

BIG LAGOON COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

APPROVED MINUTES of the Regular Monthly Board Meeting - Saturday, March 20, 2021 - 2:00 PM

Teleconference Via Zoom (Approved on April 17, 2021)

OPEN SESSION

1. Chair's Call to Order (Bill)

The open/regular meeting of the Big Lagoon Community Services District convened at 2:01 PM.

Board members in attendance: Bill Wenger, Chair; Gus Satein, Vice Chair; Dick Maier, Treasurer; Chuck King, Director; Joey Blaine, Director

Staff in attendance: Mara Friedman, Board Secretary; Val Castellano, Operator; Dana Hope, Meter Reader

Community members in attendance: John Donohoe, Rob Wilson, Margie Adler, Larry Davis

Chair's Opening Statement

- Recording meetings: Bill brought up the idea of having Dick record our zoom calls, which would allow us to archive our meetings and make it possible for the community to listen to at their convenience. McKinleyville CSD records and archives their meetings, which are available on Youtube.

- Meeting day/time: At our last meeting, three community members stated that our current day/time (Saturday 2pm) did not work well for their schedules and asked the board to consider a change. After considering other options, Bill decided to keep our schedule as is, because it works best for him and for the board. He noted that we have had increased community participation at the current day/time.

2. Invite Public to Address Item(s) on the Agenda (Bill)

2.1 Dick addressed the issue of recording our meetings. His experience as a CPA has shown him that the general public can pull information out of context from archived meetings, which opens the door to a host of issues. He has great concern about how information can be misconstrued. Currently, the meeting minutes serve as the official record of our meetings. They paraphrase events, but are not exact transcripts. He feels strongly that this issue needs to be brought up as a future Agenda item before we make any decision. Bill asked Joey about MKCSD history with recorded meetings. Joey stated he is not aware of any issues with the recordings, but that our two districts differ in structure. While Dana understands why Bill would like to make the meetings available to the community, as well as the desire for full transparency, she agrees with Dick 100%. Posting the minutes on our new website will give the public access to archived meeting minutes. Gus appreciates the downside to providing recordings of meetings and concurs that we need more experience as a board before considering whether or not to archive recordings of our meetings. Bill agreed that these considerations make good sense and are persuasive arguments as to why we need not record and archive our meetings for public consumption at a later date. Therefore, there is no need to vote on this issue and the matter is closed.

2.2 Rob asked if it was decided that we are staying with current meeting day/time. Bill answered yes. Rob stated that he was opposed to that decision.

3. Agenda for March 20, 2021 (Bill) Amend / Approval

There were no changes to the agenda.

Motion made to approve the 3/20/21 meeting agenda.

Motion: Maier, Second: Blaine- Motion Approved: 5 ayes, 0 nays

4. February 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes (Bill) Amend / Approval

There were no changes to the meeting minutes.

Motion made to approve the 2/20/21 minutes.

Motion: King, Second: Satein – Motion Approved: 5 ayes, 0 nays

5. Water System Operator's Report (Val)

5.1 System status: We are pumping about 5K gallons a day. We did really well on our chemical tests for raw water. Also tested for regulated VOC's – all tested good. Val reported that Alves did good work at 97 RHC, and that no water lines were hit. McNeil will inspect our backflow prevention devices and give us a certificate of compliance. We need to find a location for a standby well, either on our easement or on neighboring property.

5.2 Emergency Response Workshop: Val & Gus attended an emergency procedures/planning webinar. Our vulnerabilities are equal for earthquake, fire, and vandalism. Perhaps we can get volunteers to monitor the well site? Rob asked if we are experiencing vandalism at the well site, to which Val answered no. He wondered if the district would be interested in purchasing a trail cam to monitor the site. Val thinks that's a great idea, as does Bill, who suggested we might add this to our next agenda.

5.3 The valve repair at 181 OVD is scheduled for 3/23 or 3/24. A new valve will be added on the service side of the meter, as well as extend the meter a little. Neighborhood water will NOT be turned off during the repair, unless a break occurs during the valve repair.

6. Water Meter Reader's Report (Dana)

Dana, along with Laura and Dick, read the water meters on Saturday 2/27 at 10am. Thanks to Laura for her help! The noticeable improvement in the overall cleanliness of the meters is appreciated.

