

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS EMERGENCY SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM ~ Tuesday, January 16, 2024, 6:00 p.m.**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Via Zoom: Michael Arion, Sara Grigsby, Angie Kimpo, Kelly Piper.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Dan Graff

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: District Manager Ana Linden, District Clerk Heather McGivney, Assistant District Clerk Lynda Ronell, Utility Workers Alivia Pence and Steve Young, DRC David Jacob

COMMUNITY MEMBERS PRESENT: Amy Van Denburgh, Andre, Anne Philipsborn, April, Audrey Eaton, Bryan, Cloudy Sears, Daniel Grott, Darcie, Dave Selden, David Gorman, Eric Eaton, Erika Normine, Fitz Mitas, iphone52, Jeff, Jennifer O'Donnel, John Jordan, Julie Trisel, Lynette Richardson, Malcolm Freund, Marie Steffen, Michelle, Nita Graff, Rick Ray, Robert Grott, and Tim Richardson.

This emergency meeting was called in response to a community-wide weather event that began on Friday, January 12, 2024. This weather involved very strong winds, sub-zero temperatures, snow, and ice which resulted in multiple systemic problems. Corbett Water District wanted to update Board Members, staff, and members of the community.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order – Board President Kelly Piper called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. Update from District Manager Ana Linden –

- Ana began by saying that on Friday we began to have telemetry problems, then had a level transducer failure at the Larch Mountain reservoir, and a raw water intake meter failure at our treatment plant. Our vehicles got stuck in the snow when we tried to bring generators to our reservoirs to thaw out the malfunctioning valves.
- There was a great deal of water loss happening on Saturday, about 1300 gallons per minute, somewhere at the beginning of the system. It was thought that there was a very large mainline leak on Pounder due to a car accident, so they turned off service to parts of Evans and Pounder.
- On Sunday, we discovered that because the level monitor at the Larch Mountain reservoir was malfunctioning, it was causing the reservoir to overflow. The valve was frozen in the open position. Before we had diagnosed the problem, when we knew that we were losing a large amount of water, we sent an automated phone call to all customers asking them to conserve water. A valve at our Cabbage Hill reservoir froze in

THIS WAS AN EMERGENCY MEETING

Revised 1/17/24, 7:10pm, pg 1

the closed position, which caused that reservoir to drain completely. Thus the customers served by that reservoir were without water for about 12 hours. We issued a boil water notice to those customers, and to the customers on Evans and Pounder affected by the valve closure.

- On Monday we were able to thaw the valves that had been frozen, and restore the water system to normal pressure and service. We believe that many customers have frozen pipes, and we expect that when the weather thaws, they may experience a significant number of leaks. We are ensuring that reservoirs are full, and our water intake is maxed out so that we can handle the potential increased flow caused by those leaks.
- Multnomah County declared a state of emergency, which enabled them to offer us a generator to help with power outages, and they plowed the road to our treatment plant, which allowed for the rescue of our stranded vehicles. Oregon Emergency Management brought water tenders to provide water to customers. We also allowed customers to fill up containers at our office.
- Ana acknowledged that our system is aging, and needs improvements, but it is also resilient in its ability to operate without electricity.
- Ana concluded by thanking staff, Board Members, and community members for their assistance over the past several days. Many people have gone above and beyond to try to solve our problems, including some former employees of Corbett Water District who were helpful in sharing their knowledge of our system.

3. Questions from Board Members –

- Sara Grigsby wanted to thank staff for their heroic work the last few days. She has seen folks who are braving some terrible weather conditions to dig in the snow to find valves and other system components.
- Kelly Piper agreed with Sara in thanking our staff. She also remarked that she knew people were frustrated with the lack of updates. However, we tried to update folks as frequently as we could with the facts that we knew. She expressed her appreciation for everyone's patience.
- Sara also thanked Board Member Angie Kimpo for helping coordinate the water tenders' delivery.
- Sara asked Ana to provide advice for some of the common problems that might occur as the thaw comes. Ana said that anyone who has a leak can go and turn off the water at their meter, or call our emergency line to have our On Call worker either talk them through the process, or come out to turn it off for the customer.
- Kelly asked Ana to talk through the steps of what to do if a customer received a boil water notice. Ana said that we collected water samples Tuesday to send to the lab, and they should notify us of the results on Wednesday. If the samples are safe, we can lift the boil water notices. If you are under a boil water notice, this means you should bring any water that will be used for drinking, washing food, or food preparation to a rolling boil for at least one minute.

