

Minutes

LAKESIDE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING March 19, 2024

PRESENT: Directors Marc Liechti, Jim Heim, Todd Fleming, Roxanne Wadman (via telephone), David Cordell (via telephone) and employees Rodney Olson, General Manager, Rebecca Good, Secretary.

ABSENT: N/A

Director Liechti called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM

AGENDA: A motion was made by Director Heim to accept the modified agenda. Director Fleming seconded, and motion carried.

VISITORS: There were seven visitors at the meeting. See Exhibit C.

Mayre Flowers with Citizens for a Better Flathead provided the Board with two handouts that she stated she had presented to the Flathead County Commissioners prior in the day. Mayre referenced the letter to the Board and discussion was had about areas of her concern.

Jennifer Tipton with the North Shore Water Alliance stated that she would like the agendas to be posted to the District website sooner than the Friday before the meeting. She stated that she does not feel as though the public has enough time to attend LCWSD Board meetings because they are in the middle of the standard business day. Jennifer stated that she is concerned about 'forever chemicals' and PFAS in the drinking water surrounding the District's treatment site. Discussion was had between Board members and Jennifer regarding her concerns. Jennifer stated that she would like more transparency as the process continues.

General Manager Olson responded to Jennifer regarding transparency. He stated that there have been two-way conversations on multiple occasions at several board meetings to help with understanding the process. General Manager Olson reminded Jennifer and Mayre that he invited them personally to his office for a sit-down meeting and presentation of the plans in detail. He also explained that there are public meetings and hearings worked into the process moving forward once the agreement is signed. He further clarified that the District will be able to move forward with DEQ submittals as well.

Jeff Martin, a Lakeside resident, and engineer with Carollo Engineers, addressed Jennifer's PFAS concerns stating that facilities are built to current regulatory requirements. He stated that designs are built around the science that is currently available. He stated that if testing is not yet proven, it would be impossible to engineer and plan something that is not yet standard. Jeff stated that moving from a lagoon system to a pretreatment plan, the entire County will be better for it.

David Fetveit, a Lakeside resident, and business owner expressed his support for the pending interlocal agreement, stating that as a realtor, he has personally witnessed lawsuits over failing septic systems. He followed up by stating that the amount of waste that is currently going into Flathead Lake is untenable and is in favor of moving forward with this solution.

SEPTAGE AGREEMENT – FOR SIGNATURE:

Director Liechti stated that he has been on the LCWSD Board for over 25 years, and the Board President for over 20. He stated that the number one priority of the District has always been to protect Flathead Lake. He stated that when the funds were raised to create the District and install sewer services, Flathead Lake was very contaminated. The treatment site was selected 38 years ago and has been fabulously

maintained since. Director Liechti stated that Flathead County has been considering a septage treatment facility for about five years, and only in the past two has LCWSD been considered an option, namely because LCWSD is the only considered facility that does not discharge into surface water. He stated that in 2013, LCWSD was recognized as one of the best treatment facilities in the state of Montana. He stated that is something that he and the rest of the Board and employees are very proud of. He stated that the staff and Board members have always operated very system forward, and that LCWSD was one of the first Districts in the area to have a GIS mapping system, as well as many other progressive upgrades to the system. He stated that the District has always looked forward, and collected and saved monies with future expansion in mind. Director Liechti stated that the Board is looking out for their customers, Flathead Lake, and the District.

Director Heim stated that he has been involved with the Board for a long time and even served as the District Manager for 11 years. He stated that the District has always operated on best management practices. He stated that in the 1980's when the current treatment site was selected, treatment ponds were the best option at the time for small communities. He also stated that many locations were looked at around the Valley and the current location was deemed the best location. He stated that they found the best locations for the center pivots as well regarding soil.

Director Fleming stated that he has been on the Board for 5 years and has only missed one meeting in that time. He stated that Flathead County came to the District in June of 2023 and the District made the decision to move forward with the process. He stated that the Board has listened to visitors, and they have been heard. Director Fleming stated that he has a full-time job, and all the time that is spent at the Board meetings has to be made up when he gets home but stated that it is worth it to him because he is serving his community. He stated that he personally has a septic system in his neighborhood, as they are only served by LCWSD water because the sewer is not near his home. He stated that he would like to be able to call a septic pumper, and have them be available, instead of one day, that not being an option due to lack of septage haulers. The District has the opportunity to partner with Flathead County, which helps keep the rates down for District customers. This solves a problem for Flathead County and helps the District and its customers as well. He stated that the operators have already started planning and studying how to operate the new system. He stated that there are a lot of people coming together to level up. The alternative is to continue to talk about doing things for years to come. Director Fleming stated that he feels as though the District is doing the right thing by moving forward with the agreement.

