**Westport County Water District (“District” or “WCWD”)**

**Board of Directors**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting – Thursday, February 10, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Westport County Water District Board of Directors convened at 7:00 pm via Zoom videoconference. Notice was 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.

1. **Roll Call at Inception**

Present Board Members: Mr. Lee Tepper, Mr. Ryan Grossman and Mr. Gary Weiss

Not able to attend: Mr. David Brothers

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

Members of the public: Ms. Melinda McLaughlin, Ms. Dorine Real, Ms. Carla Thomas and Mr. Robert Finnell (portion of the meeting).

1. **Consent Agenda**
2. **Draft Board Meeting Minutes:** The draft minutes of the Regular Board meeting of the Regular Board meeting of January 13, 2022 were provided in advance of the Meeting and were before the Board for approval. Director Weiss suggested one edit: that, in Section 5 (Old Business – Timber Harvest Plan), the sentence “Ms. Cooper noted it was an understanding that such a Timber Harvest Plan draft may commence during February 2022” be edited to replace the word “commence” with “be prepared.” As so amended, and upon motion dully made (Mr. Grossman) and seconded (Mr. Tepper), the Board unanimously approved the January 13, 2022 Board Minutes.
3. **Correspondence:** There was no new correspondence to discuss.
4. **Public Comment**

Director Tepper provided an opportunity for general public comment. The attending members of the public were polled for possible comment. Ms. Mclaughlin stated that she was pleased to learn that the leak in the WCWD system had recently been located by Mr. Morrill so that it could be fixed. (See item 4.B.2. below for a recounting of the discussion regarding this issue.)

1. **Staff Reports**
2. **Administrator’s Report**

Ms. Kayla Cooper led the discussion regarding review of the monthly Financial Report, directing attention to the written report issued to the Board in advance of

the Meeting. (See attached report for more detail.) Questions were asked and answered by both Ms. Cooper and Mr. Morrill regarding the SWRCB charge. Mr. Morrill noted that he expected some upcoming expenses associated with our environmental health permit as well as our air quality permit and costs associated with the repair of the system water leak recently located near the Westport Fire Station. There was discussion about how work would be divided to apply for these permits, and Mr. Morrill indicated that he would take the lead in applying for them.

1. **Operator’s Report**

Mr. John Morrill led a discussion of the WCWD Operator Report dated February 10, 2022. (See attached Report for more detail.) Some of the more important discussion points were the following:

1. Mr. Morrill reported that he is recovering from his ankle injury and that he will receive a new cast on February 18, which should enable him to put weight on his leg and thus come closer to resuming his normal physical work duties. In Mr. Morrill’s absence, Mr. David Wilson has been filling in for him on physical tasks and working extra hours.
2. Mr. Morrill reported that Mr. Wilson had located the situs of the leak in the WCWD system that had been causing a monthly loss of 140,000 – 150,000 gallons of water. It was on the firehouse road where an unmetered service line led up to the sewer plant and firehouse. The old line had been installed without compacted sand to protect the plastic valve from damage from passing vehicles. The WCWD, with assistance from Brian Hawes (excavator work) and Jeff Mathias (mowing), repaired the line, including replacing the old valve with a new one, adding a separate meter for it, and compacting the sand around it to prevent further problems. Work remains for re-grading the area, but much of the work has now been completed.
3. Mr. Morrill reported that the water flow rate at Wages Creek remains strong, at over 20 cubic feet per second. After receiving a heavier than average 9.9 inches of rain in December (following heavier than average rainfalls in September and October), January rainfall was 2.0 inches.
4. The repair work on the radiator for the original generator for the WCWD is 90% completed and should be ready for pickup soon.
5. Mr. Morrill has submitted the WCWD Annual Water Diversion Reports, including the draft Consumer Confidence Report, which was approved by the SWRCB. That report includes a finding by Alpha Labs of 500 parts per billion off aluminum. This amount is well below the allowable limit of 1,000 parts per billion, but approximately 10 times higher than prior levels. Mr. Morrill believes the recent finding is in error and will attempt to resolve the issue in the coming weeks. Ms. Thomas inquired whether a second test for aluminum could be conducted and Mr. Morrill indicated that it could for an additional $100 fee. He will consider that and other options while working with Alpha to resolve the discrepancy.
6. **Old Business**

The Board next discussed the WCWD previously decided water/sewer rate increase as set forth under the existing budget ($5 per month for residential customers and $8 per month for commercial customers) to take effect in July 2022. Ms. Cooper stated that in April or May, she typically sends the notice of rate increases to go into effect in July. Director Weiss and Ms. McLaughlin asked that the notice be sent as soon as possible so that customers can prepare for it. Ms. Cooper stated that she will draft the notice before the March 2022 WCWD Board meeting, so that the Board can consider the content and form of notice at the Board meeting.

Wages Creek Timber Harvest Plan: The Board then discussed the status of the Wages Creek Timber Harvest Plan (“Wages 160 THP” or “THP”). Ms. Cooper reported that Mr. Zachary Jones (of the Lyme Redwood Forest Co, which had first given notice of the THP in November 2021 through an ad in the Fort Bragg Advocate), has not yet responded to the Board’s letter of December 15, 2021 requesting a copy of the THP once it is drafted. On the other hand, Ms. Cooper recently discussed the status of the THP with Mr. Jones when she saw him at school. Mr. Jones stated that he had not yet begun drafting the THP and expected to begin drafting the THP in February. Mr. Morrill and Ms. Thomas stated that a typical THP is a lengthy and carefully drafted document that will take a good amount of time to draft. The Board will continue to monitor this THP, including potentially reaching out again as necessary not only to Mr. Jones but to responsible regulatory agencies such as Cal Fire, Cal EPA and the California Department of Forestry.

Board Member Search: The Board continues to search for potential candidates to fill two WCWD Board vacancies. Ms. Cooper reported that, after placing an article drafted by Mr. Finnell in the February Westport Wave, no one had yet come forward to express interest in serving on the WCWD Board. Mr. Tepper likewise reported that no one had expressed interest in serving to him. The Board again inquired of Ms. Thomas and Mr. Finnell whether they might be willing to serve; while each expressed interest in continuing to participate in WCWD meetings and activities, each felt that now was not the right time for them to join the WCWD Board. Mr. Finnell expressed a preference that a fulltime local resident files an application for the open Director position at this time. The Board and interested members of the public will continue outreach to members of the Westport community to identify and recruit new possible Board members.

1. **New Business**
2. Budget Planning: The budget planning process for the WCWD will begin in July 2022, as previously scheduled by the Board. Ms. Cooper has repeatedly contacted Mr. Darin McCosker Circuit Rider of the California Rural Water Association, but, after expressing interest in assisting the Board with budget planning, Mr. McCosker has not responded to her requests for assistance. Ms. Cooper invited Mr. McClosker to the WCWD Board meeting, but he neither responded nor attended the meeting. Ms. Real suggested that Ms. Cooper contact the California Special District Association as well, and Ms. McLaughlin stated that she will forward a link for that agency to Ms. Cooper so that Ms. Cooper can make contact. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Finnell, Ms. Cooper also agreed to contact the Mendocino County Counsel to ensure that the WCWD’s July timetable is appropriate and follows legal protocols for the proposed fee increase.
3. Form of Billing Statements: Following up on the discussion during the January 13, 2022 WCWD Board meeting of improving the clarity of WCWD monthly statements, as a means of reducing the number of delinquent payments, the Board and member of the public asked Ms. Cooper whether various changes could be made, including providing a summary at the bottom of the invoice of the amounts owed and the period(s) of delinquency. Ms. Cooper reported difficulty with the current QuickBooks program in making the recommended changes. Ms. Thomas offered to work with Ms. Cooper in making the adjustments on the invoices via QuickBooks, and Ms. Cooper accepted the offer. The Board also discussed again the problem of delinquent payments, and again considered instating a fee for late payments. Chairman Tepper reported that the WCWD had formerly charged a 10% fee for delinquent payments. Mr. Weiss requested that Ms. Cooper provide information to help the Board understand the scale of the problem.
4. Brown Act: Continued Authorization to Conduct WCWD Board Meetings Via Zoom/Digital/Virtual Technologies. Chairman Tepper raised the topic of whether continued digital and virtual public meetings of the WCWD is appropriate. After further discussion and upon motion duly made (Mr. Grossman) and seconded (Mr. Weiss), the Board unanimously approved the resolution to continue holding WCWD Board meetings virtually/digitally via Zoom or other similar technologies, pursuant to County Health Department advice and guidance.
5. **Adjournment:** Upon motion made and seconded, the Regular Board Meeting of the WCWD adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Weiss

Temporary Secretary for the February 10, 2022 WCWD Board Meeting