

Vaughn Cascade County Water & Sewer



1161 6th Ave, Vaughn, MT 59487

Board Meeting Minutes

May 17th, 2022

Notice: *These minutes are paraphrased and reflect the proceedings of the Board of Directors.*

MCA 7-4-2611 (2) (b). These minutes were officially approved at the _____ Board meeting.

Public in attendance: Sarah, Sweet Grass Development

Call to order/Quorum: Herb Phinney President at 6:03 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Herb Phinney, Tina Cole, Rex Heckle, Sandra Dail

Employees: Annette Kniffen, James (Rusty) South

Approve April 19th, 2022 minutes 1:38

Herb: has everyone had a chance to read the minutes? **Tina:** yes **Rex:** yes **Sandra:** yes

Herb: any board discussion regarding minutes? **Tina:** no **Rex:** no **Sandra:** no

Herb: any community comments? **None**

Rex made motion to accept minutes. Tina seconded

All those in favor say Aye: Tina, Rex, Herb, Sandra

All those opposed same sign: none

Standing Agenda:

Secretary report: see attached 2:10

Sarah Sweet Grass: another district I work with theirs went up also. That is ridiculous. I don't think you are stuck with MACO. Cascade County use to self-insure themselves for health insurance. I will check and let you know. Discussion continued on cost of MACO insurance. **Sandra:** if we have to go with MACO who would we talk to, to represent us because this is not right? **Annette:** I talked to Erwin Insurance, the owner and he said he would see what he could do. The email I got regarding this is because our income doubled which included the grant and loan money. He called Helena and that is what they told him.

Discussion continued on MACO insurance.

Auditor requesting letter sent to County Attorney regarding any law suits against district. 12:17

Annette: Auditor wanted me to sign it and I didn't think it was my decision to sign. Does the board want to sign it? **Herb:** did you have a chance to ask our accountant about this? **Annette:** I did and she said, once in a great while the auditors will ask for this but not very often.

Board decided the President would sign the letter.

Annette: Auditor emailed me yesterday and there was 2 pages of spreadsheets they wanted copies of checks and invoices that went with the checks. That took me two days. I want to make a suggestion that this next audit we go with someone local. It will still cost \$15,000 or more but it will save us, payroll, postage etc. Every time I have to mail them it's at least \$10.

Operator's report: see attached 16:20

Discussion on Rusty's award from DEQ: Rusty received an award for excellence. They don't give them out very often.

Old business:

Sweet Grass Development: ARPA Funds 18:47

Sarah: your project isn't in dire straits so it isn't available for state funding. We are trying to get money for this. I believe what the county is going to give you is minimum allocation that is for water and sewer district. I'm thinking this project will take over 2 years to complete.

Sarah: went over the budget paperwork for funding. **Herb:** for clarification what project are you talking about?

Rusty: it includes Couch lift station, phosphorus removal, main line replacement the clay lines we have in town. **Herb:** so it is sewer system infrastructure? **Rusty:** yes.

New Business: 36:29

Resolution 22-04 increase Visa charge card limit.

Rusty: right now we are at a \$2,000 limit. I max the card out frequently. We order online. I would like to charge gas with it so we can get ten cents off a gallon. Right now I can only charge at the Conoco in Vaughn. With the Conoco app I can get 10 cents off a gallon. I can get alum for phosphorus removal on line and save the district thousands. Right now we are waiting for the alum to be shipped and we don't have enough on the card.

Annette: I have to keep calling the bank and get a temporary increase on the card which is usually only good for a week. **Herb:** How much would you like it increased to? **Rusty:** I think we can get away with \$5,000. **Herb:** Annette how do you feel about this? **Annette:** Rusty and I have talked about this the past couple weeks. I think it would be easier than me having to call Fairfield every two weeks saying we need an increase.

Board Discussion: **Herb:** this is necessary for operation. This is not an extra expense it gets paid off every month. **Tina:** it makes his purchasing easier. **Rex:** how often do you think you would need the \$7,500? **Rusty:** not very often, just when I have to order alum. Right now Annette has to pay the card off weekly. This is spring and summer and I am fixing things all the time. **Rex:** if it is \$10,000 does the card costs us more? **Annette:** no we don't pay a yearly fee. If I don't pay it off every month we get charged an interest rate.

Motion to increase credit card limit to \$7,500 made by Herb, 42:58

Seconded by Rex

All in favor: Rex, Tina, Sandra, Herb

All those opposed same sign: none

Motion passes.

Resolution 22-05 add water restrictions and penalties to Rules and Regulations 45:18

Annette: we can discuss it and approve them but I will have to change the bottom, it says page 1. When I talked to the Clerk & Records office today they said to attach the restrictions to the agenda so I will have to have page 1 of 4 on the bottom. **Herb:** Rusty is there any big changes to what it has been? **Rusty:** we have never had any. The whole thing is new. **Tina:** so when it says no irrigation between these hours, does it mean when he waters my yard? **Rusty:** no that is totally separate. **Sandra:** if irrigation is permitted between 6 am and 10 am or 6 pm and 10 pm. **Rusty:** that is so the heat of the day doesn't evaporate the water. **Herb:** Rusty is there anything you want to point out to board? **Rusty:** I think the penalties is what people will complain about most. **Sandra:** you are going to give out penalties. **Rusty:** if you don't have penalties people won't care about times they can water. They are less than what other districts charge. **Sandra:** so what is done with your penalty money? **Rusty:** it will go into general operating fund. It costs money to make that water. The pumps run longer. **Sandra:** what happens if someone doesn't pay? **Rusty:** then we shut their water off. I don't see them going past one violation.

Motion to approve Resolution 22-05 Herb 55:03

Seconded by Tina

All those in favor say aye: Tina, Sandra, Rex, Herb

All those opposed same sign: none

Motion passes

Emergency fund for Couch Lift station: 55:43

Rusty: it just isn't pumping right. It is not going on the ground anywhere. **Herb:** read statement from office staff: We have contacted several different agencies requesting emergency funding. This is what we have heard, Rural development, no funds, USDA no funds available, DNRC they don't consider this an emergency, National Rural Water has a loan available we can apply for interest rate is 3% and would be over a ten year period, payments would be approximately \$482 per month and no penalty for paying it off early. We are still searching for other agencies that provide emergency grant money.

Rusty: it has been added to the ARPA funding paperwork. If we don't get money to repair this we are going to have to borrow from the savings account, we have money in the lagoon liner savings along with other savings. We will have to repay the savings accounts by raising rates and we don't want to have to do that. **Tina:** so it is leaking sewage and they don't consider that an emergency? **Rusty:** if it was leaking on the ground yes, it is leaking in the manhole.

Herb: any discussion from the board or have any questions? **Rusty:** the electrical is obsolete and needs updated. The electrical has to be updated to match the pump. I have an emergency pump ready to drop in and a line going to the next manhole. I will have to build something to go across the street.

Community Comments: none

Adjournment:

With no further business before the board, the meeting stood adjourned. **Adjourned:** 7:04 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Annette Kniffen, Secretary/Treasurer

Date

Herbert Phinney III, President

Date