Director Wadman stated that she is in favor of moving forward with the agreement. She feels as though it is the best thing for the community and surrounding areas.

Director Cordell stated that he agrees with what everyone has already stated. He reiterated that a lot has been involved to get the District to this point and he is in favor of moving forward.

Director Heim made a motion to sign the interlocal agreement as presented by Flathead County. Director Wadman seconded, and the motion carried. It was noted that Director Liechti is authorized to sign the agreement as well as the two memorandums presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the February 20, 2024, Board meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Director Fleming to accept the minutes as presented. Director Wadman seconded, and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: The financial reports for February 2024 were presented by General Manager Olson. A motion was made by Director Cordell to approve the financial report. Director Heim seconded, and motion carried.

BILL APPROVAL: Accounts payable for February 2024 were reviewed, and expenses of note discussed. The credit card statement for January and February 2024 were also reviewed. A motion was made by Director Heim to approve the bills presented. Director Fleming seconded, and motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

PFAS- Emerging Contaminant: General Manager Olson informed the Board that he has spoken with Julie from Bigfork Water & Sewer District, and she stated that the EPA has contacted them about testing their water for PFAS. The EPA is assessing water Districts based on system size. Bigfork Water and Sewer has until 2027 to perform all the requirements. In that time, operators will be trained on how to properly gear up and how to take samples. Julie shared her sub-contractor contact information with LCWSD so preparation can begin.

Treatment Cell Aeration: General Manager Olson stated the aging aeration equipment in the treatment cells needs to be upgraded. General Manager Olson Presented the Board with an alternative aeration device to what the District is currently using. The Board and General Manager Olson discussed the pros and cons of each option presented. Director Wadman made a motion to approve the purchase of one blower with 10 Casco diffusers, along with 500 feet of hose. Director Fleming seconded, and the motion carried.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Operator Position: General Manager Olson informed the Board that the Operator One position that was posted received 15 applicants with varying backgrounds. Of the 15 that applied, five were selected for interviews. General Manager Olson selected local Lakeside resident, Joseph Frank, to fill the position. Joseph will start on April 1st, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Good, Secretary

NEXT MEETING DATE IS TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024)

Minutes

LAKESIDE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING February 20, 2024

PRESENT: Directors Marc Liechti, Jim Heim, Todd Fleming, Roxanne Wadman (phone) and employees Rodney Olson, General Manager, Rebecca Good, Secretary.

ABSENT: David Cordell

Director Liechti called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM

AGENDA: General Manager Olson requested that the 'Old Business' item of 'Septage Agreement' be removed from the agenda. A motion was made by Director Heim to accept the modified agenda. Director Fleming seconded, and motion carried.

VISITORS: There were 17 visitors at the meeting. See Exhibit C.

Jennifer Tipton with the North Shore Water Alliance read aloud a letter that was sent to the LCWSD Board of Directors and General Manager Olson for public record. See Exhibit A.

Mayre Flowers with Citizens for a Better Flathead informed the Board that she has submitted a formal letter of complaint to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality against the District. Mayre read portions of the letter to the Board, emphasizing areas that she wanted to specifically highlight. See Exhibit B. In addition to referencing the letter that was submitted, Mayre expressed her dislike for the, in her opinion, cumbersome, Public Records Request process with LCWSD. Mayre stated that she feels as though the LCWSD website is not in compliance with the transparency laws outlined in the Montana Constitution in regard to public information and wanted that Board of Directors to be aware of her concerns. Mayre also expressed concern over the lack of audio recordings at the LCWSD Board of Directors meetings. She feels as though this is inadequate as well.

Jim Mathieu questioned whether the Septage Agreement has anything to do with the Somers Steamboat Landing meeting that will be at the Flathead County Commissioners office on March 13th. Director Liechti stated no, clarifying that the Somers Water and Sewer District is an entirely separate District from the Lakeside County Water and Sewer District. Jim questioned why LCWSD was referenced in the 'Master Plan' for the Steamboat Landing project. General Manager Olson stated that he was unsure as that was not an LCWSD meeting. Director Liechti offered some clarification stating that Somers Water and Sewer is a customer of LCWSD. General Manager Olson stated that if SWSD needed more capacity, they would be required to make a formal request from LCWSD. Jim questioned the phases. General Manager Olson stated that LCWSD has provided a will serve letter for the first phase of Steamboat Landing, with strict timelines amid many other guidelines.

Jeff Martin requested the 'operational documents' for the proposed treatment facility. General Manager Olson told him to call and schedule an appointment to review the documents.

