

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

**Minutes of Regular Meeting:** April 25, 2023, at 5:30pm. Located in the Chester Public Utility District conference room: 251 Chester Airport Road.

**Directors Present:** Steve Graffweg, Royce Raker, Steve Voboril, and Kim Green.

**Directors Absent:** Art Tharpe

**Guests Present:** 11

**Staff Present:** 5

1. **Call to Order:** Director Voboril called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
  - a. Director Voboril led the Pledge of Allegiance.
  - b. Director Voboril acknowledged all members, except Tharpe, are in attendance confirming quorum.
  - c. **Agenda Approval:** Director Voboril made a motion to move #12 to after #16. Director Graffweg made a motion to accept the agenda with suggested changes. Director Green seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
  
2. **Public Comment Agenda Items:** none.
  
3. **Meeting Minutes**
  - a. **April 4 and 18 Meeting Minutes:** Director Raker made a motion to accept the April 4<sup>th</sup> minutes as presented. Director Graffweg seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. Director Graffweg made a motion to accept the April 18 minutes as presented. Director Green seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.
  
4. **March 2023 Financials:** GM Cox presented:
  - The Finance Committee reviewing of Fund 200 and 300 by rate study completed.
  - Fund 200 should be back in the black by Fiscal Year.
  - Fund 456 performed worse than expected due to staffing issues and the slow fire season.
  - Large ambulance repair bills are still coming.
  - Increased Parcel Tax Assessment needed. Pen. Fire charges 4X more than we do per parcel.
  - TOT taxes needed. May have Plumas County apportions audited.
  - Water and Wastewater are Enterprise funds: funded by service charges.
  - Affordable Care Act killed ambulance reimbursements.

- Seneca can receive 3x more in ambulance billings than we can. Talks with Seneca and the Peninsula have begun in this regard.
- Streetlight funding: parcel tax to go on ballot.
- Documents will be ready by May's meeting to get both measures on ballot in time. A public member urged the board to get them on ballot and to let the community decide.
- 1.2 million is needed to run the Fire Department. A public member stated she hopes a lot of public outreach happens to promote the 2 measures.

After much discussion, Director Green made a motion to approve the March 2023 financials. Director Graffweg seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

#### **5. General Manager's Report: by Adam Cox**

- A lot of the GM reports were discussed above.
- May meeting to discuss Finance Committee recommendations for OPEB prefunding, prefunding UAL, and retiree health strategies.
- Seneca Hospital Annexations are going a bit slower with the new engineer but moving along.
- Special Meeting/Workshop in May to discuss Fire Dept. Issues.

#### **6. Fire Chief Report: by Matthew Balzarini (Power Point Exhibit A)**

- Continued Staffing issues: 2 on workers comp., 1 going on FMLA leave and 1 leaving for other employment soon, leaves 1 full-time employee left.
- Building the 23-24 Budget.
- Past Management decisions, lack of planning and neglect have affected Operations and Maintenance as well as having caused all the equipment to expire around the same time.
- Call summary: several hours committed to calls., 900 square mile ambulance response area.
- Attended IROC training with Cheryl and Kelly.
- Student ride-alongs have started happening on Mondays.
- Our per diem medic and EMT employees are being forced to work at their other employment agencies, making them unavailable to fill shifts here.
- Trying to recruit from Shasta College and through the FCTC site.
- Want to grow explorer, volunteer and reserve programs.
- Having to spend money on apparatus. A new ambulance's cost is over 200K and a 2+ year wait. A mobile mechanic has been keeping up on the ladder truck and the engine we use to go out of county.
- May 13 we will find out who the Plumas Op Area Coordinator will be.
- Relationships matter; pulling recruits from a bay area department to cover shifts here.

#### **7. Utility Operations Manager Report: by Allan Homme**

- Coty went to back flow class this week.
- Justin is at Cal. Rural Water Expo this week.

- Wetlands are at capacity, probably going to the lake this week or next. Sewer backing up from the High School to Pine Way to Lassen St. Fines probable, many state mandated tests will be run. A lot of these issues will be solved when we get the grant project funds.
- Feather River lift station down to 1 pump.
- Vison Lake lift station ultra sonic pump went out. Running ok now.
- Interviewing for part-time position. GM Cox stated that Alliance for Workforce Development will be paying this person's wages for 6 months for a qualifying candidate.
- Offered the board to tour the district.
- Explained that the white pickup was purchased with sewer funds, so was the Escape and would like to see equipment and funds separated going forward.

**8. Local Union Representatives:**

- a. **Local 5317/Chester Professional Firefighter's Association (CFD Safety)** no comments
- b. **Local 39/ Stationary Engineers (CPUD Misc.)** no comments.

**9. Finance Committee Update:** Director Voboril stated that they reviewed the water rate study. GM Cox stated that Option 1 had residential and commercials in same class. Option 2 has them in different classes. Residential has been subsidizing commercial users for years, so Option 2 is more practical. Director Green stated that reserves need to be built up and by doing the increases this way we are in compliance. The CPI increase wouldn't happen this year, just the Option 2 format and rate suggestions. GM Cox stated that there are grants coming for radio meters. He asked the board to vote today for direction for him to prepare the rates proposed by the study and prep for public notices. Director Green made a motion to give the above-mentioned direction to GM Cox. Director Graffweg seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

**10. Water Rate Increase:** Discussed under agenda item #9. Tabled until May's meeting.

**11. Potentially Change Regular Board Meeting Date and Time:** After a brief discussion, it was decided not to change from the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 5:30pm by a motion made by Director Graffweg and seconded by Director Raker. All in favor, motion carried.

**12. Contract between Sectaris Partners LLC and Chester Public Utility District:** After being moved to discuss after closed session to (Item #17), this topic was tabled until the next meeting.

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**13. Public Comment Non-Agenda Items:** A public member thanked Chief Balzarini for trying to move forward and speaking at town hall meetings. More public needs to know the condition of the Fire Department.

**14. Closed Session:** read verbatim by Steve Voboril at 7:25pm:

- a. Anticipated Significant Exposure to Litigation pursuant to Subdivision (b) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code. (2 potential cases)
- b. Public Employee Performance Evaluation Gov. Code Section 54957  
Title: District General Manager

**15. Reconvene:** at 8:22pm

**16. Report on Closed Session:** The Board gave direction to Management.

**17. Correspondence:** none at time of posting.

**18. Comments:**

- a. **Directors:** Director Green stated that she was appreciative of Chief Balzarini speaking at town hall meetings.
- b. **Staff:** Chief Balzarini stated that the fire department received a nice card from an ambulance patient's family thanking them for their services.

**19. Adjournment:** 8:22pm, Director Green made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Raker seconded the motion. All ayes, meeting adjourned.

Cheryl E Johnson, Clerk to the Board

Approval of Minutes \_\_\_\_\_