CORBETT
WATER DISTRICT

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RATE HEARING
HYBRID MEETING: IN-PERSON ~ VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 5:30pm ~ Corbett Fire Hall 36930 E Hist. Col. Riv. Hwy

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Arion, Erika Bronson, Dan Graff, Andrew Parker, Kelly Piper
BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: District Manager Andrew Dirks, District Clerk Kelsey Zavoral, District Clerk Heather McGivney, Clerk Lynda Ronell

AGENDA
1. Call to Order – Board President Erika Bronson called the meeting to order at 5:34pm.
2. Roll Call – Michael Arion, Erika Bronson, Dan Graff, and Kelly Piper were present. Andrew Parker arrived at 5:51.
3. Approval of the Agenda – Michael Arion moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Dan Graff. *(motion passed 3 yes votes: M. Arion, E. Bronson, D. Graff; 0 no votes)*
4. Oath of Office for Newly Appointed Board Member Kelly Piper
- Kelly Piper spoke her oath of office. She will serve the remainder of the term for Commissioner position #1, which ends on June 30, 2027.

PUBLIC HEARING
1. Consider Proposals for change from Bi-Monthly to Monthly Billing, Rate and Fee Adjustments
- Summary of Proposal
  - Andrew Dirks went over the proposed change from bi-monthly to monthly billing and presented four options for base rate increases with monthly billing ranging from 60% to 100% of the current bi-monthly rates, along with projected revenue impacts.
  - These changes would incur costs. The current estimate is that it would cost an additional $6,189 per year. However, he believes that bi-monthly billing has the drawback of larger bills for customers, and delayed billing can increase late payments and customer service issues.
  - Some benefits of moving to monthly billing and increasing the base rate include funding for necessary projects, earlier detection of water leaks, improved service, and more consistent income for the District.
  - Andrew is proposing four options for the new monthly base rates: 60%, 75%, 80%, and 100% increase compared to the current rate. Any of these amounts would be within the spectrum of the monthly base rates charged by other water districts.
  - He acknowledged that the 100% increase to the base rate would be challenging for some customers, so he proposes offering discounts for signing up for paperless billing and automatic ACH payments, and for bulk payments. He also proposed a Low Income Rate Assistance program.
  - The proposed timeline for penalties and shut offs would be: bill due on the 15th of each month, late fees will be assessed on the 16th, and shut off notices will be delivered approximately 5 days later followed by shut offs if the bill remains unpaid.

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- Andrew went over the projected monthly revenue by meter size, noting the increase in monthly revenue under each of the new proposals. Andrew's request to the Board is that they approve the switch to monthly billing and choose one of the four monthly base rate options.
- Public Comments
  - Angie Kimpo requested a more detailed explanation of what people would pay if we left the base rate alone. Andrew answered that, if we went to monthly billing, but didn't change the base rate, people would pay half of their current base rate, which is $25.07 for a ¾ inch meter. If they went with the 60% proposal, that fee would raise to $30.08, and so on.
  - Gordon Fulks asked how much more revenue do we need to balance our budget? Andrew Dirks answered that the rate increase is more about planning for infrastructure improvements, and proving our ability to repay any loan that we may need to pay for the improvements. He said there would be a presentation during the regular meeting about infrastructure needs and costs. Michael Arion said that he ran some numbers for the proposed infrastructure improvements, which the engineering firm said might cost up to $28 million. If we were to borrow $5 million, which is the cost for the first project, at 1.5% interest, the monthly payment would be $35,000. Mr. Fulks responded that a $5 million loan would cost each customer $5,000-10,000 over the 20 year life of the loan. Andrew said that however we pay for them, the infrastructure repairs are needed, and we can't delay any longer. Much of the expense now is due to the effects of deferred maintenance. Dan Graff said that some of our difficulty now is that rates were held flat for many years; he remembers one rate increase in 15 years. However, the rates haven't kept up with inflation, and parts and maintenance are much more expensive now. Keeping up with inflation essentially means a flat amount of buying power, and not a lot of room for planning big projects. We need enough revenue to show that we are able to repay a loan.
  - Clair Klock submitted a written comment, which was read aloud: I support the proposed rate increase as it updates much needed infrastructure and conservation management of our dwindling water resources. None of us want to pay more, however, labor and material costs are increasing rapidly. I have no opinion either way for monthly or bi-monthly billing. Thank you for your consideration and service.
  - Jeff Hardley typed his comment into the Zoom chat: Questions for the board and management. I know the District bought new vehicles, but it appears they have become take home vehicles for the staff. What is the cost impact on the District to provide take home vehicles, especially when I believe our manager lives pretty far away. This seems like unnecessary wear and tear, and a waste of resources when asking for more money from the community. It seems like the only solid cost increase shown in this meeting was for the monthly billing, which is only around $520 per month. Why are these rate increases so heavy when there doesn't appear to be a rate study done or any solid executable plan on the system projects. Just not understanding how $520 turns into the thousands you are asking for with such little evidence to back this up. 100% increase or even 60% while showing "rough numbers" doesn't make sense to me. So why are we voting on an increase before we have knowledge or planning on the infrastructure needs, rate studies, etc. I'd prefer a plan before handing over money aimlessly. Give us the numbers first. You haven't shown the need for the money you're asking for, that's just a fact. There is discussion on how much it costs to maintain and upgrade but not one tangible number so far. Inaccurate numbers on the slideshow, no information on costs or plans for projects, etc. Yes, we all know we need a better system but repeating that and "we need to show we can pay back bills" doesn't give us any justified costs/pricing. Why not table this vote until you guys actually know what is needed. Andrew Dirks responded that the vehicle provided to him was part of his contract. The crew are taking home vehicles because Andrew wants them to be able to respond to an emergency right away without heading to the shop. In his experience this is common practice. He said that this hearing is before the presentation because they didn't want to limit the presentation time. The current proposals are trying to establish a foundation for the planned improvements, and we will talk about a rate study at the regular meeting.

