

**WILLOW COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING
DECEMBER 13, 2021
6:30 P.M.**

Present: Mike Hildreth, Director
Gary Nevill, Director

Ross LaRue, Director
Devin Gordon, Director

Absent: None

Others Present: Jared Walker, GM, Kate Barrett, Board Secretary, Liz Patton, Office Manager
Mark Hildebrand, Hildebrand Consulting
Beth Salomone & Chris Watt, RRFC
Michael Maltas, Steve Dangler, Bonnie Henderson, Public

Director Mike Hildreth called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Roll Call was taken.

Minutes

Director Nevill made a motion, seconded by Director LaRue, to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2021 regular board meeting. This motion was passed with a unanimous aye vote.

Financial Statement

Director LaRue made a motion, seconded by Director Gordon, to approve the financials for October and November 2021. This motion was passed with a unanimous aye vote.

Public Forum

- None.

Public Hearing - Proposed Increase to Water Rates

a. Introduction of Proposed Water Rates

- i. GM, Walker stated that Willow went through an extensive water rate study with Mark Hildebrand, Hildebrand Consulting.

b. Conduct Public Hearing

- i. Mark Hildebrand, Hildebrand Consulting, presented the proposed increase to water rates.
- ii. Bonnie Henderson, member of the public, commented that she opposes the rate increase. She recommends spreading out the rate increase evenly among all the zones rather than having a larger increase in some of the zones than others.
 1. Mark Hildebrand noted that the increase in rates is so the District can try and recoup the costs of PG&E and the energy it takes to pump the water up the hill. The higher the elevation, the more energy it takes for the water to circulate.
- iii. Michael Maltas, member of the public, questioned why the board did not choose a rate structure that discourages people from using large amounts of water.

1. Mark Hildebrand explained that even though tiered rates are a fairly common approach to deter people from using excess amounts of water, the courts in California have ruled that you need to demonstrate specific costs that are incurred for increase of water use. There have been a lot of lawsuits regarding tiered rates that have been successfully waged against the municipalities.
- iv. Steve Dangler, member of the public, suggested that the board look at the rate increase differently and balance out the increase among all of the zones. Perhaps the board could increase rates based on water usage rather than zones.
 1. GM, Walker reiterated that the increase in rates is so the District can try and recoup the costs of PG&E and the energy it takes to pump the water up the hill and that is it.

c. Result of Public Hearing

- i. The public hearing closed at 7:30pm.
- ii. There are a total of six (6) protest letters.
- iii. Director Nevill made a motion, seconded by Director Gordon, to adopt the rate increase as proposed. This motion was passed with a unanimous aye vote.

d. Consideration of Resolution 2021-03: A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Willow County Water District Establishing Change in Rate Structure, Rules and Regulations for Water Service by Ordinance No. 100 and Supersedes all Previous Ordinances and Resolutions

- i. Director Nevill, made a motion, seconded by Director Gordon, to adopt Resolution 2021-03: A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Willow County Water District Establishing Change in Rate Structure, Rules and Regulations for Water Service by Ordinance No. 100 and Supersedes all Previous Ordinances and Resolutions. This motion was passed with the following roll call vote:
 AYES: LaRue, Nevill, Gordon, Hildreth
 NOES: -0-
 ABSENT: -0-
 ABSTAIN: -0-

Staff Reports

a. General Manager

- i. GM, Walker reported that a few leaks have been popping up, but with ground being saturated it swells up shifting it is expected.
- ii. Director LaRue inquired about the monitoring of the outflow of Lake Mendocino.
 1. GM, Walker commented that the State approved Sonoma Water’s TUCP on Friday to maximize the amount of storage in Lake Mendocino. Right now, the releases out of Lake Mendocino are down to 25 CFS.
- iii. Director LaRue asked what the District would have to do for someone to pay attention to the water that is being sent out to the ocean.
 1. GM, Walker replied that the District does not have much say in that. Sonoma Water and their TUCP will reduce the releases out of Lake Mendocino. In terms of what comes into Lake Mendocino, that is a different story.
 2. As of now, the lake is getting 45 CFS through a bypass around the Potter Valley Project because the hydro plant is down. The bypass is capable of releasing 135 CFS, but the people

who control that water are not willing to increase the 45 CFS going into Lake Mendocino at this time.

3. Director LaRue commented that the people who are controlling the water are putting human health and safety at risk and they should be accountable for it. If our area goes through another dry year and we don't fill the lake up, the District, and surrounding municipalities could be at risk.
 - a. GM, Walker noted that the people who control the water are fulfilling their obligation to divert minimal stream flows into Lake Mendocino and Potter Valley and to keep as much water as they can in Lake Pillsbury and the Eel River Watershed. They just aren't doing us any favors.

b. Office Manager

- i. None.

Old Business

a. Report on Water Districts Service Contracts

- i. GM, Walker reported that staff is trying to work through the service contract renewals as well as employee reviews. All the information about the service contracts have been sent off to the consultant who has been reviewing the contracts for the past five or six years.
- ii. Staff anticipates having everything ready for the board's review by the February board meeting.

b. Report on JPA

- i. GM, Walker reported that the majority of the conversations revolve around the GSA contributions and consolidation.
 1. The consolidation discussions are still occurring, but there seems to be less of an urgency. Everyone is mainly concerned about how much water we are going to have for 2022.
 2. Staff still thinks that consolidation is a great option, but this may be as far as consolidating the districts goes.

c. Report on PG&E Potter Valley Project

- i. This item was discussed in previous agenda items.

d. Update on Drought and Water Conservation Efforts

- i. GM, Walker reported that he has been in meetings with the State and other municipalities throughout California trying to work on a voluntary agreement for 2022 and beyond; it is a "one size fits most" agreement.

e. Consolidation Efforts of URRWA Districts

- i. This item was discussed in previous agenda items.

Adjourn

Director LaRue made a motion, seconded by Director Gordon, to adjourn. This motion was passed with a unanimous aye vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WILLOW COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

Date _____

ATTEST _____
SECRETARY TO THE BOARD
WILLOW COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

Date _____