7. Treasurer's Report (Dick)

7.1 February meter reading takeaways: Dick thanked Dana and Laura for their service. After joining them in meter reading, he has much more appreciation for all the work they do. A majority of meters were clean. There were 6 instances of varying degrees of difficulty to read meters and warning letters will be sent to these customers. He requested that the board help him determine when to implement the next step of penalties. There is a wide range in all the meters as far as age, readability, accessibility, valves, etc. Some meters are pushing 50 years old and some are set very deep and thus hard to read. Perhaps the board should consider upgrading valves and/or meters? Gus stated that he would address this issue later in the meeting.

7.2 Our most recent P&L report showed a \$138K bank balance. We have sufficient funds to take care of day-to-day needs. Dick feels it's important for the board to address and establish a capital improvement budget and suggested that we put this on our April agenda. This budget would authorize board members in charge of various committees to spend designated investigative funds and proceed with preliminary research (studies/samples/etc) with greater ease.

8. Website Status Report (Joey)

Our new website should be launched in a few weeks. Joey shared on zoom the working, in progress website. Currently, our temporary domain name is - biglagooncsd.com. Joey will be the site administrator and Streamline will host. In answer to Gus's question, there will be a FAQ section. Joey suggested that we form an ad hoc committee to brainstorm how we want to present ourselves on our site, as well as decide on our final domain name. In April, the online payment option will be available. Bill wanted to know if our domain is thru Google or Streamline? He feels it might make sense to use the Google Domain name.

9. Leak Adjustment Policy Status Report (Chuck)

Chuck thanked his work group team - Greg, Catherine and Rob, as well as Joey and Dana, for their valuable assistance. After reviewing policies from other water districts, a consensus for a new leak adjustment policy was arrived at on 3/20. This proposal will be presented to the board at the next meeting.

10. Storage Capacity & Fire Suppression Status Report (Bill)

- The work group continues to research storage capacity and tank technology. Aquastore is the favored tank for our coastal area. Orick, Trinidad Rancheria, and Westhaven will use Aquastore tanks. Although Aquastore tanks are more expensive, being glass-lined inside and out, these tanks ensure excellent water quality and tank durability. We're waiting to receive more information (pricing/warranty/etc) from Aquastore.

- In a small district like ours, there is a tradeoff between delivering safe, high quality water and meeting our fire flow needs. Bill has been talking with different engineering firms, as well as Paul Rosenblatt (Westhaven CSD's General Manager). Paul's knowledge has been very helpful and he highly recommends Pace Engineering in Redding. Bill has been in discussions with Pace and they have been very generous with their time. They will be here in a week to do an on-site assessment and he hopes that we will be able to sign a work order with them. Pace's preliminary findings will help us understand what our potential cost would be to upgrade our system. Our local contractors have poor reputations, and Bill has not received any indication that they are interested in working with us after repeatedly reaching out to them. Bill is seeking two estimates for preliminary work from Pace and also a Sacramento-based engineering firm.

- There are grants and loans available thru Rural Communities Assistance Corporation. RCAC performs median household income surveys, (free, door to door), which determines if a community can be classified as a 'disadvantaged unincorporated community' (DUC). When designated as a DUC, doors open for financial aid such as grants and loans. Big Lagoon Rancheria is a DUC. Westhaven CSD is also a DUC and is receiving both state and federal funding. If we decide to have the survey performed, we will need to reach out to the community beforehand. Dana suggested an informational letter be mailed out to our community. If we are not determined to be a DUC, our options might be limited to getting a grant for fire related issues. Although we have great drinking water, we score very low on fire flow capabilities. Gus asked if this project would have an approximate budget of 100K? Although he hopes it is less, Bill replied that it is too early to tell.

- Bill mentioned that California encourages water districts to consolidate. When they do, funding flows their way. A discussion followed about the possibility of consolidating with Big Lagoon Park Corporation. Based on past history, some members think there may be a lot of community resistance to this idea. Chuck advised that it's not wise to make decisions based on anecdotal information and it never hurts to explore all our options. Dana and Val described some of the ways the BLPC is set up very differently than BLCSD.

- Bill noted that were we to receive a low interest loan, there would be no need to look at possible consolidation. Val stated that our credit is very good and we could borrow money if needed. RCAC offers both short and long term loans. CoBank is said to have the best loan rates for rural communities.

- Margie noted that this is a critical issue and it's time to move our system to the next level. We need to think long term through a lens that is both economical and sustainable.

