

Moab Irrigation District #20

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Date: September 18, 2025

Location: Tri-Community Grange Hall, 25025 E Heather Lane, Newman Lake, WA 99025

Time: 6:00 PM

1. Call to Order

- Meeting called to order by Chair at 6:00 PM.

Roll call: Board Directors present included Deanna Erwin (Chair), Rosalee Allan, Dave Pfeiffer, Robert Snow, and Holt Ayles (Assistant Chair). Staff present included Scott Inch, District Manager and Jeannette Radmer, Office Manager. Others present included Attorney Dunham and Engineer McMulkin and several community members.

2. Approval of Vouchers

- Vouchers 13-19 (payroll: \$26,468.80) and 13-20 (operations: \$22,084.55) presented for approval.
- Motion to approve vouchers made and seconded.
- All board members voted in favor; vouchers approved and signed.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- July 17th, August 11th (special), and September 11th (special) meeting minutes presented.
- Motions made and seconded for approval of each set of minutes; all approved.
- Discussion: Concern raised that no board minutes have been posted on the Moab Irrigation District website since May 2025.
- Decision: Robert will complete the July 23rd and August 21st minutes and bring them for approval at the October 2025 meeting; Rosalee takes over task of producing minutes of current September 18, 2025, meeting as well as future meetings.
- Action Item: All board minutes will be available for review and approval at the next scheduled board meeting. Staff will promptly resume posting approved minutes on the district website.

4. Election Board Appointments

- Background: In July, board approved transition to all mail-in voting.

- Discussion: Brief discussion regarding voting details per parcel and why there is an expense for elections. Considered appointing election board earlier to assist with new mail-in process. Standard practice is to appoint after petitions are filed and election confirmed. Members discussed timing (December availability) and bylaw requirements.
- Decision: Election board appointments to be placed on the October agenda for further decision-making.
- Action Item: Add election board appointments to October agenda; finalize appointment timeline once election status confirmed.

5. Assessment & Equalization Timeline

- Discussion: Board plans to set 2026 rates in October 2025, followed by equalization in November 2025. We won't vote on the 2026 rates as a board until the community has an opportunity to make comments at the October meeting. Once the community has made comment and then we've deliberated further, we'll decide at that meeting if we can all agree to approve the 2026 rates or set a follow-up meeting to discuss it further.
- Once the board approves rates for the 2026 assessment roll, the attorney prepares public notices that will inform community that the 2026 rates are available for viewing at the district office. Public Notices will be posted in a local newspaper (Valley Herald/Cheney Free Press) and on the district website.
- Decision: Board is planning to approve rates at October meeting; equalization hearing scheduled for November meeting.
- Action Item: Attorney's office to prepare and publish equalization notice once the 2026 rates are approved by the board. The 2026 rates will be published on the district's website after the equalization meeting has occurred.

6. Approval of Treasury Report

- Fund balance as of August 31, 2025:

As of August 31, 2025, fund total is \$1,119,817.04.

- Two major revenue receipts are anticipated in coming four months (second-half property assessments and fall excess water charges).
- Projected balance of fund after estimated revenue receipts and expenses paid by year-end could reach ~\$1.213 million.

Clarification - District still has a \$200,000 deficit in the Operational Emergency Reserve Fund (not fully funded since 2005 appropriation).

Clarification - The 2026 rate study anticipated cost is included in the general expense fund allocation of the Treasury Report and does not appear as a budgeted expense item for 2026.

Clarification – The Treasury Report has nothing to do with the Capital Expense List distributed at the meeting.

Clarification – Part of the Treasury Report includes a category for uncompensated absences. A discussion occurred regarding why we are self-insured for unemployment and not using State of Washington unemployment program to cover the employee unemployment benefit. The board requested the information needed to make this change.

- Motion to approve Treasury Report made and seconded; approved unanimously.
- Action Item: Scott Inch to prepare clearer Treasury Report overview of revenue allocation and reserve balances for board review.
- Action Item: Scott Inch will research the steps needed to move from a self-insured unemployment model that requires an allocation in the Treasury Report to a non-self-insured Washington State unemployment option where a monthly fee is remitted. He will present plan of action at the October 2025 meeting.

