

Bolinas Community Public Utility District
A Meeting Of The Operations Committee of the Board Of Directors
August 15, 2019 270 Elm Road, Bolinas

1. Call to Order.

11:06 a.m.

2. Roll.

Directors Comstock and Smith present; General Manager Jennifer Blackman also present.

3. Review BCPUD's 2019 - 2024 Capital-Improvement Plan and Fixed Asset Schedule; Identify/Recommend Updates.

Director Smith said he has made a preliminary effort to schedule all of the district's infrastructure and equipment in a single excel document which is based on the district's fixed asset schedule, five-year capital improvement plan and other documents. Director Comstock asked if this schedule includes the assets identified by staff prior to the development of the capital improvement plan; director Smith said that it does not as he was unaware of that document. Staff agreed to locate that document and provide it to the Committee.

Turning to the schedule he prepared, director Smith said there are critical pumps at the water treatment plant: the chlorine and coagulation pumps. He said it is essential for the district to have redundancy here as the failure of these pumps would mean the district could not safely treat its water; he therefore would like to know whether there are back-up pumps on-site. Staff said that the pumps are constantly monitored, repaired as necessary and recalibrated; staff will find out whether redundant pumps are on-site. On the sewer system, director Smith said he spoke with the Brelje & Race engineers when the new lift station pumps were installed about the issue of cycling between pumps and installing new logic controller so that the pumps do not receive equal wear (thereby reducing the possibility that they will fail at the same time). Director Smith said that he would like to see the district engage an electrical engineer to design a new logic controller for the lift station. Finally, director Smith said he would like the district to inspect its force main as he is worried about unknown conditions. Discussion ensued about the difficulty of inspecting a fully-charged pipe that is in constant use; director Comstock suggested the district obtain advice about best management approaches to evaluating the condition of force mains, including how to do such an evaluation and how frequently such an evaluation should be done. With regard to the solar arrays, director Smith said he is working with staff on a monitoring program; in addition, he noted that the air filters in the inverters should be cleaned periodically and the combiner boxes on the array at the water treatment plant are rusting and should be either recoated or replaced. Finally, director Smith said the BCPUD building is nearly 100 years old and not in great shape; staff concurred, noting that the foundation is deteriorating due to a lack of adequate ventilation and the building needs to be seismically assessed.

Staff said it may be most cost-effective to demolish and replace the building with a much smaller structure. Ultimately, the community will decide whether it would support a capital campaign to raise funds to rehabilitate the building rather than demolish it, if there are strong feelings in town to preserve the building. Staff commented that the district currently is in the process of working with an engineer to design Class 2 repair septic system to replace the existing system serving the building; replacing the existing building could trigger more stringent requirement (i.e., the requirement to install a Class 1 new system, at considerably higher cost). Discussion ensued; director Smith noted that a process is underway at the County whereby systems currently permitted as Class 2 repair systems will be eligible to be permitted as Class 1 new systems (specifically the peat moss dispersal system, which the district is planning for its repair). Ultimately, the Committee agreed that the district should be mindful of this issue when planning and engineering the repair of its septic system.

Discussion turned to an update of the district's fixed asset schedule. Per the recommendation of the district's outside auditor, staff will be seeking Board approval of a resolution adopting a biannual physical inventory of the district's fixed assets. Director Comstock said he is aware of this but that physical inventory likely was recommended by the auditors for purposes of the district's depreciation schedule whereas the Committee would like to develop a highly detailed, comprehensive, systemic inventory of the district's infrastructure that will inform maintenance and replacement needs beyond the five-year window of the capital improvement plan. Director Smith noted that a monitoring schedule also may be able to predict potential failures of equipment so that they are caught and addressed (by either maintenance or replacement) prior to a major failure. Director Comstock said the district has a large amount of infrastructure and it is a huge challenge for a small staff to assess and maintain it – as such, the district should avail itself of all possible tools to systematically track and prioritize infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement needs. He suggested that ACWA or other districts may have specific information systems and/or best practices to share or recommend to the BCPUD for these purposes. Director Comstock said the overall goal is to create a systematic set of tools to track the status of every piece of the district's infrastructure; director Smith concurred and cautioned that it may take several years to fully implement such a system given the extent of the infrastructure.

