

FLATHEAD COUNTY WATER DISTRICT #101

POB 1141, Columbia Falls, MT 59912

*** Meeting Minutes December 3, 2024 ***

General Meeting:

I. Call to Order 7:01 pm

General Meeting for FCWD #101 held this December 3, 2024. Directors present include Nicole Bond, Clarence Taber, Russ Barnett and Brian Rohletter.

Audience: Jeff Soyland, CWO; Water District Customers: Steve Fucci, Norm Nunnally, Jim Miller, John Toftum, Linda Parker and Ellen McCrory.

Tina Bondy, Board Secretary, attended via telephone.

II. **Minutes** - *Discussion and approval of the September 17, 2024 Minutes of Regular Meeting; Discussion and approval of the October 22, 2024 Minutes of Special Meeting*

- a. Following a brief Board discussion of the Minutes for the September 17 regular meeting, Brian made a Motion to accept the Minutes; Russ seconded and all voted in favor.
- b. Following a typo correction pointed out by Nikki in the Draft Minutes circulated electronically prior to the meeting, Nikki made a Motion to approve the Minutes as amended; Russ seconded and all voted in favor.

III. **Time for Public Comment and Discussions** - 5 min allotment / property owner.

- a. John Toftum
 - i. addressed the Board about previous water leaks where the customer would not be responsible for the excessive charge for the leak if the leak was fixed immediately. In this case, he called and tried to get the water shut off when learned it was leaking. He was out of town, and it was on one of his rental properties in February. Meter wasn't shut off and instead it froze and broke and continued leaking. 100k gallons that he says was not his responsibility. Is asking the Board to look into this.
 - ii. believes that water meters should be in the renter's name. If they don't pay the rent, he can't shut it off; he doesn't feel he has any control. Per the Board, this is not open for discussion.
 - iii. locater problem. Had to call it in several times to get the lines painted, and then it snowed before he could proceed to dig
 1. Nikki addressed that the U-dig ticket did come through and went out to mark it. Then snow happened. Russ asked whether that was going to

preclude John from doing any work the rest of the winter. John confirmed that it would not necessarily, but with frozen ground digging around a gas line is problematic.

- b. Clarence Taber – approaching the Board as a Customer. Is concerned about the water hydrant in his field, and wants it removed. Clarence (as the Board Member) recuses himself from the decision. Doesn't want to be present for the Board discussion of this issue. John Toftom advised that this has been surveyed 3 times and it always comes back to being correctly placed. Nikki asked whether if we put this on the next meeting as an official agenda item, and had an engineer here and a surveyor, whether that would be satisfactory for Clarence. Clarence agreed that would be sufficient. Note that this should be on the next meeting agenda. Following this discussion, Clarence un-recused himself and rejoined the Board.

IV. Old Business

a. Open Board Seat(s)

- i. Linda Parker, A&W owner – had applied for a board seat (the night of the last meeting).
- ii. Steve Fucci also has submitted a letter of interest tonight as well.

As both applicants are present this evening, Russ suggests that both speak for themselves.

Steve Fucci provided that he is an inspector for the state of Montana. Essentially a number cruncher. He has lived here for 6 years and has weekends off. With his job, he spends a lot of time doing research (Federal regulations, etc., familiar) and has worked 2 jobs for 38 years.

Linda Parker provided that she is has been a business owner in the district for 2 years. She was previously in the potato industry. She is also currently working on Masters in Business Mgmt and agricultural management.

Clarence suggested that there are two people that would be great for the board, and he would be willing to step down to allow for both of them to be appointed as Board Members. Two people who are interested and have time to do this.

Clarence announced he will step down and Nikki accepted Clarence's resignation from the Board.

There are now 3 Board Members and 2 Open Seats.

