**Westport County Water District**

**Board of Directors**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting**

**Thursday, February 20, 2025**

The regular monthly meeting of the Westport County Water District (“District” or “WCWD”)Board of Directors convened at 7:01 pm via zoom on Thursday, February 20, 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 (7:01 pm):**

Present Board Members: Chairman Lee Tepper, and Directors Ms. Carla Thomas, Mr. Steve Cardullo, Mr. Robert Finnell and Mr. Gary Weiss.

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

Present Members of the Public: Ms. Dorine Real (Ms. Real joined the meeting in progress at 7:49 pm and exited before the private executive session).

1. **Entity Governance (7:03 pm)**
2. **Status of Directors’ Appointments to WCWD Board by Acclimation via November 7, 2024, Mendocino County Election Process and Signed and Filed Oaths of Office with County Recorder (7:04 pm):**

Director Finnell inquired as to whether each Director had completed his/her oath of office and filed the oath with the County Recorder. Each Director confirmed that s/he had done so. Ms. Cooper reported that she had received copies of the oaths of office completed by Chairman Tepper and Director Weiss, but still needs copies of the oaths for Director Thomas, Director Cardullo and Director Finnell. These three Directors agreed to assist Ms. Cooper in obtaining such copies. Ms. Cooper stated that it would be helpful to have electronic copies of all oaths of office. Mr. Morrill suggested that these be posted on the website, and Director Weiss stated his agreement with this proposal.

1. **Status of Form 700 Director Filings (Statement of Economic Interests per California Fair Political Practices Commission) Due Each Year on April 1 (7:09 pm):**

Director Finnell reminded the Board that each Director’s Form 700 must be completed and filed by April 1, 2025. Each Director confirmed that s/he had already completed his/her Form 700 for 2025 upon filing his/her oath of office and had filed the Form 700 with the County Recorder.

1. **FFPC Training on AB 1234 – Ethics Training for Local Public Officials (7:11 pm)**

Director Finnell stated that each Director must complete the ethics training course per AB 1234 every two years. He said the course may be taken online at no charge. He reminded the Board that he had circulated a sign-up link and encouraged the Directors to sign up and take the class as soon as possible. Director Finnell recently completed the required ethics training and noted he had provided an imaged copy of the certificate of completion to the Board Members and Administrator for the WCWD entity records.

1. **Proposed Policy for WCWD Document Retention – Discussion of Draft Policy by Sacramento Regional Water Authority as Potential Template (7:15 pm):**

Director Finnell reminded the Board that he had in advance of the meeting circulated a copy of the Sacramento Regional Water Authority’s Document Retention Policy in order to frame the Board’s consideration and potential adoption of its own such policy. Director Cardullo stated his willingness to serve on a subcommittee to formulate a document retention policy. Director Thomas thanked Director Cardullo for this offer and Director Finnell for circulating the Sacramento policy.

Director Cardullo stated his recollection that the WCWD Board had already enacted a document retention policy sometime before 2018. He stated that he believes the policy may be among the records stored at the Firehouse and would do his best to retrieve and circulate it for review by the Board and staff.

Director Thomas moved that the Board create a subcommittee of Directors to address the creation of a new document retention policy or to confirm and follow the dictates of any document retention policy in existence upon Director Cardullo’s location of same. Chairman Tepper seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved by the Board.

1. **Consent Agenda**
2. **Approval of Minutes (7:29 pm):**

Chairman Tepper pointed out that the draft minutes of the WCWD’s Board Meeting held on January 16, 2025, contained an error in the acronym designation of the Westport Volunteer Fire Department as “WPVD,” and that such designation should be “WFD.” Director Weiss agreed to make that correction and moved that the Board approve the minutes of the regular Board meeting held on January 16, 2025, as corrected. Director Thomas seconded the motion, which was then approved unanimously by the Board.

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1. **Correspondence (7:31 pm):**

The Board deferred discussion of the correspondence received from Cox, Castle & Nicholson until later in the meeting, item 6.A., below, as noted on the agenda. Ms. Cooper stated that the WCWD had received no other correspondence to report and discuss.

1. **Public Comment (7:31 pm):**

There was no public comment.

1. **Staff Reports (7:31 pm):**
2. **Bookkeeper/Administrator Report (7:31 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 January 2025 expense report as well as the January 2024 expense report and the accounts receivable aging summary as of February 17, 2025. She had also distributed confidentially to Board members information on specific delinquent customer accounts, but discussion of those accounts was deferred to the private executive session to be held immediately after the public Board Meeting. (See Item 8 A, below.)