Staff said potential next steps seem to be for staff to reach out to ACWA, or the California Rural Water Association, or the California Special District Association or other such groups for suggestions and

recommendations. Staff noted that the Chief Operator has announced his retirement at the end of 2020 and suggested the Committee and/or the full Board may want to consider a potential restructuring of that position in light of these goals and objectives. Discussion ensued, with the Committee members acknowledging that the General Manager currently devotes a large percentage of time to “community” issues (such as downtown parking or local coastal plan update issues) that divert time and attention away from assessing and tracking the status of the district’s infrastructure. Director Comstock noted that the General Manager is not an engineer and therefore cannot be expected to perform this function; rather, the district really needs to consider hiring a “director of operations” with an engineering background to do so. Staff said a director of operations position likely would be an exempt position, like the General Manager, and cautioned that it may significantly impact staff morale if the Chief Operator position is restructured and not required to perform stand-by and/or cover weekend shifts. Discussion continued and director Comstock said he feels the Board eventually should receive regular written reports from the chief operator or director of operations position at the regular Board meetings about the status of the district’s infrastructure; director Smith agreed and suggested a quarterly reporting schedule similar to the Finance Committee quarterly reports.

4. Schedule Operations Committee Meetings for FY 2019-20 to Evaluate Best Practices and Prepare Proposed Monitoring Protocols and Maintenance Procedures for District Infrastructure and Equipment.

Director Smith suggested the committee hold quarterly meetings during the upcoming year; director Comstock said he strongly prefers monthly meetings in order to really move the process along. Director Smith said a monthly schedule may be overly ambitious with everything else going on for the staff. Director Comstock acknowledged that there are other priorities for the staff and for the Board, but he said he prefers for the Operations Committee to pursue its goals with an aggressive meeting schedule. Staff requested that the next meeting take place in October rather than September due to numerous deadlines for staff concerning the year-end audit of the district’s financial statements and other scheduled commitments. After further discussion, the Committee agreed to next meet on October 2, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.

Director Smith summarized the meeting thus far: he is going to focus on solar monitoring and working with Andrew to dial in that process. The next steps for staff are to: (1) reach out to ACWA and/or other associations or districts for recommendations and advice regarding potential information systems to consider to track the status of the infrastructure; (2) contact Brelje & Race or an electrical engineer to design upgraded controls for the lift station pumps; (3) evaluate the chlorine and coagulation pumps and whether redundancy is in place for these critical items; (4) reach out to the septic system engineer and discuss any impacts for the repair approach posed by a potential replacement of the office building; and (5) research and recommend an approach to inspect the district’s sewer force main.

5. Update on Pending Capital Improvement Projects:

a. West Tank.

Director Smith said he would like to accompany the district’s coating inspector onto the roof of the West Tank when the inspector is next in Bolinas to assess the status of that tank roof and identify if any spot repairs are advisable now pending the rehabilitation of that tank approximately three years from now. Staff agreed to notify director Smith as soon as the inspection schedule has been set for the coating work (which will occur after the roof is fully repaired).

b. Water Main Replacement on the Bolinas Mesa.

Director Comstock suggested the district specify a date by which a request for proposals could be issued for the engineering to replace the steel water main piping on the Bolinas Mesa. Staff proposed January 2020 for this task. Director Smith questioned whether engineering is really necessary for this project; he said the district’s operators could put this information together (i.e., length, diameter and type of piping needed, location of valves and services, and so forth). Staff said that engineered plans are needed to properly bid out the actual project and also are required if the district plans to seek outside funding (which is likely for this multi-million dollar project). Director Smith said the project is extremely straightforward and staff should be able to write it up; he said he does not understand why this needs to be “engineered” or why detailed drawings should be needed. Director Comstock said he is in favor of any way to reduce costs for the district but the district needs to have full confidence that the project will be properly installed; he therefore believes engineered drawings and specifications will be necessary. Director Smith acknowledged that if outside funding agencies require such work, that’s a factor, but he would like to be part of a conversation with any eventual engineer to discuss how the district can reduce the engineering costs for this project as much as possible. Staff noted that the Stinson Beach County Water District did a similar project and will follow-up with the General Manager there about how it was conducted.

c. New projects.

Director Comstock said he would like the district at some point to schedule an inspection of the two dams on the Arroyo Hondo Creek; he is bothered by the apparent leak under the lower dam. Staff concurred that a replacement rubber footing needs to be installed on the bottom of this dam (which is a moveable dam)

and staff can accomplish this. Director Smith queried whether it matters that the reservoir behind the upper dam is silted in, noting that it has been for some time and the district has continued normal operations. Staff commented that the upper dam silts in regularly during storm events which is inevitable with a fixed dam; staff agreed that the district has been able to operate without any impact to water quality despite the silt. Director Smith also asked whether the district “needs” the lower dam’s moveable gate – can it just lower the intake pipe at this location? Director Comstock said the two dams are crucial pieces of infrastructure that are old and have not been inspected or analyzed in years; hence his suggestion that the district have them both inspected and evaluated.

6. Community Expression

None.

7. Adjournment

1:14 p.m.