

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING OF COMMISSIONERS
OF PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 3
OF MASON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

President Farmer called a regular teleconference meeting of the Mason County PUD No. 3 board of commissioners to order at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held virtually using Microsoft Teams in Shelton, Washington, on Tuesday, July 28, 2020.

District officers present were: Commissioners, Thomas J. Farmer; Linda R. Gott; Bruce E. Jorgenson; Manager Annette Creekpaum; Attorney Robert Johnson; Risk Manager/Auditor Brian Taylor; Finance Manager/Treasurer Sherry Speaks.

The following PUD 3 personnel were present: IS Manager John Bennett; Environmental & Admin Specialist Ali Burgess; Public Information & Government Relations Manager Lynn Eaton; Customer Service Manager Diane Hennessy; Director of Engineering & Utility Services Justin Holzgrove; Director of Engineering & Utility Services Dale Knutson; Power Manager Michele Patterson; Administrative Services Manager Mary Taylor-Monger (recorded minutes).

MODIFICATION AND/OR APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Farmer reviewed the items listed on the consent agenda. Mr. Jorgenson moved; motion seconded by Ms. Gott to adopt the consent agenda. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. By adopting the consent agenda, the following items were approved:

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| a. | Minutes of the July 14, 2020 regular commission meeting. | |
| b. | Voucher Nos. (July 21 ,2020) 154528 through 154576 (Includes electronic funds transfer payment Nos. 23063-23080 | \$ 401,612.82 |
| c. | Voucher Nos. (July 28 ,2020) 154577 through 154658 (Includes electronic funds transfer payment Nos. 23081-23302 | <u>\$ 1,559,427.60</u> |
| | Total | \$ 1,961,040.42 |
| d. | Void accounts payable checks for the week ending July 24, 2020 in the total amount of \$0.00 | |
| e. | Governance Policy Expense Approval | |

*Vouchers audited and certified by the district auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing which has been made available to the board.

STAFF REPORT

Mrs. Speaks reviewed the status of the budget as of June 30, 2020, with the commissioners. The month-end receipts for June were \$5.5 million, expenditures were \$5.8 million. Finishing the month of June with a negative budget balance of \$333,243.

Mrs. Speaks then provided the treasurer's report of funds through June 2020. The opening cash balance for June was \$5.2 million and was \$5 million at month's end. The total of all funds at month-end were \$34.8 million.

Mrs. Creekpau reported on the current COVID-19 efforts. As of July 27, 2020, there are 130 confirmed COVID-19 cases, forty-two (42) active cases and one (1) COVID related death in Mason County. Washington State has 53,321 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 1,518 COVID related deaths.

Mrs. Creekpau stated that Customer Service continues to work closely with customers financially affected by COVID-19. The 90 day past due totals through May were \$163,000 which includes 861 customers. Compared to May 2019 which was 276 customers totaling \$34,000.

Mrs. Creekpau proudly reported that the State Auditor has completed its audit and declared 41 years of clean audits for Mason PUD 3.

Mrs. Creekpau stated that PUD 3 is actively pursuing FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) funding for COVID-19 related costs.

Mrs. Creekpau announced that Dale Knutson is retiring on July 30, 2020 after 20 years of PUD service and Nancy Bolender is retiring July 31, 2020 after 38 years of PUD service.

At Mrs. Creekpau's request, Mr. Holzgrove provided commission with a Wi-Fi update. Mr. Holzgrove stated that twenty-three (23) of the twenty-seven (27) Wi-Fi hot spots are active. There have been 4,000 unique users accessing these sites. The peak hours continue to be from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with an average use of six (6) minutes.

Mrs. Creekpau reported on a June 11, 2020 publication in the Shelton Journal by a PUD 3 customer that discussed the lack of retail authority for ports and PUD's. This is a topic that may be seen in legislature soon.

At Mrs. Creekpau's request, Ms. Patterson provided commission with a Power Supply Statement. Ms. Patterson reported that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) rate proposal to suspend the financial reserves policy surcharge effective July 1, 2020 and through September 20, 2021. It will be reflected on the wholesale power bill received in August for July usage. Mrs. Creekpau added that this will save BPA power customers \$9 million in the remainder of 2020 and \$30 million in 2021.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mrs. Creekpau reviewed the COVID-19 Customer Support Program developed to be compliant with Proclamation 20-23.6 which requires utilities review existing policies concerning disconnection of service, reconnection of service, payment arrangements, and suspension of other fees or charges, and update those policies as appropriate and necessary to assist vulnerable individuals and households to maintain essential services during the economic recovery. The program will be posted on the PUD's COVID-19 webpage with a separate dropdown. The program will be posted in the "Alert" section of the PUD's website (and translated into Spanish) after the program review at the July 28 commission

meeting. A link to the PUD's COVID-19 Customer Support Program will be sent to WPUA and to the Department of Commerce.