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- Robert Grott said that he’s lived in Corbett for 30 years, and his property value has increased over that time, partly due to the water supply. He understands that the current proposal is a small piece of a larger puzzle, just a foot in the door for the future. But he thinks it is worth spending money on.
- Kurt Kerslake asked for clarification on the reason for charging for inactive meters. Andrew Dirks responded that the charge for inactive meters is ½ of the base rate, and he wants to charge that amount because an inactive meter still costs the District to maintain. There is a risk from leaks or theft, for example. Mr. Kerslake responded that meters used for irrigation, by design and for water conservation, aren’t being used when it is raining during the winter and spring. It is frustrating to get big bills suddenly for a service he isn’t actively using. Kelly Piper said that the irrigation meter is like insurance for when it doesn’t rain, and you have to pay for insurance. The alternative is to have the meter removed. He responded that he’s already paid for the installation of the meter, and removing it isn’t a viable option. It is common practice to shut down irrigation in the winter. Andrew Dirks responded that we have to provide drinking water, we aren’t an irrigation district. And it is like any other utility: even if you don’t use internet service, you still have to pay for it.
- Chris Winters added that there is a difference between irrigation and other services. He has a well, and a 2 inch meter for irrigation. If you aren’t using power from PGE, they drop their price significantly, whereas CWD is asking for a large amount of money for an inactive service. But CWD doesn’t care if farmers stay in business. And he, likewise, doesn't care if CWD stays in business. Dan Graff responded that there could be a separate discussion about the amount charged for irrigation meters, but he believes that there needs to be some sort of base rate because there is still a risk to the system for having a large connection in place, like if there was a leak that started in November, and the irrigation wasn’t turned on until summer, the District wouldn’t know to address it. Andrew Dirks said that he is willing to address a different cost for irrigation customers.
- Kevin Bates read his statement: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm here tonight regarding the recently adopted base rate structure for a 1-1/2 inch service and to ask the Board to consider an issue that I believe may not have been fully contemplated when the new rates were adopted. Years ago, thousands of dollars were invested to install a 1-1/2 inch water service. Those installation costs were not paid by the District. Today however, that service is not being used. I'm not asking the District to provide water, and I would be willing to have the meter locked and placed into the District’s “off not out” status. As I read the District's policies, they specifically allow a service to be discontinued while leaving the meter in place and locked. At the same time the recently adopted rate resolution describes the base rate as the charge for an active meter. This raises what I believe is a reasonable question: if a customer voluntarily requests that their meter be locked and taken out of service is that still considered an active meter? And if so, why? I'm not here to argue that the District shouldn't cover its costs. I understand that maintaining a water system is expensive, and I appreciate the work that goes into operating it safely and reliably. My concern is whether charging the full base rate to a customer who is receiving no water service, and who has voluntarily asked that the service be locked, is the most equitable approach. If the District is not reading the meter for consumption, not delivering water, and the customer has already paid for the installation of the service, I'd like to better understand what specific ongoing costs justify charging the full capacity-based rates. If there are legal, engineering, or financial reasons, I would genuinely appreciate hearing that explanation. If there are not, I would ask the board to consider whether an inactive or stand-by rate would be more appropriate for customers whose services are officially placed in “off not out” status. I suspect there may not be many customers in this situation, but for those who are, the current policy can result in paying several hundred dollars every billing cycle for a service they are not using and have intentionally asked not to receive. My goal tonight isn't simply to seek relief for myself. It's to ask whether this policy fairly reflects the service being provided and whether there is room to create a more equitable option for customers with inactive services. Thank you for your time, and I appreciate your consideration.
- Matt Bruton said that there needs to be a way for the District to track inactive meters in case there is a leak, or if someone is stealing water. On the other hand, he feels that there needs to be some