7. Operations Report

- Payroll update: Board approved retroactive standby/on-call pay for Scott (\$1,559.24 through September 30th). This is to compensate for his 50% of on-call time that he has been covering, which was not in his regular pay. And moving forward, he will be showing it on his payroll. This arrangement will end as soon as staff are hired, or resources are contracted and trained to cover on-call.
- Update on RFP results for rate study. Copy of an e-mail from Welch Comer distributed to the Board. Welch Comer has decided to not submit an RFP response as the RFP request did not include an engineering evaluation of the system or a capital improvement plan development. Other responses to the RFP will be reported at upcoming Board meetings.
- Election update: Mail-in ballot process will cost approximately \$5,000; details of ballot allocation and security discussed.
- Meter reading: Temporary agency staff will be used for seasonal meter reading due to hiring challenges.

8. Policy Discussions

- Asset Disposal & Disposition Policy:
 - Board discussed dollar thresholds for asset sales and reporting requirements.
 - Agreed to add manager responsibility for updating asset management plan and to clarify board approval thresholds.
 - Scott to send policy draft for legal review.

- Hiring Policy:

- Board discussed restrictions on hiring board member dependents and required approval processes.

- Policy will be updated to reflect definition of board member dependent ineligibility for hire and board member recusal from related hiring decisions.

9. Budget Review (2026)

- Board reviewed line-by-line proposed expenses for 2026, including payroll, benefits, per diem, office supplies, technical services, attorney fees, power, insurance, debt payments, audits, water planning, maintenance, and capital improvements.

- Key points:

- District manager salary and on-call pay clarified.

- Field tech position to include office support duties.

- Attorney fees budgeted at \$30,000 (3% of total budget).

- Power costs increased by 10% due to early pump usage and rate hikes.

- Capital improvement placeholder retained; truck replacement removed from budget.

- No additional contributions to reserves planned for 2026.

10. Community Comments

- Multiple community members expressed concerns about overall transparency, no revenue discussion, budget increases (i.e., attorney fees), reserve levels, rate-setting process and missed opportunities for grant funding. Community members also pressed for access to monthly financial reports and for clarity on whether prior years were over or under budget. Requested that budget materials and budget meeting information be readily accessible to the community members. Community members proposed budget freeze and rate freeze due to insufficient planning and communication. Questioned if the district is sustainable under current structure.

- The board stated that expenses must be set first under state law, after which rates are determined to match. This year, the board is following this process. The board acknowledged community frustrations and committed to addressing revenue discussions in the following month's meeting.

- Board agreed to improve posting of meeting notices and documents, including at the post office and online.

- Strategic Planning Committee proposed to explore merger/co-management options with other districts/organizations. The Board welcomed the suggestion from the Strategic

Planning Committee and affirmed the Board's willingness to consider it. Scott Carver will present the committee's proposal and plan of action at the October board meeting.

- Board acknowledged need for grant applications and recognized the current efforts being made by a volunteer community member, Dr. Denise Smart and Rosalee Allan, Board Member. A report on progress will be made at the October board meeting.

- A resident of Strong Lane wished to correct misinformation that the water distribution issue in his neighborhood is only regarding low water pressure, The resident also has documented occurrences of no water. A letter was submitted by the resident and will be recorded by the secretary to the board.

11. 2026 Expense Budget Approval

- Motion to approve 2026 expense budget at \$1,081,631 seconded and carried. It was confirmed that both reserves and contingency allocations were set at zero in the approved budget.

- Board agreed to set rates at the next meeting, based on approved expenses.

12. Executive Session

- Executive session was called, the basis for the executive session to discuss potential litigation with counsel present under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). The board entered executive session at approximately 10:05 pm for 30 minutes to discuss confidential matters.

13. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned following executive session.

- Next regular meeting scheduled for October 16, 2025, at 6:00 PM. October meeting to be held at Tri-Community Grange Hall for community accessibility. Address is 25025 E Heather Lane, Newman Lake, WA 99025

Chairman Deanna Erwin

Rosalee Allan

Minutes prepared by: Director Rosalee Allan

Date: October 5th, 2025