

MINUTES

CORBETT WATER DISTRICT  
Regular Monthly Water Board Meeting

August 10, 1999

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Grover at 7:30 p.m. All Board members, Ed Kalberg, Jim Mastne, Sandra Redfern and Henry Schwartz, were present. Also present were Barbara Gideon and staff members Jan Leckron, Torey Redfern, Superintendent Randy Stark, and District Clerk Carol Quinn. Al Kimbley arrived a few minutes later.

Henry Schwartz moved the minutes be approved as read and printed. Mr. Mastne seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Board requested last month that information be presented at the next meeting regarding the Capital Improvement Fund. Carol contacted Multnomah County Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission concerning whether the funds in the CIP Headwork's Projects fund could be used for other Capital Improvement Projects if for some reason the district would not be allowed to build a reservoir there. The current CIP fund was established in March 1991. At that time such a fund had a ten-year limit for depositing funds with an additional two years to complete the project and spend the funds. Those rules have now changed. The CIP Fund can be an ongoing fund. TSCC has advised that if due to rule changes there should be no problem with transferring those funds to another capital improvement project. It would take Board action and approval. With the current CIP Fund expiring with next year's budget, they suggested the Board address this issue at that time. A savings program for large capital improvement projects could be established that would not limit those savings to a specific item, which would give the District much more flexibility. The General Fund would still have a capital outlay expenditure category that is budgeted for expense each year. This CIP Fund relates to projects that require some years of savings to acquire the funds to construct the project.

Mr. Mastne asked the Board to reconsider the rate amount the District charges residents of the community for public information. He thinks charging \$40.00 an hour is excessive and it stifles members of the community from getting public information. Mr. Schwartz commented that in comparison to charges by other companies the rate should be raised to \$75.00 an hour. There was discussion concerning wages, benefits, and actual costs to the district. Sandra Redfern mentioned that the District must make more money than what it costs to operate or there would be no money for capital improvement. The District cannot afford to lose money. Mr. Stark advised that the non-profit status comes from being a

public entity with no stockholders to pay and all funds are put back into the District. Field workers bill \$25.00 an hour per person plus equipment charges when they move a meter, etc. at a customer's request. Mr. Grover commented he thought the amount was enough to prevent frivolous requests but not so much to discourage justifiable requests. He expressed his concern that even though it may be public information, he preferred his name and address not be given out. If the fee structure deterred such a happening, he favored it. The policy concerning release of public information for a fee was approved by the Board in December, 1995, and was reconsidered in the May, 1999, regular Board meeting. At that May meeting the policy was updated to include a request form with charges listed and provision for estimated costs to be collected as a deposit. Actual cost would be calculated and adjustments made if necessary before the information is released. This update was approved unanimously by the Board including Mr. Mastne. A customer may request the Board to provide information free of charge because such information is in the public interest. The Board has authority to waive the fee. Carol Quinn said there are very few requests for information that require research. Most can be handled within the 15-minute availability time frame. Other than Mr. Mastne's recent request, she could remember only one other time for sure when a customer requested a mailing list. Mr. Kalberg expressed his opinion that since a policy exists, it should be followed. The policy seems to cover easily accessible information is provided at no charge. If the policy is not working, it should be changed. Has the policy been detrimental to a significant number of people who have requested information and been denied. Staff reported that at this time no one but Mr. Mastne has asked for information. Mr. Mastne thought if it didn't make any difference because there were no requests the fee should be lowered. Mr. Schwartz suggested that if it didn't make any difference because there were no requests the fee should stay as it is. Mr. Mastne moved the fee be reduced to \$25.00 an hour for a trial period to see if it makes a difference for people requiring information. Mr. Kalberg called a point of order. He stated if the District is changing policy, it should have a copy of the policy to evaluate. It is listed in the Board of Commissioners Policy Manual. Mr. Kalberg seconded the motion. The motion failed with Mr. Mastne voting in favor and Mr. Kalberg, Mrs. Redfern, Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Grover voting against.

There were no audience comments regarding the old business.

Mr. Stark presented his work report. He advised the Board the Hurlburt and Ellis Road project is complete; the entire pipeline is in service; the old line is out of service. The total cost was about \$120,000. Between Engineering and Construction, the costs ran about \$7,000 over the line item for system

improvement in this year's budget. There are approximately \$3,000 additional costs for incidental costs to the district for meters, double check valves, etc. Several leaks have been fixed. John Lammert says the shed extension should be finished within the next couple weeks. Three new meters were installed and three meters were reset on Salzman Road. Reservoir sites were cleared, inventory completed, etc. A complimentary letter was read from Mr. Gutierrez regarding staff fixing a leak at his meter. Mr. Stark asked if the Board would like to transfer funds from the contingency at this time to cover the additional expenditure. Mr. Kalberg asked why the overrun and if there was documentation showing the change orders that required the extra costs. Mr. Stark answered that he did have the documentation and the bid included provision for the additional charges, which resulted from Multnomah County Road Dept. requiring granular backfill under asphalt and on the shoulder of the road. The District had hoped to use some native backfill in the ditch line of the road, but because there was no ditch area available to lay the pipe, all of the backfill needed to be granular. The County Road inspector was pleased with the job. A happy inspector is good for the District because it means we got a good job. Also Marc Caldwell was on site to observe the job and made sure it was done according to specifications. Dick Rogers did an excellent job. Part of the overrun is a result of an extra hydrant being installed as well. However, half of that cost will be reimbursed. Mr. Kalberg suggested that the District wait until next month to consider the contingency transfer. The project was designed to use funds from the Capital Outlay 1998-1999 Budget and the 1999-2000 Budget, making it more cost effective by incurring Engineering costs once. It is very early in the year to transfer funds. At this time the Capital Outlay fund is not overspent as a whole. He would like to have a paper trail of the cost overrun indicating why the project was higher than the bid.

Under audience comments, Barbara Giddeon wanted to know if the staff was being paid to attend the meeting.

A FAX from Patti Smith was read requesting information. She stated she had attended a community meeting recently at which a Water Board member and a Water Board Budget Committee member discussed the status of the Water District. She said comments were made with regards to employees leaving work early and asking the community to report these happenings if observed; the apparent conflict of some board members being related to employees, that the employees are running the Water District to the detriment of the community and are overpaid. These are serious allegations and she would be glad to discuss them with a Board member so she can make her own decision as to their truthfulness. She thought the Board should be aware that these comments were being made within the

community, as this can create hardships and make it more difficult for board members.

In response, Sandra Redfern stated, for the record, she did not really appreciate fellow board members slandering her name at local meetings. She feels it is very inappropriate. She will contact Patti.

Mr. Kalberg thanked the staff for preparing the budget summary. He believes it will be very helpful in keeping track of expenditures. There was some discussion of the summary and of the bills.

Mr. Kalberg asked if there were many complaints from customers. Staff reported that most complaints are about billing amounts. These are reviewed. If it is a District error, we apologize and make the corrections. If there is a leak, we try to contact a customer as soon as we are aware there might be a leak. We have an occasional water quality complaint, which we also investigate immediately and we try to discover the source. In most cases it is the result of something within the household.

Carol Quinn spoke to the Board both as a citizen and as an employee regarding Patti Smith's comment. She said it would be nice if there is a problem within the District that it comes to the Board instead of rumors in the community. It is a lot better to work for solutions than to cause more problems. Mr. Grover agreed and stated the Board has an open door policy and the public is free to come to the meetings to express any concerns.

Mr. Mastne moved the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Schwartz seconded. Passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.