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compromise on price for people who have seasonally inactive meters. He supports a rate increase because our system hasn't been proactively maintained in a long time and we need to make repairs and upgrades. There needs to be a partnership between the people who maintain and care for the system, and the users who pay for it.

  - Andrew Dirks said that the District will do some work to make sure we verify and catalog all of the irrigation meters and we can revisit the base rate cost for irrigation meters before they are turned off for the summer. Dan Graff said that we need to maintain our whole system, each point to point, so that the system works when we need it. Erika Bronson concluded that we can adopt the resolution tonight as is, and then address the cost of irrigation meters at another meeting before irrigation is turned off for the winter.
  - Gordon Fulks said that he feels that going from bi-monthly to monthly billing will be less efficient because that means doubling our costs for staff time, supplies, and postage etc. He said that if we want to double rates, we shouldn't hide it in a transition to monthly billing. He only knows of one customer who objected to bi-monthly billing because of budgetary reasons. He feels that if we want more money out of customers, we should do it in a way that still maintains efficiency in costs, not wasting money by doubling our effort. Dan Graff said that he feels monthly billing will end up being more cost effective just by catching leaks earlier that we don't then have to forgive with a leak adjustment. He also highlighted challenges specific to the Corbett area, including limited system development revenue compared to other municipalities. Mr. Fulks called that a false argument because the cost to the District for leaks is negligible, just the cost of producing the water by adding chemicals and letting the water run downhill.
- Discussion and questions of the Board of Commissioners and District Manager
  - Erika Bronson asked each Board member for their thoughts.
  - Kelly Piper said she favors monthly billing, and would like to adopt the base rate option that is 60% of the current base rate because we only recently raised rates.
  - Michael Arion said that he would prefer the 75% option for the base rate because he's read the engineering study that will be presented at the next meeting and noted that proactive investment is required now to do the necessary upgrades. He prefers monthly billing.
  - Erika said that she wants to adopt the 60% base rate because we just had a rate increase and because we are going to do a rate study. She invited the audience to stay for the System Optimization Review presentation, which will show the needed infrastructure improvements. She is worried about needing a large increase in revenue once we see the rate study, so adopting the 60% base rate proposal will get us more revenue in advance of the rate study.
  - Dan Graff said that he is in favor of monthly billing. He asked Andrew Dirks to investigate grants to help pay for infrastructure financing. But he feels that doing nothing about rates is just deferring capital improvements for another year, so he endorsed the 60% base rate option. Andrew responded that he will look into grants further, but noted that the urgency for switching to monthly billing is that we are adopting new billing software soon and they wanted us switched to monthly billing before the new software is implemented. He would have preferred to do the rate study first, but the timing didn't work out.
  - Andrew Parker said he is in favor of monthly billing because he feels it will be more efficient, especially in regards to finding leaks. He said that either the 60% or the 75% base rate is doable, and feels we need an increase because of the amount of infrastructure upgrades that need to be made. He knows that the increase will sting, but believes it is doable.

2. Board Recommends to keep rate and fees the same or to approve an increase and instruct on possible Resolution language

- Kelly Piper moved to go forward with transitioning to monthly billing, with the Resolution to reflect the 60% base rate increase option, seconded by Dan Graff. *(motion passed 4 yes votes: E. Bronson, D. Graff, A. Parker, K. Piper; 1 no vote: M. Arion)*

ADJOURNMENT OF HEARING – Board President Erika Bronson adjourned the meeting at 6:30pm.

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THIS WAS A PUBLIC MEETING