

Pursuant to the Open Records Act: The minutes of the LCRWS #17 are available to its members upon request. Copy rates are posted at the LCRWD #17 office and on file with the County Clerk. Minutes will also be available at our website lcrwd17@myruralwater.com

LCRWD#17 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2024

- Jean Conklin led the meeting with a prayer.
- Member questions: None.
- Roll Call: Vicki Cearnal Chairman, present. Jean Conklin Vice-Chairman, present. Deb Butler Treasurer, present. Kendle Ortiz Secretary, present. Matt Pollard member at large, present. Also present were John Butler, Water Operator and Sean Balzanna operator trainee. Guest list see sign in sheet filed with meeting minutes.
- Meeting called to order at 6:02 PM.
- Secretary's Report: Kendle Ortiz apologized to the board for not emailing a copy of the meeting minutes to the board. A copy of the meeting minutes from the GMM on January 9th and following BOD meetings were distributed to the board prior to the start of the meeting. Kendle asked if everyone had reviewed the minutes from the GMM and BOD meetings. Kendle asked if there were any amendments or corrections for the minutes. There were none. Jean Conklin made a motion to accept the GMM meeting minutes from January 9th. Matt Pollard seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Deb Butler voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried. Deb Butler made a motion to accept the BOD meeting minutes from January 9th. Matt Pollard seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Deb Butler voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried.

- **Treasurer's Report:** Deb Butler presented the Management Report to the board. A copy of the report and cover letter are filed with the meeting minutes. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the management report. Deb stated that UTS had an annual maintenance and support fee that she had not noticed when they decided to go with UTS for the drive by meter system. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the UTS fees. John Butler stated that the software updates were needed for the handheld unit he used for the meter system. John stated he would see if there was a bi-annual or monthly option for the service. John stated he would be meeting with Blake from UTS and would talk to him about this. Vicki stated we would discuss this again at the next meeting. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the district's finances. There was a discussion about our past due accounts. Doug Davis asked how many of our accounts were past due. There was a discussion regarding our past due accounts and our procedure for them. Jean Conklin asked if ACH payments were available yet. Deb stated that we had signed and returned all the paperwork for obtaining ACH payments and it was up to the provider to finish setting that option up for us. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the district's water loss. John stated that we needed the gate valves installed to find the leaks. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Matt Pollard seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Deb Butler voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried.
- **Operator's Report:** John Butler presented his operator's report to the board. A copy of the operator's report is filed with the meeting minutes. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the operator's report. John stated he wanted the board to be aware that the truck will need new tires and a possible front end alignment. He stated the cost of the tires was around \$1300 plus the cost of the alignment. John stated he would like the board to talk about this and make a decision on that issue. John gave an update on the RIG project. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the RIG project. Vicki asked John to discuss the RIG 2 grant we are currently working on. John explained the reason for the project and the project in

general. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the project and leak detection. Matt Pollard showed a picture of a thermal detector for leak detection. There was a discussion regarding the use of thermal detectors in leak detection. Vicki Cearnal explained to the members the two RIG grants the district had applied for. She stated the first RIG was for the new drive by meters that were installed. She stated that the second RIG was for leak detection and water quality. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the new gate valves and flush hydrants that were going to be installed. A member asked if the water from the automatic flush hydrants could be measured. John explained that he had a meter that would be used to show how many gallons of water were run through the hydrants during the flush so that we can track that usage so it would not be included in our water loss report. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the flush hydrants, the water quality and the process for using the flush hydrants. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the road widening project along highway 63. Vicki thanked John Butler for his operator report.

- Old Business:

- HomeServ: Kendle Ortiz stated she wanted the board consider using HomeServ for the district. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the HomeServ program leak insurance. Vicki stated she would put an alert on the website regarding the leak insurance and we would try to get member input regarding adding the leak insurance. She stated the board would revisit this again at the next meeting.

- New Business:

- Customer Account Status (2): There was a lengthy discussion regarding account disconnections.
- Loan Resolution Community Unlimited loan \$25,000 (new board): Deb Butler stated that we had approved a prior loan resolution with Communities Unlimited back in March of 2023 for \$25,000 but we found other funds and did not use the loan. She stated that Communities Unlimited had that prior resolution but she felt we

should have a new resolution for the Communities Unlimited loan for \$25,000 just to be prepared. Vicki Cearnal read the resolution into the meeting minutes.