Nikki makes a Motion to appoint Linda Parker and Steve Fucci to the Board. Following further board discussion, Brian seconded the Motion. All voted in favor. Nikki announced to Linda and Steve "welcome to the Board".

b. General Manager Role

Board discussion about the consideration of hiring someone for a GM role. Unless a person is retired, the district will be challenged to get someone to devote ½ their time to the role. Jeff suggested that the Board contact someone in Bigfork, who may be willing to do something like this, taking on an additional district part time. Russ had spoken with Ben about this, but with Martin City, Hungry Horse and his other responsibilities, he is not willing to take on another role.

Customer Ellen McRory suggested that she may be willing to help out. There was a further discussion as to how much the current contractors are paid monthly:

CWO - \$500

Secretary - \$400

Bookkeeper - \$400

Russ did talk with someone at MT Rural Water, the organization that may provide some guidance, they suggested that the FCWD 101 try to find someone within the district, that could then work under someone else and eventually get their CWO license. It was pointed out that the DEQ website has managers listed for each of the districts. Further Board discussion about the CWO qualifications. The Board suggests that if they can find someone that has another district as well, would be ideal. This is a small district, but we need to figure out how to make it more efficient!

Board also noted that Jeff, the current CWO is around and close until April, but after that, he will be further away working at GNP. Also noted that the next full Board Meeting is in March.

V. Operator's report – Quarterly Report presented by Jeff Soyland, CWO

Jeff gave this report (also via email). He conducted the fall flush on the 21st of October and noted that there was a lot of gunk in there. Because of this, he conducted a secondary flush in the middle of the night a few days later. That didn't seem to make a big difference, so will go back to doing just one in the spring.

Jeff noted that there is still a matter of needing to drain and sanitize the tank. He needs to work with John Toftum. John mentioned that can be scheduled in the spring. It needs to be drained and sanitized per the sanitation report from DEQ.

There was a power outage in November during a large storm. The generator at the pump house did not kick on, as the battery was bad. The battery was replaced.

VI. New Business

a. Pumphouse Generator / Battery

In light of the power outage and generator outage during the large storm, the Board continued its discussion of these issues following the Operator's Report. Noted by John Toftum that the generator should be fired up at regular intervals to ensure that it ready

to go to work in the event of a power outage and suggests that Jeff do so when he checks the meter at the pumphouse monthly.

This topic also covered further discussion with John Toftum on his previously submitted and approved bid to relocate the meter pit for the motel, as well as the discussion about the cost to drain and sanitize the tank. There is a repair that is needed, but John is concerned about incurring the added expense of chlorinating, multiple water tests, etc. He will check with DEQ and then advise as to the costs to clean/sanitize. But looking at March for scheduling this work.

Further discussion about a hydrant on Circle Drive that is next to Clarence Taber's field. The discussion moved into the fact that some of the hydrants in the district are not true fire hydrants. They are FLUSH hydrants. Fire department should not be messing with them at all.

VII. Financial report – Secretary provided financial reports as of December 2, 2024

Nikki provided that the Accounts Receivable report in Quickbooks had not yet been reconciled prior to the Secretary pulling these reports for the meeting. Further, the bills for December have not yet been sent out. Discussion with Nikki and Russ about the bills and Russ noting that he wants to go over the bills before they are sent out.

Board discussion about the \$2000 leak on the Toftum account, and the discussion about a hardship review. The Board proposes that they take an average over the previous 6 months and adjust the extensive leak dollars. Note that John has been paying toward this bill, but believes that in the past similar situations with other customers, the costs were adjusted. Decision to pull a list of John's invoices and bills and find an average to use.

Further Board discussion on the various expenses, water testing, etc.. The Board members would like to have a breakdown of the water tests. Nikki advised that she will pass along to the Board when they arrive electronically.

VIII. Correspondence and Additional Discussion

Nikki advised that Ed Albaugh passed away and that account is being switched over to his son.

IX. Adjournment - 8:57pm

-- President announced the next General Meeting of the Board is scheduled on March 4, 2025, 7pm, at the Badrock Fire Department.