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

**Board of Directors**

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting -Thursday, January 13, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Westport County Water District Board of Directors convened at 7:04 p.m. via ZOOM videoconference. Notice was previously properly issued, a Board was quorum 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: Administrator Ms. Kayla Cooper, Operational Manager and Chief Plant Operator Mr. John Morrill

Public: Ms. Melinda McLaughlin, Mr. Robert Finnell, Ms. Dorine Real, and Ms. Carla Thomas (part of the Meeting).

**2. Consent Agenda**

A. **Draft Board Meeting Minutes.** The draft minutes of the Regular Board meeting of November 11, 2021 and Regular Meeting of December 9, 2021 were provided in advance of the Meeting and were before the Board for approval. Upon motion duly made (Mr. Weiss) and seconded (Mr. Grossman), the Board Meeting minutes for the November 11, 2021 Board Meeting as presented were unanimously approved. The Board Meeting minutes for December 9, 2021 Regular Board Meeting were then presented for final review and approval,. Upon motion duly made (Mr. Grossman) and seconded (Mr. Weiss) the Board unanimously approved the December 9, 2021 Regular Board Meeting minutes. Regarding the December 9, 2021 Meeting minutes, Mr. Finnell as temporary meeting secretary noted he would sign the approved December 9, 2021 minutes and present back for posting on the WCWD website in due course.

**B. Correspondence**

1) At the suggestion of Ms. Kayla Cooper, correspondence from the Mendocino County Counsel’s office was received by WCWD with an invitation extended to the Board and any interested persons to attend a Zoom Meeting Brown Act Training Seminar on Friday, January 2022. Registration details and process of earning the relevant Brown Act training certification was discussed and presented.

**3. Public Comment**

For the next WCWD agenda item, Director Grossman provided an opportunity for general public comment. The attending members of the public were polled for possible comment. Mr. Finnell, suggested that the WCWD should consider the idea of participating in a future “Village of Westport Town Hall” meeting in the future, perhaps as soon as June 2022. Mr. Finnell noted the town of Elk, California sets a good example of such an annual meeting with their various entities and organizations attending and briefly presenting. Ms. Real noted this was a good suggestion. With no other public comment. Chairman Tepper moved to the next agenda item.

**4. Brown Act – Findings for continued Digital – Virtual Public Meetings.** Chairman Tepper referenced the next item on the Agenda which was a discussion and finding for continued Digital – Virtual Public Meetings for the WCWD in the near term. After further discussion and upon motion duly made (Mr. Weiss) and seconded (Mr. Tepper), the Board unanimously approved the resolution to continue Digital -Virtual Public Meetings for the WCWD pursuant to County Health Department advisory and guidance.

**Staff Reports**

1. **Administrator’s Report (7:19 p.m.)**

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 regarding a discrepancy in the expenditure report. Mr. Morrill also provided commentary on the expenditures. Ms. Cooper the reported on the various Report numbers and the signature authorization processes. Mr. Grossman had questions on the sewer fees and after questions asked and answered it was noted answers or clarifications will be reverted.**B. Operations Manager and Chief Plant Operator’s Report (7:33 p.m.)**

Mr. John Morrill (See attached report for more detail.) led the discussion on the Report highlights. Important points:

1. Mr. Morrill noted he is still recovering from his ankle injury that occurred in December and he hopes to be back in physical action in early February. Mr. David Wilson is filling in for him well now and working extra hours accordingly. Possibility of State disability claim process was discussed for Mr. Morrill. Questions were asked and answered.
2. Mr. Morrill provided additional data and insights from the recent heavier than usual rainfall in December 2021 trailing into early January, noting that the potable water figures were good and the WCWD is in reasonable shape now as to capacity.
3. Mr. Morrill noted that the District water leak in its water system is continuing and still have not been detected (principally due to the fact of the ground saturation of recent). This alleged water leak continues to cause a monthly loss of approximately 140,000 to 150,000 gallons of water. Testing and troubleshooting is ongoing and the location and reason for the water leak is currently not known. Questions were asked and answered on the investigation and remediation process, but not a concern quite yet.
4. Mr. Morrill noted there is no scheduled date yet for the WCWD water tank cleaning in the coming by LiquiVision Technology (based in Klamath, Oregon).
5. Mr. Morrill noted that current water flows measurements from the Wages Creek source are approximately 2X of usual expectations for this time of year.
6. As previously reported at the December 9, 2021 WCWD Board Meeting, Mr. Morrill will endeavor to address the subject WCWD generator issue upon his return to Westport, hopefully early February 2022.
7. Mr. Morrill noted there are several required water reports due, and he will endeavor to address them in due course.
8. Mr. Morrill noted that he continues to seek out and attend various continuing education courses in the future, one of which is a 90 hour course.
9. Questions were asked and answered regarding any other material concerns from Mr. Morrill’s desk and other than locating and repairing the water leak, nothing was material at this time. Mr. Morrill was more confident that once the earth dries out a bit more, there is a greater confidence in locating the leak, which again is outside the meters.

