

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 Special Called Meeting Minutes

September 4, 2024

- Call to Order: Vicki Cearnal called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.
- John Butler led the meeting with a prayer.
- 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 apprentice. Sign in sheet filed with meeting minutes.
- Vicki Cearnal had an opening statement that she read into the meeting minutes. I have called this Special Meeting for the Board to review the letter received from Sean, regarding his decision to remove his property from a listing for sale. According to our job posting and discussions during the interview process, we had made it known our desire that our water operator should reside in the district. When Sean was hired, the Board felt his qualifications and desires made waiting for that relocation a satisfactory decision. We did not set a time frame for that relocation, understanding that the real estate market was/is in a flux. And, that John was not planning to retire until May, 2025. I want the Board in its entirety to hear from Sean in this regard in his own words. The district and John have invested 7 months into Sean's training and Sean has invested his focus,

time and travel to fulfill his obligation. Considering these investments, I believe it to be prudent that a thorough discussion be had. With all of this said, circumstances change. We all know that from our personal lives. And I believe that all of us understand the enormity of the recent Choctaw grant award. That single decision changes work focus, board focus, financial needs, all while still handling the day-to-day water operations. I will turn this over to Sean first. Board questions and discussions will follow. I do not expect any motions or actions to come of today's meeting. Once we have asked questions and heard answers, I anticipate that we will all prayerfully consider our options and next steps to be determined no later than September 13th. This is only my suggestion of time to contemplate next steps. After we hear from Sean, we will be dismissed, and John will have an opportunity to add any input he has directly from the operator's perspective. Sean Balzanna tendered a letter of resignation to the board. Vicki stated that in his letter of resignation he had mentioned some things that she found concerning. There was a lengthy discussion regarding his resignation. Vicki asked Sean if he was amenable to an exit interview and Sean stated that yes he was.

- Adjourn To Executive Session: Vicki Cearnal made a motion to adjourn to executive session. Kendle Ortiz seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Deborah Butler voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried. Adjourned to Executive session at 4:18 PM. Deborah Butler recused herself from the meeting when John Butler was asked to return due to a potential conflict of interest.
- Adjourn Executive Session: Vicki Cearnal made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session. Kendle Ortiz seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried. Executive session adjourned at 6:52 PM.

- Return to regular BOD session: Vicki Cearnal made a motion to return to regular BOD session. Kendle Ortiz seconded the motion. Vicki Cearnal voted yea. Jean Conklin voted yea. Kendle Ortiz voted yea. Matt Pollard voted yea. Motion carried. Deborah Butler was asked to rejoin the meeting. Regular session resumed at 6:53 PM. Matt Pollard suggested the possibility of hiring Curtis Faulkenberry under contract to run the district. He stated Curtis could hire workers to do the water testing and flushing and other tasks for the district. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the potential to hire Curtis Faulkenberry or another licensed water operator to take over the running of the district. There was a lengthy discussion regarding John Butler's retirement and the possibility of him being hired to be the inspector for the upcoming project on the water line. There was a lengthy discussion regarding possibly having Sean Balzanna returning as the water operator and keeping John Butler on as well but in a supportive role until his retirement. There was a lengthy discussion regarding Sean Balzanna taking over as the water operator for the district. Deb Butler asked if we were willing to have Sean as water operator even if he does not live in the district. Vicki stated yes if he is willing to come back as the water operator. Vicki stated that we can address the issue of his living outside the district at a later date. John Butler was asked if Sean wanted to return was he okay stepping aside as the primary water operator and letting Sean assume that role. He would be there in a support capacity and to assist when necessary. John would continue to work on developing the SOP's and other paperwork for the operator position. John stated that he had no problem with that at all. Vicki Cearnal called Sean Balzanna. He did not answer. Sean Balzanna called Vicki back and he was placed on speaker phone. Vicki stated that the board had wanted to ask Sean if he would be willing to take over being the primary water operator for our district. Vicki stated that Sean would be in charge of answering the phone and taking care of all the day to day operations of the water district. John would still be working for the district but as just a support person for Sean until John retires or is hired on as an inspector for the upcoming project. Vicki asked would he be willing to return in those circumstances. Sean stated that his

initial thought is no. Sean stated that he would still have to interact with two of the main people involved in running the district and he felt that their values were too different and that would cause conflict. Vicki asked Sean to at least take a day and think it over before deciding. Sean stated he would talk to his wife and then let the board know his final decision. Sean ended the phone call. There was a lengthy discussion regarding possible solutions for a water operator if Sean is not willing to return to the district.

- Adjournment: Vicki Cearnal made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jean Conklin 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 7:24 PM.

Signed: _____

Seal: