**Westport County Water District**

**Board of Directors**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting**

**Thursday, May 8, 2025**

The regular monthly meeting of the Westport County Water District (“District” or “WCWD”)Board of Directors convened at 7:11 pm via zoom on Thursday, May 8, 2025. Notice and the Agenda were previously properly issued, a Board quorum was present, and it was confirmed that each Director was able to hear and be heard by the other Directors and members of the public in attendance.

1. **Roll Call at Inception (7:11 pm):**

Present Board Members: Directors Ms. Carla Thomas, Mr. Robert Finnell, Mr. Gary Weiss, and Mr. Steve Cardullo (portion of meeting, from 7:41 pm onward), and Chairman Lee Tepper (portion of the meeting, from 8:05 pm onward).

Present Staff: Operations Manager and Chief Plant Operator Mr. John Morrill, and Administrator Ms. Kayla Cooper.

Present Members of the Public: None.

1. **Entity Governance (7:12 pm):**

Director Weiss stated that he would prepare the minutes for this meeting.

1. **FFPC Training on AB 1234 – Ethics Training for Local Public Officials (7:12 pm)**

Each director reported on the status of his/her respective completion of FPPC training on AB 1234 – Ethics Training for Local Public Officials (to be taken online every two years at no charge). Director Weiss stated, and Ms. Cooper confirmed, that he had completed the FPPC training on AB 1234. Director Finnell stated, and Ms. Cooper confirmed, that he too had completed the training. Director Finnell also stated that he had spoken with Director Cardullo, who had told him that he (Director Cardullo) had completed the training. Director Thomas stated that she had not yet completed the training on AB 1234. The present Directors stated that they did not know whether Chairman Lee Tepper had completed the training. Director Finnell suggested, and the directors agreed, that this item be revisited at the next monthly WCWD Regular Board Meeting, and that Director Thomas and Chairman Tepper should update the Board at that meeting as to whether each had completed his/her training on AB 1234.

1. **Consent Agenda**
2. **Approval of Minutes (7:15 pm):**

Director Weiss moved that the Board approve the minutes of the Regular WCWD Board Meeting held on April 10, 2025. Director Thomas seconded the motion, which was then approved unanimously by the Board.

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1. **Correspondence (7:16 pm):**

There was no correspondence.

1. **Public Comment (7:16 pm):**

There was no public comment.

1. **Staff Reports (7:17 pm):**
2. **Bookkeeper/Administrator Report (7:17 pm):**

Ms. Cooper led the discussion of the WCWD’s monthly financial report. In advance of the meeting, Ms. Cooper had distributed to all attendees a copy of the April 2025 expense report as well as the April 2024 expense report and the accounts receivable aging summary as of May 8, 2025.

Ms. Cooper reported that as of the end of April 2025, there was $42,544.05 in the District’s main checking account, along with $17,172.57 in water capital and $17,255.58 in sewer capital. Ms. Cooper reported that the funds currently in the District’s main checking account are roughly $4,870 less than were in the account at the end of April 2024.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Cooper attributed the cash balance difference to the timing of the receipt of customer payments and the payment of WCWD bills during April of 2024 versus 2025, and not to any extraordinary event or meaningful trend. She stated, however, that during April 2025 the District had reimbursed Mr. Morrill for the $3,048.06 he had paid for a new injection pump and roughly $89 paid to Phoenix Fire Defense for recharging fire extinguishers. Mr. Morrill stated that the recharging of fire extinguishers is required periodically by applicable regulations. Ms. Cooper stated that it is more productive to examine year-end averages for cash balances rather than to examine cash levels during any particular month.

1. **Operator’s Report (7:23 pm):**

Mr. Morrill led the discussion of the May 8, 2025, Operator’s Report he had circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr. Morrill answered questions from the Directors about the report.

Mr. Morrill stated that pursuant to the Westport County Water District Ordinance # 1-25 adopted by the WCWD Board of Directors on April 10, 2025 (“Cross Connection Control General Policy”), and the mandate issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”) to inspect for and remediate any cross-contamination issues identified within the District, he had sought and obtained from Mr. Rio Russell a work order to conduct a Cross-Connection Survey to identify any existing cross-contamination issues within the District as well as a draft Cross-Connection Survey drafted by Mr. Russell. **Mr. Russell’s work order is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.** Mr. Morrill stated that notwithstanding an effort to search for alternative contractors, he had been unable to identify any other qualified contractor in the area to perform this work, and that Mr. Russell’s work order is reasonable. Director Thomas moved to accept and sign the work order, Director Finnell seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the motion.