**5. Old Business (7:40 pm)**

The Board then discussed the WCWD scheduled water/sewer price increase as set forth under the existing budget and possible assistance from California Water Resources entity for assistance. It was suggested that perhaps an invitation to the WCWD Zoom Thursday, February 10, 2022 open Board Meeting would be a good idea. Questions were asked and answered. Ms. Real noted she had previously assisted with the WCWD budget in prior years. Mr. Tepper supported the idea to have Darren, from CWR, invited to the next WCWD Board Meeting. Questions were asked and answered as to whether the existing WCWD budget could be extended for a period of time and how Proposition 218 may come into play. Questions were asked and answered on timing for the Budget and possible one year extension possibility based on the prior COVID related temporary increase deferment. A discussion ensued regarding ending the increase “freeze” and issue the final WCWD water/sewer increase in July 2022. Ms. Cooper noted the budgeted approved increase would be $5.00 for residential properties and $8.00 per month for commercial properties. Both are monthly increases. Questions were asked and answered regarding how the existing WCWD Budget was published and communicated. Ms. Cooper noted it was published and communicated April 2017. Questions were asked as to whether current budget, final deferred year would cover actual WCWD costs.

RESOLVED: After further discussion, upon motion duly made (Mr. Tepper) and seconded (Mr. Weiss), the Board unanimously approved issuing a notice regarding utilizing the final (previously deferred year) WCWD district rate increase of $5.00 per month (Residential) and $8.00 per month (commercial) commencing with the July 2022 invoice cycle.

The Board then discussed the timing and methods that would be considered and used to timely communicate the July 2022 WCWD rate increase.

Timber Harvest Plan (8:01 pm)

The Board then directed attention to the proposed timber harvest activity that had been publicly noticed that would probably impact the WCWD water source of Wages Creek. It was noted that such Timber Harvest Plan had not yet been filed or communicated to WCWD yet or otherwise. Ms. Cooper noted it was an understanding that such a Timber Harvest Plan draft may commence during February 2022. This will be a matter that will be monitored by the Board.

Board discussion on process for establishing and issuing a WCWD Late Fee Assessment policy and process. Discussion initial discussion by Director Brothers with “Darin” at the California Rural Water Association on budgeting process and guidance. Discussion on Proposition 218 guidance document from the State (48 pages) that should be reviewed and understood by the Board. The Budget would be set for a new five year period. The Budget is due July 2022, but the Board discussed making substantial progress in the February/March 2022 timeframe so enough lead time to formally publish and approve by the July 2022 date.

**6. New Business-**

The Board then discussed a process and update for the recruitment of two replacement Board members. Mr. Finnell encouraged and indicated a preference for full-time residents in the WCWD to apply. Mr. Finnell also noted he could likely attend most of the WCWD monthly Board meetings and if so, would volunteer to function as temporary Meeting Secretary to help off load that work from the Board and its Officers. Other possible full-time resident candidates were discussed, with questions asked and answered. Mr. Finnell volunteered to compose a draft article for publishing in the Westport Wave (subject to prior final copy review by the WCWD Board) regarding the WCWD and its active recruitment process

The Board discussed the timing preference for Director David Brother’s resignation from the WCWD after many years of service, due to family care issues he is undertaking in Connecticut for the near and mid-term. Ms. Cooper noted that the fifth director position for the WCWD does not easily open up until November 2022, the next election cycle. A brief discussion ensued on possible Director candidates for Mr. Brother’s Board seat, timing and process. A brief discussion was undertaken on contacting past recent Board members to occasionally attend WCWD open meetings to provide input and knowledge continuity management. The concept of a possible Advisory Committee to the Board was also briefly discussed.

The Board then discussed Proposition 218 and the process for Budget process and the process of evaluating WCWD rates against the proposed Budget. Mr. Real suggested a published timeline or handbook methodology. The Board again discussed a delinquent payment process and the value of such a process and communication. Questions were asked and answered regarding reviewing and possibly improving the WCWD paper statements to improve on the clarity of amounts due and amounts paid by WCWD customers, including a simple PAID stamp indication or PAST DUE Stamp. Chair Tepper suggested placing the invoice content review on the next WCWD Board Meeting agenda, so action can be taken in accordance with the Brown Act. The next scheduled WCWD Board of Directors meeting (open to the public) is scheduled for Thursday, February 10, 2022 via ZOOM Meeting commencing 7:00 p.m.

**7. Adjournment.** Upon motion made and seconded, the Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert D. Finnell

Temporary Secretary for the January 13, 2021 WCWD Board Meeting

February 2021