11. Easement Boundary Survey Report (Bill)

- The survey was completed in 5 hours and Kolstad Land Surveying did a great job. The final bill should be around \$1,600.00, the original estimate. All five corners of our easement were located, in addition to the eastern boundary. Our easement covers a lot more land than we initially thought. This gives us more options in locating a new well when we decide to put one in. Our current existing well is well within our boundary. Appreciation was expressed for the brush cutting that Bill and Chuck did to help with the survey.

- Bill suggested that we schedule a future neighborhood volunteer work weekend to clean up the easement area, especially around the well site. We could use a chipper (Dick has one with 3" capacity), and/or haul away debris. Chuck suggested that there are leaning trees near our tanks that need to be proactively removed.

12. Road Improvement Status Report (Gus)

Gus met with Jim Crook at the turn leading up to the well site. Jim's quote was \$3,500 and Scott Miller's was \$2,310, for the same work and 20 yards of rock. Based on the difference in the two bids, the job was awarded to Scott Miller, who was given a notice to proceed. Miller has provided an insurance certificate naming BLCSD as additionally insured. Gus estimated that the work would begin mid to end of April.

13. Valve Replacement Options and Upgrading Meters Discussion (Gus)

- Preliminary discussion regarding valve & meter upgrade. There is currently a shutoff valve at 181 OV that has failed. We have not been able to close it off, which has prevented the customer from doing repairs. Not being able to maintain and repair our water supply system puts us in a bad position. Dana and Val noted that there are at least three meters that have problems. As some of the meters are 50 years old, these meters may be near a failing point, and old meters are known to under report water usage. It's time to consider alternatives to our old meters and shutoff valves. Gus mentioned that Paul Rosenblatt (Westhaven) recommends Ford quarter turn meter valves. We may want the new meters to read in gallons, not in cubic feet.

- At the next meeting, Gus will present a proposal and budget to replace all the meters and valves. He has estimated a preliminary 16 to 20K budget. He strongly suggests spreading this program out over two to three years (replacing 10-12 meters & valves per year) until completed. Gus is looking into the Badger water meter brand (Santa Rosa manufacturer), which are currently used both in Westhaven and BLCSD. Gus and Bill recommend, in addition to replacing meters and valves, to add customer shutoff valves on their side of the meter.

- Discussion about the possibility of installing smart meters. About two years ago we received a bid for installing smart meters. Although seemingly affordable, the board did not pursue this idea. Rob thinks it might be a good idea to install smart meters in phases. Joey shared that Badger radio-read meters are able to detect leaks when they occur. Gus will research and provide a cost option for that alternative. Chuck suggested we identify and prioritize houses where the water can't be turned off to fix a leak.

Gus concurred that part of this program would be to identify and prioritize the worse case situations. Dana suggested that a survey be sent out to each household with two basic questions: 1. Do you know how to shut off your water? 2. Do you know where your shut off valve is? She also suggested that we develop instructions to help our neighbors better understand and use their water system. Rob wondered whom to call first if there is a leak and several names were mentioned. It was agreed that we need to develop a protocol and that this information will be easily accessed in the FAQ section of our new website. Gus stated that our board needs to create a team to provide backup for Val.

- Dana suggested it's important to have at least two valve shutoff tools placed at each end of our street in case of emergency. Bill asked Gus to pursue research into additional tools to be distributed within the district (Bill/Val/Gus/2 more), and arrange with Val to conduct onsite training in tool operation.

14. Action Items - None

15. Public Comments

15.1 Val encouraged everyone to email our state/county legislators, suggesting they make good use of the two empty portable buildings at the school by creating a Cal Fire - EMT Annex. We have a lot of traffic here because of the lagoon and Patrick's Point and there is a need for this presence.

15.2 Dana announced that there will be a Tsunami warning test on Wednesday 24th between 11am and noon. They are asking everyone to listen for the siren located at Big Lagoon, and if we don't hear it, please contact them. Mara will send out the notice out to the BLCSD community.

16. Future Agenda Items From Board Members

16.1 Dick will submit a proposal for setting up a Capitol Improvement Fund.

16.2 The Leak Adjustment Policy work group will submit a proposal for consideration.

17. Adjourn

With no other business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:45pm.

Next regular meeting will be April 17, 2021 at 2 pm on Zoom.

Submitted by Mara Friedman, Board Secretary