Ms. Cooper reported that as of the end of January 2025, there was $35,688.74 in the District’s main checking account, along with $16,570.55 in water capital and $16,653.55 in sewer capital. Ms. Cooper reported that the funds currently in the District’s main checking account are roughly $5,627 fewer than were in the account at the end of January 2024.

In response to questions from the Directors, Ms. Cooper stated that there were no extraordinary payments made in January. She noted that in the $339 statement received from the State Water Resources Control Board and paid in January, the SWRCB had expressly designated the WCWD as an Economically Disadvantaged Community.

1. **Operator’s Report (7:36 pm):**

Mr. Morrill led the discussion of the February 20, 2025, Operator’s Report he had circulated during the meeting. Mr. Morrill answered questions from the Directors about the report.

Mr. Morrill reported that the District had produced 263,736 gallons of water in 150 hours of operation in January, and that this was 94,500 more gallons and 55 more hours of operation than during the month of December.

Mr. Morrill reported that he had filed the District’s annual CIWQS report and annual CERS report in early February, and that he and Ms. Cooper were currently working on the annual drinking water EAR report due in April and the Consumer Confidence Report due in July. He said he is also working on the District’s Cross Connection Control Plan, using the template supplied by the State Water Resources Control Board (“SWRCB”). He said that in doing so, he is working with Mr. Rio Russell, a Certified Cross Connection Control and Test Specialist consultant from Elk. Mr. Russell will perform or review the District’s initial hazard assessment for a fee. As of now, Mr. Morrill will have Mr. Russell also perform the annual inspection and repair of backflow preventers within the District.

Mr. Morrill reported that the District had received relatively little rainfall in January, under 3 inches. Current lagoon depth has risen from 8.6 feet to 9.1 feet, roughly 46.9% of its capacity, which he regarded as good given that we are more than halfway through this year’s rainy season.

Mr. Morill reported that the newer generator at the Fire Station manufactured by Cummings, which had previously had an electrical issue that made it unreliable, is now working well after the WVFD had it serviced (oil, filters, etc.) and Mr. Morrill had worked with Cummings over the phone to resolve electronic issues.

1. **Old Business (7:53 pm):**
2. **Status of Response to December 19, 2024 Letter from Cox Castle & Richardson Requesting Copies of Records re 36875 North Highway 1 in Westport Pursuant to Cal.Govt.Code sec. 7920, et seq. (7:53 pm):**

Ms. Cooper reported that, in response to the above-mentioned letter, she had undertaken an effort to search for responsive documents in the District’s possession, had copied the documents she had located into a zip file and sent the zip file to Mr. Jimmy Purvis, the attorney at Cox Castle & Richardson that had made the request. She said Mr. Purvis had thanked her for her efforts. The current owner of the property has since explained to Ms. Cooper that she seeks records from the District that may show how the property has been used since the owner’s family’s purchase of it in 1974.

1. **Status of California Coastal Commission’s Consideration of Application of Westport Beach RV Park to Make Various Improvements to its Infrastructure (8:09 pm):**

Mr. Morrill stated that he believes the Westport Beach RV Park and Campground’s application to the California Coastal Commission, and the projects that this application concerns, have no bearing on the District or its customers and that there are no new developments that he is aware of.

1. **Status of Municipal Service Review & Sphere of Influence Update Requested by Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (8:09 pm):**

Ms. Cooper and Mr. Morrill reported that two weeks ago they had on behalf of the District provided additional information to Ms. Uma Hinman, Executive Director of the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission (“Mendocino LAFCO”), in response to her most recent requests. They said that according to Ms. Hinman’s most recent comments, LAFCO was finalizing the completion of its draft Sphere of Influence Update, that Ms. Hinman neither anticipates nor welcomes the WCWD Board’s involvement in the preparation of that Update, and that LAFCO expects only WCWD staff to be involved in providing information sought by LAFCO for its Update. Both Mr. Morrill and Ms. Cooper stated that they had been surprised by this stance and that Ms. Hinman had previously indicated that the Board could be involved in the report’s preparation. Ms. Hinman stated that there would be a public hearing on the draft Update on April 7, 2025, and that Board members are welcome to attend as members of the interested public. Mr. Morrill also said that the Update prepared by Mendocino LAFCO does not take a clear position on whether the Westport RV Park and Campground should be officially incorporated into the District. Directors Weiss and Thomas requested copies of the latest version of the draft Sphere of Influence Update and Ms. Cooper stated that she would provide a copy to each Director.