Mr. Morrill reported that a copy of the Cross-Connection Survey and a pamphlet prepared by the American Water Works Association about how customers can protect their drinking water from cross contamination had been mailed to each customer along with the District’s May billing statement. Mr. Morrill stated his hope that each customer would promptly fill out and return the survey, but also said he was prepared to follow up with customers on an individual basis to ensure completion.

Mr. Morrill reported that on May 6, 2025, he had taken 10 gallons of WCWD water to be tested by the SWRCB with a different polymer than the District had been using and was awaiting results, particularly on Manganese levels. As reflected in the 2024 Consumer Confidence Report dated February 21, 2025, discussed at the March 13, 2025 WCWD meeting, the WCWD’s water meets all primary safe drinking water standards, but Mr. Morrill believes levels of Manganese are higher than they could be, which Mr. Morrill described as an aesthetic issue rather than a health safety issue. Mr. Morrill said that although no action is required, if Manganese re-tests at similar levels with the different polymer by the SWRCB, the District may choose to address the issue by pre-chlorinating the water before polymer dosing or by using a different type of sand with the filter than the District has been using.

Mr. Morrill reported that the District had produced 290,705 gallons of water in 166 hours of operation in April, and that this was 30,493 more gallons and 18 more hours of operation than during the month of March.

Whereupon, at 7:41 pm, Director Cardullo joined the meeting.

Mr. Morrill reported that the new spare injection pump with some used parts (as reported earlier, purchased in toto for about $3,000) had been delivered earlier today. (He had chosen this pump after receiving for quotes for a new injection pump.) He could not estimate the likely useful life for the pump. He said that the price was very reasonable for a pump of this kind.

Director Finnell inquired about the certification status of Drinking Water Plant Shift Operator and Distribution Operator Mr. Beck Regalis and Drinking Water and Wastewater Shift Operator Mr. David Wilson, and whether they were on their way toward achieving full certification for Master Operator status. Mr. Morrill replied that in order to achieve that status, Mr. Regalia or Mr. Wilson would need to obtain T-3 certification. Because the WCWD plant is a grade 3 plant, each would need to fulfill a certain number of working hours and then take the test for T-3 certification. Currently, Mr. Morrill is the only person on the WCWD staff certified as a T-3 Operator.

Mr. Morrill reported that due to corrosion on a service line along Abalone Street, a small leak at the residence of one customer caused a saddle clamp to break, which then expanded the leak to over 20,000 gallons before it was identified and fixed. Mr. Morrill said that he keeps a supply of new clamps on hand for just such an event and used one to replace the broken clamp and stop the leak.

Mr. Morrill stated that the District will flush its distribution lines on May 14-15, 2025. This may temporarily cause some discoloration in the drinking water but will not create an unsafe condition.

1. **Old Business (7:52pm):**
2. **Status of Program to Inspect for and Remediate Any Cross-Contamination Issues Pursuant to Ordinance Unanimously Approved at April 10, 2025 WCWD Board Meeting Re Cross Control General Policy (7:52 pm):**

This topic was discussed earlier in the meeting. See Section 5.B. above. Director Finnell moved to waive a reading of Ordinance # 1-25 on Cross-Connection Control General Policy, Director Cardullo seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved. Director Finnell inquired whether Ordinance # 1-25 must be published once or twice and Director Cardullo replied that it need be published only once. The Ordinance is published and remains available for viewing on the WCWD website. Mr. Morrill and Ms. Cooper confirmed that they had received no public comment or questions regarding the Ordinance and the Cross-Connection Control General Policy.

Mr. Morrill stated that he will forward a copy of the Ordinance to the SWRCB. Director Finnell moved that the Board authorize Mr. Morrill to send Ordinance # 1-25 to the SWRCB, Director Thomas seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved. Mr. Morrill asked that Ms. Cooper remove the “DRAFT” language before he forwards the ordinance to the SWRCB.

1. **Status of and Next Steps for WCWD Capital Improvement Projects: (7:55 pm):**

In response to questions from the directors, Mr. Morrill stated that he had heard nothing further from GHD following his forwarding of the District’s proposed edits to the Master Service Agreement.

Director Thomas stated that the District and GHD remain on hold (until Federal funding issues are sorted out) with funding through the state revolving grant program for drinking water infrastructure projects. On the other hand, she reported that the North Coast Resource Partnership has announced another, entirely new, block grant program enabled through State Proposition 4. This program may be applicable to address fire resiliency and/or drinking water infrastructure and would enable up to $50 million in block grant funding over a 10-year period.

