

PACIFIC CITY JWSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

March 23, 2021

Chair McVicker stated that the board was meeting via video conference call due to the pandemic and the Oregon Governors social distancing recommendation.

Directors Present: Carolyn McVicker, Sean Carlton, Cameron Gogas, Tom Donohue, and Anne Price. (via video conference call)

Guests Present: None

Staff Present: Michelle Hughes, Ray Browning, Leonard Whiteman, and Rachelle DeLoe.

Chair McVicker called to order the special meeting at 10:30 AM.

**UPDATE FROM STAFF**

A. AMR Project

Chair McVicker said she and Ms. Hughes had conferenced with legal counsel. Ms. Hughes said there had not been any additional issues and the meter lids would be delivered that week. Ms. Hughes continued that the contractor would be back after the first of April to install lids and connect radios.

Chair McVicker said they had a few outstanding issues with the contractor.

Chair McVicker gave a summary of the cut lock situation. Chair McVicker said legal counsel advised that the contract was vague enough that it did not cover cut locks specifically and would be the Authority's responsibility. Director Carlton asked for a copy of the lock policy. Ms. Hughes said she would get a copy to the board.

Chair McVicker said there was a customer that had suffered damage to their home. Chair McVicker continued that paragraph 10 of the contract covered those types of instances and they were waiting on a report from the insurance adjustor to then forward to the contractor. Director Carlton asked if there were a lot of issues coming from customers regarding the meter replacement project. Chair McVicker said they were still collecting that information per legal counsel advisement. Chair McVicker continued that the contract did not have a back charge or retainage paragraph and would continue to work with legal counsel regarding that issue. Ms. Hughes gave several examples of issues that customers had complained about.

B. Horn Creek Internet

Ms. Hughes reported that she had contacted the regional manager of CenturyLink and they would have a tech out the following week. Ms. Hughes continued that they said they could get 6 MB to

Horn Creek and Global Network Support said that would be sufficient. Ms. Hughes said she had received a new modem. Director Gogas asked what the monthly charges would be for the increased speed. Ms. Hughes replied that it would change from \$39.99 per month to \$99.99 per month. Discussion ensued regarding future internet options the Authority may seek.

### C. Springbrook

Ms. Hughes reported that they had two meetings the prior week about Utility Billing and Finance. Ms. Hughes continued that they were in the testing process and had until that Friday to complete testing. Ms. Hughes said they would have a check in the next week to report any issues and were still on schedule to go live April 22, 2021. Director Carlton asked if they had confirmation that the new software would work with the AMR system. Ms. Hughes responded that they did and they were testing that aspect of the software as well.

## **CURRENT STATUS**

### A. Board Liaison

Director Price reported that she had two meetings so far with the leads of PCJWSA (Michelle, Leonard, Ray, and Rachelle).

Director Price reported that the lead staff placed the highest priority on hiring a Wastewater Operator III, because it would take a long time to find candidates, and the person hired would need as much time as possible to train with Ray Browning. Director Price said they felt it was also critical to fill the open Operator in Training position that had been open for more than two years. Director Price continued that the former Authority Manager had committed verbally to filling the two open positions but had not begun the advertising process. Director Price said there was a standard hiring process that had been used for several years and because the positions had been committed to by the previous Authority Manager, she had asked staff to move forward with the applicant search process.

Director Price reported that the lead staff was concerned with the characterization of “toxic” that was used in a recent meeting. Director Price relayed that the staff wanted to assure the board and community, that though there may have been tensions in the past, those tensions were not amongst the operating staff and they were working smoothly together as a team and share a commitment to provide safe and reliable water and wastewater services to the community.

Director Price reported that they had also discussed the Interim Authority Manager but would like to save that topic for later in the meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for another operator in training, Mr. Whiteman moving into the Wastewater Operator III position, and job descriptions.

Director Price asked if the board could have a matrix of which employees were in what positions and what certifications they had, so that the board did not get confused. Ms. Hughes said she would send that to the board.

## B. Gathering Data- Update Re Call with Ryan Fleming

Chair McVicker reported that she had spoken with Ryan Fleming, but he was busy until May. Chair McVicker said Mr. Fleming wanted to work with the board prior to data gathering. Chair McVicker gave some examples of things the board needed to think about prior to meeting with Ryan Fleming. Chair McVicker asked if the board would like her to pursue a meeting with Mr. Fleming. Discussion ensued regarding HR consultants that may be available sooner, as some board members did not want to wait two months. Director Price reiterated that she felt very comfortable that the staff was functioning very well as a team and the tensions that were mentioned may have been rumors. Discussion ensued regarding preparation the board should take before meeting with Mr. Fleming, reasons they cannot use executive session, and who the staff would report to with the absence of an Authority Manager.