Director Thomas inquired as to Director Cardullo’s prior experience in working with Mendocino LAFCO. Director Cardullo provided his recollection of the process and recalled that Mendocino LAFCO appeared every 4 years and had in the past asked for money in preparing a report. Ms. Cooper verified that Mendocino LAFCO had in 2016 requested and received $294 for preparation of a Sphere of Influence report.

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

Director Weiss reported that he had summarily reviewed the public records filed to date on the Cal Fire website concerning the timber harvest plan for property owned by the Roger and Michelle Burch Trust (the “Bell Mountain THP”) and that although he had not identified any particular issue or problem, he had noticed that the recent public filings indicated that the Bell Mountain THP might involve the crossing of Wages Creek. He requested the participation of Director Thomas in reviewing the filings and welcomed her experience and expertise relative to Director Weiss’ in assessing such matters. Director Thomas agreed to review within the next few days the publicly filed documents in the Bell Mountain THP and would notify the Board and staff if she identifies an area of concern for follow-up.

1. **New Business**
2. **Canvassing of Directors and Staff on Three Goals for the District in 2025 (8:24 pm):**

In advance of the meeting, Director Finnell had circulated a list of possible goals for the District in 2025. Mr. Morrill stated that he wished to address the items listed by Director Finnell.

Mr. Morrill stated that Director Finnell’s first listed goal of further development of its capital improvement plan should be tabled until he has a chance to start the process.

Mr. Morrill stated that Director Finnell’s second listed goal of employing Google Earth’s mapping system for mapping the District’s service lines was problematic because in Mr. Morrill’s opinion, Google Earth’s mapping software was not effective enough for these purposes. He acknowledged that the District’s existing maps are not adequate. Director Thomas said that there may be a better software application for mapping and that such an application may possibly be purchased through grant funding obtained through the Westport Volunteer Fire Department. She offered to inquire about this and report back.

Mr. Morrill stated with respect to Director Finnell’s fourth listed goal of developing/documenting/enhancing its emergency response plan the District already has a plan both for water quality and hazardous materials risks.

Mr. Morrill stated that his own goals for 2025 were:

1. Addressing various deferred maintenance projects, including painting the water tank: Mr. Morrill said that painting the water tank would cost approximately $25,000 if performed by an outside contractor but that he would endeavor to handle it in-house.
2. Replacement of the circuit breaker box near the well.
3. Adding directors with check signing authority. Ms. Cooper reported that this was underway and that she was in the process of getting dates for the Directors to go to the bank to finalize this.

Director Thomas stated her agreement with these goals. Director Finnell suggested these goals be posted on the website. Mr. Morrill questioned this suggestion as tasks such as these add to Ms. Cooper’s time and thus increase the District’s costs.

Whereupon, at 8:41 pm, Mr. Morrill requested to exit the meeting. There was no objection stated and Mr. Morrill exited the meeting.

1. **Communication with Other Small Districts in Mendocino County re SWRCB Wastewater Permit Fees (8:42 pm):**

Director Finnell said that he had tried to communicate with the Elk Municipal Water District about this topic but had been unsuccessful in reaching the responsible parties. It was agreed that, given Mr. Morrill’s departure from this meeting, this item should be moved as an agenda item for the next WCWD Regular Board Meeting.

1. **Brown Act: Continued Digital/Virtual Zoom Meeting Authorization (8:43 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.

All attendees other than the Directors and Ms. Cooper exited the meeting at this time.

1. **Private Executive Session (8:44 pm):**
2. **Remaining Delinquent Customer Accounts (8:44 pm):**

The Directors discussed the remaining delinquent customer accounts and the process going forward with them.

1. **Next Steps for WCWD Capital Improvement Projects, Including Review of Draft Agreements and Internal Redline Proposals (9:06):**

The Directors unanimously agreed that the redlined draft that had been prepared by Director Weiss and forwarded to all Directors in advance of the meeting should now be sent to GHD for response. Director Weiss stated that he would forward that redlined draft to Mr. Morrill with instructions to forward it to GHD for response.

1. **Adjournment (9:08 pm):**

Upon motion made (Director Weiss) and seconded (Director Thomas), the Regular Meeting of the WCWD Board was unanimously adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Weiss

Temporary Secretary for the February 20, 2025, WCWD Board Meeting