Whereupon, at 8:05 pm, Chairman Tepper joined the meeting.

Director Thomas reported that she had recently begun working with WVFD Chief Dan Maxey to complete a survey for the North Coast Resource Partnership grant program, and planned to list all of the items in WCWD’s capital improvement plan as part of the survey. Director Weiss inquired as to the next steps, and Director Thomas replied that within 4-6 weeks the funding request would be made at the state level and that things should move quickly from there. She said she would report on status and progress at the next WCWD Board meeting.

1. **Status of Municipal Service Review & Sphere of Influence Update Prepared by Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (“Mendocino LAFCO”), and Discussion of Outcome of Public Hearing Held on May 5, 2025, re Same (8:07 pm):**

Director Finnell reported that he had attended the May 5, 2025 Hearing by Mendocino LAFCO and could summarize the highlights. First, he said attendees had concluded that the WCWD was exempt from the California Environment Quality Act (“CEQA”). Second, he said some members questioned why the WCWD continued to meet remotely via zoom. Director Weiss asked whether hybrid meetings held at the Westport Firehouse (in which those members who could not attend in person could participate via zoom) should be acceptable to Mendocino LAFCO and Director Finnell answered that this should be sufficient. Third, Director Finnell reported that some members expressed concern about depreciation of the WCWD’s capital equipment and resources. Fourth, Director Finnell said the members effusively praised the work of Mr. Morrill and Ms. Cooper in providing info and assistance to Mendocino LAFCO in evaluating the District’s governance and operations and in being on top of the details of such matters.

**Status of Director Cardullo’s Review and Cataloguing of Existing WCWD Documents (8:14 pm):**

Director Cardullo recounted his efforts since his last report to inventory and review the many historical WCWD documents located in boxes stored at the Westport Fire Station. He said he had thus far reviewed 22 boxes of WCWD records, up from just 8 he had reviewed by the time of the April Board Meeting. He said he had received assistance from Mr. Beck Regalia in doing so. He said they were not reviewing the documents for content but rather merely cataloguing the documents for further review and disposition. Director Cardullo said there remained much work to do to complete the review and that the pace of review would slow over the summer months due to his schedule. Among the documents he had located thus far are 10-20 ordinances and resolutions. Before deciding which documents to retain, Director Cardullo said he expected the other directors to review and opine on which categories of documents are worth retaining and which are not. Director Thomas suggested that those documents not worthy of retention should be shredded and suggested a shredding service in Bodega Bay she had encountered might be a good one. Chairman Tepper said that those documents worthy of retention ought to be scanned and retained electronically to preserve space and lower the risk of loss.

Director Finnell reminded the Board that he had forwarded a draft revised policy on document retention and disposition, in response to Director Cardullo’s forwarding of the District’s existing policy, and that he expected Directors to review and discuss both at the next regular Board meeting.

1. **Status of Timber Harvest Plan on Property Owned by Roger and Michelle Burch Trust (“Bell Mountain THP”) (8:21 pm):**

Director Thomas reported that she had been keeping abreast of the public filings on the Bell Mountain THP and that there had been a flurry of recent activity on the matter, some of which had been instigated by Mr. Gary Quinton’s letter raising concerns about the potential impact on roads identified in the THP, and about the importance of those roads to local residents. Director Thomas thanked Mr. Quinton for sending that letter and said that she would continue to review public filings and alert the Board to significant developments and issues.

1. **Communications with Mendocino County Board of Supervisors or State Authorities re SWRCB Wastewater Permit Fees (8:25 pm):**

Director Finnell suggested that the WCWD invite Senator Mike McGuire to a WCWD Board meeting to discuss the unfairness of the SWRCB fee schedule for wastewater permits, i.e, that the same fees are applied to small water districts serving a small number of customers as to larger districts serving a greater number of customers. He said that he would draft a letter doing so. Director Thomas suggested that perhaps the WVFD and/or the Westport Municipal Advisory Council and/or the Westport Village Society ought to be invited to attend as well.

1. **New Business (9:08 pm):**
2. **Brown Act: Continued Digital/Virtual Zoom Meeting Authorization (9:23 pm):**

Director Weiss moved to continue providing the option for zoom attendance at WCWD Board meetings. Director Thomas seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved.

1. **Adjournment (8:32 pm):**

Upon motion made (Director Weiss) and seconded (Director Finnell), the Regular Meeting of the WCWD Board was unanimously adjourned at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Weiss

Temporary Secretary for the May 8, 2025, WCWD Board Meeting