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

**Board of Directors**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting – Wednesday, November 9, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Westport County Water District Board of Directors convened at 7:01 pm via Zoom videoconference. 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.

1. **Roll Call at Inception (7:01 pm):**

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

Not able to attend: Mr. David Brothers.

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

Present Members of the Public: Mr. Jeff Whitehouse, Ms. Dorine Real (portion of meeting), Ms. Carla Thomas (portion of meeting) and Mr. Robert Finnell (portion of the meeting).

1. **Consent Agenda (7:02 pm)**
2. **Draft Board Meeting Minutes (7:02 pm):** The draft minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of October 20, 2022 and the Special Board Meeting of October 27, 2022 were provided in advance of the meeting and were before the Board for approval. Upon motion duly made (Chairman Tepper) and seconded (Director Grossman), the Board unanimously approved the October 20, 2022 Minutes with instructions to have the applicable meeting secretary (Director Weiss) sign the minutes and place with the District records. Mr. Morrill took issue, however, with a portion of Section 2 of the draft October 27, 2022 minutes that attributed to Ms. Cinkutis the statement that bolts on water tanks might have to be replaced every 10 years. Mr. Morrill stated that he did not believe Ms. Cinkutis made such a statement and that it is not the case that bolts might have to be replaced every 10 years. The Board asked Mr. Weiss to re-check his notes from the October 27, 2022 meeting and for Mr. Morrill to reach out if necessary to seek clarification from Ms. Cinkutis.
3. **Correspondence (7:10 pm):** There was no correspondence to discuss.
4. **Public Comment (7:10 pm):** There was no public comment.
5. **Staff Reports**
6. **Administrator’s Report (7:10 pm)**

Ms. Kayla Cooper led the discussion regarding review of the monthly Bookkeeper’s Report for October 2022. (The Report is attached to these minutes.) Ms. Cooper reported that the WCWD’s main bank account held $49,408.28 and that there was $11,349.37 in water capital and $11,432.22 in sewer capital. Questions were asked and answered regarding various aspects of the Report, including charges by Pace Supply and AT&T.

Ms. Cooper led the discussion regarding preparation of the 5 Year Budget. In advance of the meeting, Ms. Cooper had distributed a WCWD Profit and Loss Statement for July 2017 through June 2022 to serve as the foundation for the budget. The Board agreed to meet in person on Monday, December 12, 2022 at the Firehouse in order to discuss the budget. Ms. Cooper also reported that the CPA who had worked with the WCWD in the recent past, Zack *McSweeney [?],* was unavailable to assist until April 2023. Accordingly, Ms. Cooper stated that she will reach out to CPA’s in Fort Bragg, including JJACPA, to assist the WCWD.

1. **Operator’s Report (7:28 pm)**

Mr. John Morrill led a discussion of the WCWD Operator Report dated November 9, 2022. (See attached Report for more detail.) Some of the more important discussion points were the following:

1. Maintenance: Mr. Morrill reported on the ongoing pampas grass issue. He stated that Adam Vanwormer had mowed the field. Next, he will have Brian Hawes dig up the pampas grass with his excavator (at the rate of $65 per hour) after the Thanksgiving weekend.
2. Mr. Morrill reported a water infiltration problem with the sewer pipe at Masolini property, which will require digging. He stated that he plans to hire Brian Hawes for that work as well, again at the rate of $65 per hour. Ms. Thomas asked for a time estimate and Mr. Morrill stated that this is impossible to provide until the digging is underway but provided a 3-day guestimate.
3. Mr. Morrill reported that the production and use of drinking water in October was similar to September, which was down significantly from the prior month.
4. Mr. Morrill reported that he had purchased a year’s worth of Chlorine at the cost of $8 per gallon, well below the $18 per gallon it used to cost, albeit up slightly from last year’s cost of $5 per gallon.
5. Drought: Mr. Morrill reported that Westport received .2 inches of rain in October. The creek flow remains well above minimum flow rates.
6. The directors inquired as to the status of Mr. David Wilson’s efforts to prepare for and take his licensing exam. Director Weiss suggested that the Board offer to pay for Mr. Wilson’s attendance at a 5-day test preparation class, which Mr. Morrill stated would be necessary. Mr. Morrill agreed to discuss this with Mr. Wilson.
7. **Old Business**
8. **RFQ to Implement Various Needed Capital Improvement Projects (7:44 pm):**

Mr. Morrill began the discussion by recounting the research he had done to determine how the State Water Resources Control Board will likely determine if Westport is a “disadvantaged community” (“DAC”). Such status would greatly improve the WCWD’s ability to obtain grant funding for the capital improvement projects planned. Mr. Morrill explained that he has been communicating directly with senior officials at the SWRCB on the methods to be used to evaluate and determine DAC status. The first threshold is whether <50% of residences are secondary rather than primary homes. Westport satisfies this standard, as only 46.2% of Westport residences are secondary homes. Second, the median income level in Westport must be less than $67,900, which is 80% of the state median level. The SWRCB is now analyzing this at Mr. Morrill’s request. If the WRCB is unable to definitively determine Westport’s median income level, an independent organization will conduct an income survey. Mr. Morrill answered questions from Director Grossman and Ms. Thomas regarding the scope of the community to be surveyed and the degree to which the SWRCB would be permitted to rely on previously compiled income levels.

The Directors then (beginning at 7:50 pm) reported at length on the due diligence each had conducted to date on MC Engineering (Director Weiss), GHD (Chairman Tepper) and Bennett Engineering (Director Grossman). The findings of the Directors as reported at the meeting shall not be detailed in these minutes, in order to preserve the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of the reports received. We do summarize the general method by which each Director conducted his due diligence below.

Each Director had begun his due diligence effort by conducting an internet search to determine whether there were available reports on the company’s background, financial status, reputation and performance for other municipalities or whether there had been litigation or disputes regarding the company’s work. Directors Weiss and Grossman had followed that research up by conducting detailed telephone interviews with references provided by the competing companies, and each reported on what they had learned in those interviews regarding the companies’ relative competency, performance, working and communication styles, efficiency, timeliness, costs, attention to detail and the like. Mr. Weiss additionally reached out to one individual that had worked with MC Engineering but had not been listed by them as a reference. Chairman Tepper had not yet conducted interviews with respect to GHD’s references.

Accordingly, the Board determined that it would take an additional week to conduct such interviews (apportioning them between Chairman Tepper and Director Weiss) and convene a Special Meeting on November 16, 2022 to discuss its findings in those interviews and in other aspects of its due diligence investigation on the companies. The Board, Mr. Morrill and members of the public gave their impressions of the relative strength and weaknesses of each of the three companies but deferred making any decision until it had completed the additional interviews and received more detailed responses and commitments from the companies on the degree to which each would shoulder the financial burden of applying for a planning grant.

1. **New Business**
2. **Adjournment (8:52 pm):**

Upon motion made (Director Weiss) and seconded (Chairman Tepper), the Regular Board Meeting of the WCWD was unanimously adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Weiss

Temporary Secretary for the November 9, 2022 WCWD Board Meeting