliminate the daily duties such as driving to El Centro, realigning water samples, getting gas for the truck, etc. If we can eliminate daily duties, what would the Manager do? We could call in a contractor like Sexton. To do this we have to have the valves working, then we are not shutting off at the main. The focus of the next 12 months is to identify the water manager tasks and reallocate as many as possible.

Bucheit talked about the water manager daily duties. Bucheit loved it. The primary daily duties are presently checking the tanks, checking the lines for leaks, recording the tank levels, maintaining the logs, and maintaining the equipment.

Action item: Identify 5 to 10 water manager tasks. Identify Canebrakers that would be interested in being trained to conduct those tasks.

Mooney supports investigating the automated future but developing a human backup system as well.

The board discussed searching for a person to live in an RV near McKenney Hall. Or providing a space for someone to stay for overnight repairs.

### Automatic Tank Level Reading and Remote Pumping

Ramstrum discusses a method to read tanks (Attachment 8). A transmitter is attached to the tank. It is read 10 times per day by satellite. The data is sent to a website. This saves a water manager driving daily up the canyon to check the tank levels. It costs \$1.54 per day. It has a temperature range of 30 to 140 degree. It also will assist in catching leaks faster since we can see the change in the data immediately. This

combined with a remote pump relay (Slide 2 of Attachment x) would allow the schedule of the tank pumping to be changed from an App. The relay system costs about \$250. But, we will need to purchase Starlink to run the relay at a cost of \$120/month.

The Wards have had the relay system running outside in the shade for years and have not experienced problems.

Jim Ward speaks to the concept that the CIA needs to increase rates to \$40 per year to cover the cost of Starlink for everyone as it could save someone's life. Steve Fillmore points out that not everyone is a member of the CIA. Jim would toss in the cost of the equipment.

Tom Stucke discusses the logistics of how to pay stating that the CCWD has the better mechanism to pay for it. It can be spread into the water rate. Hae agrees. Every property will pay as opposed to those that are members of the CIA and points out that if we automate and do not have a full-time water manager we will have huge savings. And we can broadcast our meetings so more people can participate. Holmes moves to purchase the tank reading system for \$1,610. Hae seconds. Unanimous.

Bucheit asks CIA to put Starlink on the agenda and we can decide next steps for the relay at the April 7<sup>th</sup> CIA meeting.

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Stephen Fillmore (Attachment 9).

Discussion: Mooney asks him why he wants to assist. Fillmore responds that after people water is the most precious resource. He sees himself out here more and he has a fairly flexible schedule. Also has experience with heavy equipment. He lives in the world of safety and bureaucracy. Everyone is thrilled and applauds.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

- Bucheit and Ramstrum will take a water sample today.
- Holmes thanks Bill Dimmock for fixing the leak.



- Jim Ward re-tied the zip tie lines on the photovoltaic system on clean-up day. It needs to be checked at least once a year. Bill Dimmock has it on the building list.
- Bill Dimmock spoke to the need for a water irrigation system for McKenney Hall. We have lost hedge hogs, and other plants. Would like to replace and clean out the existing system on the next clean-up day. Could use the relay system that we are considering for the pump as it has eight stations. Bucheit asks for a schematic and a cost for the next meeting. Dimmock makes the point that watering in the summer at McKenney Hall will assist in keeping the water moving in lines. Board agrees.
- Ramstrum visited the Borrego Springs Water District. It was beautiful. We are well on our way and can learn from them.
- Tom Stucke reminds us we need to think about how we keep the roads in good condition. Holmes worked on the roads with the new equipment. We need someone that loves dragging roads. Where is Butch Whitely? Ramstrum suggests the CIA/CCWD develop a roads committee that early in the season uses the CCWD equipment, but we need people to pick up rocks. Fred Flintstone party. Mooney is concerned about the Army Corp channels could be clogged. Holmes is talking with Ron about putting a ramp down there to get access.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Mooney, seconded by Holmes to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:58 p.m.

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

Saturday, May 11, 2024, at 9 AM  
McKenney Hall

Attachments  
eh