RESOLUTION

AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION FOR LOAN FROM COMMUNITIES
UNLIMITED

WHEREAS, Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County is financially incapable of providing the 20% needed to complete a RIG grant funding and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the citizens of Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County, to expedite a loan from Communities Unlimited

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that a situation is hereby recognized and declared to exist in LeFlore County, Oklahoma and Vicki Cearnal, Chairperson of the Board or Deborah Butler, Treasurer, are hereby authorized and directed to execute and sign all closing documents relating to said loan on behalf of the Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County, Oklahoma.

Kendle Ortiz made a motion to accept the resolution as read. Matt Pollard seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Deb Butler voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried.

- Grant Resolution for WaterSMART engineering \$400,000 (2.3M project): Deb Butler stated that at our meeting for the DWSRF grant that engineering costs would not be funded only construction costs due to limited funds. There was a lengthy discussion regarding funding options for our 2.3 million dollar project. Deb stated that there was a WaterSMART grant for engineering costs that we could apply for to cover the engineering costs for our district. Vicki Cearnal read the resolution into the meeting minutes.

RESOLUTION

AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION FOR APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION GRANT

WHEREAS Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County has a water loss ratio between 50-80% monthly due to poor installation of the water line 22 years ago; and

WHEREAS, Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County is financially incapable of remedying the situation which threatens the public health and welfare of the people of Big Cedar, Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, it is justifiable and in the best interest of the citizens of Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County, to expedite the preparation and submission of an application for financial assistance for a 2.3 million dollar project and to seek a Water and Energy Efficiency grant for \$400,000 from the US Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation Water SMART Program for the engineering design to improve our water management.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that a situation is hereby recognized and declared to exist in LeFlore County, Oklahoma and Vicki Cearnal, Chairperson of the Board, and/or Deborah Butler, Treasurer, are hereby authorized and directed to sign an application and related documents necessary to file and process an application on behalf of Rural Water District #17 in LeFlore County, Oklahoma. Kendle Ortiz made a motion to accept the resolution as read. Deb Butler seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Deb Butler voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried.

- ORWA Meeting April 10-12: Deb Butler stated our district had been nominated for district of the year by ORWA and the award would be given at the ORWA annual conference in Norman. She stated that she felt it was important that the board attend the conference to accept the award if we win. She also stated this would be a chance to meet other people involved in the grants and peers at the conference. She stated that she had already booked her hotel room and encouraged the other board members to do the same as space was limited. She stated that the board should pay for the cost of attending the conference and our hotel ourselves so that district

funds would stay with the district. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the conference.

- Installation of electric at the stand pipe: Vicki stated she had spoken with the land owner in the past and he was adamant about not giving us an easement due to the power lines disrupting his view. John stated he had spoken with RMEC regarding providing electric to the standpipe and it was possible to go down the fence line then across the highway and back across the highway to provide electric to the standpipe but it increased the cost of the installation. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the possibility of burying the electric cable versus running it across the highway. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the possibility of eminent domain as we are a utility. Vicki stated she would discuss this with Dean Warren our attorney and see what our options would be.
- Potential Contract negotiation with Mena: There was a lengthy discussion regarding our options regarding a contract negotiation with Mena. Vicki stated she would discuss this with Dean Warren as well to see what our options could be. She stated we did not want to get locked into a long term contract with Mena in case Freedom Water was able to obtain a secondary source for water and then we would not be able to switch to them for our water needs. She stated that we would continue to monitor the situation with Mena for the time being. We were watching their agendas for their meetings to see if the contract negotiation was added to their agenda. In that case we would want to attend that meeting.
- Open Member Discussions: Vicki Cearnal stated that she had been to three meetings regarding the upcoming solar eclipse on April 8th. She wanted everyone to be aware that they are anticipating a large influx of people to our area for the eclipse and that they are anticipating up to 150,000 people to come to view the eclipse. She stated she wanted everyone to stock up on supplies prior in anticipation of resources being depleted due to the influx of people. She stated we should prepare for this event. Vicki stated she would put an alert on our website regarding the upcoming solar

eclipse. Ken Winkenwerder stated that the last quarter meeting minutes were missing from the website. Kendle stated she would look into providing those to him to be posted on the website. He stated that November, December and January minutes would be what he needed.

- Adjournment: Deb Butler made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Matt Pollard seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Deb Butler voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Signed: *Vicki Cearnal*

Seal:

