

**Chester Public Utility District
PO Box 503
251 Chester Airport Rd.
Chester, Ca. 96020
530-258-2171**

Minutes of Special Meeting: October 17, 2023, at 4:00pm. Located in the Chester Public Utility District conference room: 251 Chester Airport Road.

Directors Present: Kim Green, Steve Voboril, Arthur Tharpe, Royce Raker and Steve Graffweg,

Directors Absent: None

Guests Present: 15

Staff Present: 8

1. **Call to Order:** Director Voboril called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.
 - a. Director Voboril led the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - b. Roll Call/Attendance: Director Voboril let it be known that all Directors were present.
 - b. Agenda Approval: Director Graffweg made a motion to accept agenda. Director Green seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

2. **Public Comment Agenda Items:** None

3. **Measure D Workshop:**

Director Green wants to understand the financial status in able make the best decision. GM Cox stated that the snap shots the board requested are of the cash on hand and the cash flow trend.

Director Voboril said that Measure D is needed, but we still need to figure out how to try to stretch out the cash flow until we can figure out how to fully fund the fire department.

Director Green stated that there may need to be a second property tax to total \$1500.00 because it looks like the billing option through Seneca is not going to happen.

GM Cox stated that the new special assessment money would not be seen by the District until 2025.

He then stated that he was waiting to annex in the surrounding areas within our 900 square mile response area until the special assessment passed.

Director Voboril suggested that if it does pass, that we reassess the cash flow quarterly.

Hopefully we can retain the fire staff, get them Wild Land qualified over the winter.

Maybe work with the Unions on some compromises.

Director Green stated she is working with IAFF regarding the ambulance billings we may be missing out on. She will follow up.

Director Voboril suggested surplus of some district property and apparatus.

A public member asked if there were grants to help with any of these issues. GM Cox stated that we have applied for many grants, but there aren't many operations specific grants.

After many public comments in regards to the public not being properly informed on the status of the Fire Department due to no newspapers or due to "rhetoric" on social media,

Director Raker asked about bringing on a Public Relations person to help educate the public on a regular basis.

A Public Member offered to help with a citizens committee to promote Measure D.

4. Strategic Plan: A and B: if Measure D passes and if it does not:

GM Cox stated that when we choose to surplus items, that other government agencies are offered first, then non-profits then the public.

Director Voboril stated that they need to try to “limp” along for 18 months if “D” passes. Director Raker stated that if “D” doesn’t pass, that he as a new homeowner in Chester, will be very frustrated as his homeowners’ insurance will go up x4, if it doesn’t get canceled.

Director Green stated that the older citizens of this town need EMS and Fire service.

GM Cox stated that the department may need to go back to being a Volunteer department with no ambulance. He explained that Seneca has been negotiating with Peninsula Fire in regard to ambulance services for Chester, and has stopped talks with Chester Fire. The 35-mile rule states that both departments need to be in contract with Seneca for billing. He encouraged the public to attend Seneca Hospital’s board meetings to get the answers we can’t get, on why.

Chief Balzarini stated that there is never a guarantee that we can get folks out on fires under the CFAA. In the past it has kept the department afloat. With no fires in 2 years and union contracts that were negotiated before The California Care Act, the department is not sustainable. April and May we had a staffing crisis, Nor-Cal EMS almost shut us down. We are out of Hail-Marys.

A public member stated that all board members should call their senators.

Director Green will work on an information sheet for the public.

For “D” to pass, there needs to 2/3 of the votes that are turned in to be “YES”. There is only 3 more weeks left.

Town Hall is next Monday.

5. Comments:

Directors: none

Staff: none

6. Adjournment: Director Tharpe made a motion to adjourn at 6:22pm. Director Raker seconded the motion. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Clerk to the Board, Cheryl Johnson

Approval of Minutes 