Director Carlton asked for clarification regarding whether the board could conduct an investigation. Chair McVicker responded that whistleblower policies state that if a staff member comes to the board with a complaint, it is their responsibility to take action, but would not conduct the investigation themselves.

Director Carlton suggested the board get legal advice in the absence of an Authority Manager and handling HR issues, while they wait to consult with Mr. Fleming. Director Price added that they could ask for guidance from SDAO as well.

Chair McVicker summarized the boards discussion, including contributions to the Authority Managers resignations and practices of the board to ensure success. Director Carlton added that the board had failed in communication standards as well.

Director Gogas asked if there would be Covid information during the April business meeting. Chair McVicker replied in the affirmative. Director Carlton said it was important to reiterate Covid policy, create a new Covid policy, or bring in training for staff. Director Donohue recommended contacting the Tillamook County Health Department for training materials and opportunities. Chair McVicker stated because Covid policy was not on the agenda, they would pick it up at the April business meeting.

## **INTERIM AUTHORITY MANAGER OPTIONS**

Chair McVicker referred to a document in the board packet of correspondence she had with OAWU, SDAO, Prothman, and Rob Mills, and received several responses including, contacting a previous employee, looking at the Authority Manager pool of applicants from the last hiring round, and to hire a consultant for specific work. Chair McVicker continued that there were many projects that needed immediate attention and the board could not act as the Authority Manager without having two meetings a week, which she believed the board may not be available for. Chair McVicker recommended that the board appoint Michelle Hughes as Authority Manager through December 31, 2021. Chair McVicker continued that Ms. Hughes had been with the Authority for several years, had an extensive financial background, had written and or edited most policies and resolutions, and had knowledge of the budget process. Chair McVicker said the staff, community,

and board held her in high respect and had experience with legal counsel and engineering consultants. Chair McVicker gave several projects that needed an Authority Managers attention and Ms. Hughes would move seamlessly into that position.

Director Price reported that during her meetings with the lead staff, she said it was clear why they would need an Interim Authority Manager, but concern was expressed about an outside individual coming into the system as they would need extensive training and time to catch up. Director Price said her impression was that the lead staff would be very busy helping a new individual and it would take a lot of time and if that individual did not apply for the Authority Manager position, the lead staff would have to turn around and train a new individual again.

Discussion ensued regarding the HR assessment and the boards concerns about the communication failure.

### **Motion**

Director Price moved to appoint Michelle Hughes as the Interim Authority Manager through December 31, 2021 unless an Authority Manager is hired and trained prior to that date. Director Carlton seconded, and the motion carried with four ayes and one abstention.

Ms. Hughes accepted the appointment.

Director Carlton asked if Ms. Hughes would move into the Authority Manager salary bracket. Chair McVicker replied in the affirmative and said that the current salary range for an Authority Manager was \$85,000 to \$125,000. Chair McVicker recommended that they use the salary of \$95,000 due to Ms. Hughes experience and longevity.

Discussion ensued regarding what Ms. Hughes experience was worth, and how to break down the salary in a fair way. The board had a difficult time justifying the compensation without further discussion and job description availability. Director Donohue added that if the discussion were to be tabled, the board should agree to make the compensation retroactive to March 23, 2021.

### **Motion**

Director Price moved to approve the annual salary of \$95,000 for Ms. Hughes as Interim Authority Manager. Chair McVicker seconded, and the motion carried with three ayes and two nays.

## **AUTHORITY MANAGER SEARCH**

Chair McVicker said that Prothman was waiting for response from the board and staff regarding the Authority Manager job description posting and asked if the board could return those with their comments by the following Tuesday. Discussion ensued the timeline of the hiring process versus the HR assessment that the board was anticipating in the coming months. Members of the board asked for clarification on the discount given by Prothman and Chair McVicker responded that she would get that information to the board.

Chair McVicker adjourned the meeting at 12:47 PM.

The PCJWSA Board of Directors approved these minutes on April 6, 2021, by the following votes:

Aye\_\_\_\_\_ Nay\_\_\_\_\_ Abstain\_\_\_\_\_ Absent\_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carolyn McVicker, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Hughes, Authority Manager