4. Questions or Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person) –

THIS WAS AN EMERGENCY MEETING

Revised 1/17/24, 7:10pm, pg 2

- Community member Eric Eaton noted that this storm had been forecast for several days before it hit. What did CWD do to prepare our system for the storm? Ana answered that we have several backup options like heating tape and generators at our facilities, but we normally have to scramble around troubleshooting problems as they occur. One of the main problems with this storm was the malfunctioning level transducer at our Larch Mountain reservoir. We don't have an external gauge outside of the reservoir to tell us the level, so when the instrument stopped working, it caused a big problem. We also had trouble because many of our staff are new to CWD and we don't have an accurate system map to help guide us. Mr. Eaton responded that he was disappointed that there wasn't a redundant monitoring system, like a person stationed at each of our facilities with a heater, antifreeze, and a CB radio. Ana pointed out that our staff responded to each situation as soon as they knew something was going wrong. CWD has two Utility workers, and Manager Ana in the field, so we don't have enough staff to station workers around the system. Sara asked for Mr. Eaton to make a closing statement to summarize the key takeaways that he wants us to carry into the future. Mr. Eaton said that he felt we should have prioritized our most critical infrastructure and that we need more experienced workers.
- Community member Darcie said she missed the first few minutes of the presentation and had previously heard about a water shortage. Is the reservoir low at this point? Ana responded that there is no water shortage; all of our reservoirs are topped off and full.
- Community member Malcolm Freund commented that he had received advice to allow his faucets to drip to avoid his pipes freezing, but by the time they got the message to fill containers with water in advance of a shortage, they already were without water. Now that the water has been restored, he believes that his pipes are frozen. Ana asked when his water went out, because CWD had sent the message about the possible water shortage several hours in advance of losing water. Mr. Freund responded that they had power issues and his phone that operates without electricity can't receive messages, and the phone that can receive messages, requires electricity. They finally received the message about the water shortage from a neighbor. There were a lot of rumors and misinformation flying around. Mrs. Freund commented that she appreciates everyone's hard work, and she acknowledged that our system is complicated.
- Community member Dave Selden asked if there are any known mainline breaks left? Ana answered that there are no main breaks that are adding to a water shortage, but there are several icy patches around town that make her suspicious that there may be leaks. CWD is making a list of all the icy patches to investigate in the future. They'll plot those over the maps of our system to see if anything lines up as a possible leak.
- Board Member Sara asked if CWD had power at the office. Ana answered that as of about 4:30pm she believes there is power.
- Community member Robert Grott commented that, in addition to thanking the field staff, he wanted to thank the office staff who are responding to customer concerns during this weather.

THIS WAS AN EMERGENCY MEETING

Revised 1/17/24, 7:10pm, pg 3

- Mr. And Mrs. Eaton commented that CWD has always had two Utility workers, and why don't we purchase or rent generators for the sites that are most likely to freeze? Ana responded that she believes that we need more sheltered space at both the Larch Mountain reservoir and the Cabbage Hill reservoir, both to help prevent freezing, but also to facilitate working on the components, so that the workers are not stuck out in the weather as they are trying to solve problems. We also need to have power at Cabbage Hill reservoir. Sara jumped in to advise community members to pay attention to the upcoming annual budget process which will be a place where folks can learn about what resources it takes to run our District, and make their voices heard about budget priorities. District Clerk Heather McGivney informed the audience that the community budget meetings will occur in March, and will be advertised in February or early March. Ana added that we are in a special position where we are competing with larger water utilities for workers, while having little to no population growth. It leads to some challenges for funding our system. We are starting to pursue grant funding and increased funding from the county and state.
- Community members Ann Philipsborn and Rick Ray thanked us for having this meeting, working on our old water system, and trying to make things better for our community.
- Community member Cloudy Sears said that the District is moving from reactive maintenance to predictive maintenance. It takes a lot of planning and finances to do so that we have not had in the past.
- Community member Andre thanked CWD for their hard work, advocacy, and sharing this information.
- Community member Robert Grott commented that he missed the first part of the meeting and wondered where he could get the information. Heather answered that we will be making meeting minutes from the recording that should be available on our website soon. Ana also mentioned that any member of the public can make a public records request for an audio recording of our public meetings.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING – Sara thanked everyone for attending the meeting, noting that meetings like this help to foster community understanding. Kelly echoed Sara's thanks and gave additional thanks for the hard work of the crew and the community over the last several days. We've learned some lessons and will get better in the future. She encouraged everyone to stay safe as we move into freezing rain. The meeting closed at 6:33pm.

THIS WAS AN EMERGENCY MEETING

Revised 1/17/24, 7:10pm, pg 4