Todd Little made the statement "taxation without representation is what started the Tea Party".

Debbie Newman stated that she has called the District several times over the years about the smell in the Lower Valley from the treatment site. She wanted to make sure that the Board was aware that the complaints had been made. Director Liechti stated that the Board was aware that the complaints have been made. He further stated that he is aware that steps have been taken to mitigate the smell. Debbie stated that the District has only contributed to dust mitigation once. General Manager Olson questioned whether an invoice had ever been sent in, or a verbal request been made. Debbie stated that had not

been done but noted that the surrounding neighbors 'just know' to pay their portion. General Manager Olson stated that if an invoice was ever to be sent in, the District would pay their portion, as the District has always done in regard to the Lower Valley neighbors.

Katie Newman stated that the districts pivot field road off of Somers Stage Road can be extremely dusty, and she felt as though planting bushes to prevent the dust was not a viable solution. She stated that she is unable to have her windows open in the summertime even when the road is oiled. General Manager Olson stated that they were reviewing options with the farmer who leases the land.

James Mathieu questioned the Board on the specific differences between a public entity and a private entity. Director Liechti stated that to ensure accurate information, he would need to consult with legal counsel. General Manager Olson stated that the District is governed by Montana Code Annotated. He stated that the standard is to adhere to MCA Special District guidelines.

Donald Smith stated that SWSD has approved all stages of Steamboat Landing. He questioned whether that has to do with LCWSD capacity. Director Liechti stated that SWSD is a customer of LCWSD. Donald asked who the engineer is for the treatment site expansion project that LCWSD is working on. Director Liechti stated Robert Peccia and Associates.

Jim Mathieu stated that the Lakeside Neighborhood Plan has not been updated in several years. He asked how that would tie in to the current treatment site expansion plans. Director Liechti stated that it does not have any effect. Director Heim clarified that the Neighborhood Plan is not a regulatory document.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the December 19, 2023, Board meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Director Fleming to accept the minutes as presented. Director Heim seconded, and the motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: The financial reports for January 2024 were presented by General Manager Olson. A motion was made by Director Fleming to approve the financial report. Director Heim seconded, and motion carried.

BILL APPROVAL: Accounts payable for December 2023 and January 2024 were reviewed, and expenses of note discussed. The credit card statement for December 2023 was also reviewed. The credit card statement for January was accidentally excluded from the packet and will be included with the February bill review. A motion was made by Director Fleming to approve the bills presented. Director Heim seconded, and motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

Board Seat Election Process & Schedule: General Manager Olson informed the Board that in addition to the three existing Board members that submitted their Oath of Candidacy to extend their Board term, another citizen has submitted an Oath of Candidacy as well. Because there are more candidates than seats available, an official election will be held. General Manager Olson explained that the Flathead County Elections office will be handling all aspects of the election. He stated that he will be keeping the Board in the loop as the process unfolds.

Director Liechti questioned the cost to the District for the election that will be held. General Manager Olson stated that the Flathead County Election Department had provided a rough estimate, in the ballpark of \$6,000 - \$8,000 to cover the costs of election ballot supplies and administrative costs. General Manager Olson requested a biography from all Board members to post to the LCWSD website in addition to social media outlets, informing the public of their history, not only with the District, but the industry as well.

Bank Account: General Manager Olson requested changing banking institutions from First Interstate Bank to Glacier Bank. General Manager Olson outlined a list of reasons for requesting the switch. Director Wadman made a motion to change from First Interstate Bank to Glacier Bank for LCWSD's business banking needs. Director Heim seconded, and the motion carried.

General Manager Olson did state that if there were any 'red flags' identified in the process, he would halt the change and report back to the Board for further discussion.

MISCELLANEOUS:

While reviewing the 'New Hookups' Director Heim questioned the wastewater portion of the car wash that was listed. General Manager Olson informed that Board that they will have a self-contained water purifying system that not only pre-screens the wastewater but allows them to reuse some of it, along with proper grease and debris settlement basins approved by the district.

Hiring: General Manager Olson informed that Board that the help wanted advertisements have been posted for Operator 1 or Operator 2 positions. He stated that there have already been some resumes and applications submitted.

Director Heim addressed the visitors while speaking of District history regarding the original EPA grants that were acquired to create the District. He noted that a major component of the original EPA grant and facility plan was to allow for growth, and that it is, and always has been, the Districts view that growth is a vital part of what keeps the District running.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Good, Secretary

(NEXT MEETING DATE IS TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024)

Minutes

LAKESIDE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
January 16, 2024

The January
16th, 2024,
Board Meeting
was cancelled.

(NEXT MEETING DATE IS TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024)