COVID-19 Customer Support Program

- 1) Mason PUD 3 customers will maintain access to essential services during the state's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Mason PUD 3 has taken active steps to review current customer assistance programs to address the needs of customers going forward, especially low-income and vulnerable individuals and households.
 - For those economically impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, Mason PUD has suspended disconnections for non-payment and waived late fees, on active accounts until **August 1, 2020**, at which time the Manager may re-evaluate this timeline and modify the plan if necessary. *This does not relieve customers from the obligation to pay for utility services.*
 - The PUD has evaluated its assistance programs and will continue to offer and promote low-income senior and low-income disabled discounts.
 - The PUD is using all its resources to promote and improve access to energy assistance through the Community Action Council (CAC) as well as other help agencies.
 - The PUD has increased promotions seeking donations for the customer-funded Project Share Program to assist low-income customers with their electric bills.
- 2) Mason PUD 3 will offer long-term payment arrangements to all customers economically impacted by COVID-19 and with arrearage balances. Payment plans will be tailored to address individual customer needs, with longer term payment plans advised for customers with high arrearage balances.
 - Customers with arrearages are encouraged to contact the PUD for help coordinating assistance programs.
 - The PUD is also making efforts to contact these customers directly by phone, email, door tags or premise visits, if necessary, to coordinate payment arrangements/plans and connect customers with assistance.
 - The PUD will work with each customer to provide a long-term payment plan (six to eighteen months or longer if appropriate) considering each customer's unique circumstances.
 - Customers may qualify for the PUD's PrePay program for such payment plans, avoiding future late fees and possible deposit requirements.
- 3) The PUD's outreach and communication plan to provide information to customers about options for bill payment assistance and payment plans includes:
 - Mason PUD 3 has a dedicated COVID-19 page on its website which includes information in English and Spanish.
 - The PUD has proactively reached out to customers via phone and email regarding available assistance and payment arrangements/plans.
 - The PUD has also Included the notification regarding the PUD's "COVID-19 Customer Support Program" as a billing message and in a billing insert/newsletter.
 - Mason PUD 3 has used social media, newspaper advertising, and other communication methods to inform customers of available assistance.

- The PUD's contact information will be provided on all customer bills and notifications related to COVID-19 assistance.
- 4) Mason PUD 3 is working with state and local agencies to help identify customers experiencing economic hardship as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and help those customers gain access to bill assistance.
- Mason PUD 3 is working closely with community partners such United Way, Community Action Council, and others to help connect customers with bill assistance.
 - In addition to contacting customers on its past due listing, the PUD is also reaching out to all customers through billing messages, billing insert, social media, website, and other communication methods in an effort to reach all customers in need.
 - The PUD is attempting to include its marketing for assistance programs in English and Spanish to align with its customer demographics.
- 5) All customers with arrearage balances are being notified of bill assistance funds available through the PUD.
- The PUD is continuously monitoring its 30-60-90 day past due accounts and attempting to make personal contact with customers, informing them of available energy assistance.
 - The PUD is utilizing its marketing efforts through billing messages, billing inserts, social media, website, etc. to inform customers of available assistance.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Ms. Gott reported that she attended the Washington Public Utility Districts Association (WPUDA) virtual meetings, American Public Power Association (APPA) Policy Makers council Meeting, and the State Auditors Exit Conference.

Mr. Farmer reported that he attended the virtual Special Economic Recovery Meeting through the Washington State Senate and the State Auditor's Exit Conference.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

With no further business appearing, the commission meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.



Thomas J Farmer (Aug 11, 2020 10:34 PDT)

Thomas J Farmer, President



Linda R. Gott (Aug 11, 2020 10:52 PDT)

Linda R. Gott, Vice President

ATTEST:



Bruce E. Jorgenson (Aug 11, 2020 12:26 PDT)

Bruce E. Jorgenson, Secretary