

PRICE RIVER WATER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
January 2, 2024

A regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Price River Water Improvement District was held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the District's Service Center located at 265 South Fairgrounds Road, Price, Utah.

PRESENT

Scott Jensen	Micha Marelli
Barney Zauss	Kim Wood
Lenise Peterman	Beau Fausett
Mike Kourianos	Ross Bryner
Jeff Richens	Chris Matthews

EXCUSED

Keith Cox

SELECTION OF CHAIRMAN PRO TEM

Zauss moved to elect Peterman as Chairman Pro Tem for this meeting. Jensen seconded and the motion carried unanimously. AYE: Jensen, Peterman and Zauss.

Chairman Pro Tem Peterman welcomed everyone to Board Meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Peterman led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor Mike Kourianos was sworn in as a PRWID Board Member from Price City.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

POSSIBLE CONFLICT WITH AGENDA ITEMS

There were no conflicts with Agenda Items.

MINUTES

Chairman Pro Tem Peterman asked for input to the minutes of the December 19, 2023 Board Meeting. Jensen moved to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2023 meeting. Zauss seconded and the motion carried unanimously. AYE: Jensen, Kourianos, Peterman and Zauss.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS BY BOARD

Zauss reported the WTP has seen a slowdown in water demand and they are still receiving 600 gallons per minute from Price City. The operators are working on rebuilding pumps and equipment to get ready for summer. They are working on the yearly consumable inventory and they rerouted some electrical from high voltage to low voltage for a heater unit.

Jensen reported that the line crew completed work on the sewer manhole lid on Hwy 6 that came off. UDOT took care of traffic control and paid for the concrete. We used a locking lid that

was already in the yard. Crews read master meters while Chris was on vacation. John Jaramillo passed his CDL driving test. Jacob got called out to Quall Hollow to fix a leak on Christmas Day. They fixed a water leak in Spring Glen and took the end of the month residuals and bacteria samples. They input inventory into the computer and cleaned up a leak in Coal Creek. They also installed a new yard hydrant at the RV dump and hauled road base to the Kenilworth pump house for a stockpile, then hauled off junk and asphalt to the dump.

Kourianos did not have an update this time as he thought that the update that Tony sent him was just a general overview. He will be prepared for next time.

Chairman Pro Tem Peterman reported that the WWTP continues to work on the state COVID 19 study and continues testing on phosphorus removal with the plant upgrade. They have had two power outages that have resulted in some alarms. Crews worked to cover shifts over the holidays. Vancon is removing concrete forms today and they collected and performed 231 lab tests or samples over the last two weeks; mostly for process control and some for the state discharge monitor report.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Richens passed information to the board members for training that board members have attended in the past and which is scheduled for March 18-20, 2024. The first day's conference will focus on Water Law, and will review what new laws were passed this legislative session, how they will affect different entities, and how we can best respond to them. The rest focuses on all things water and is from the Utah Water Users Association. He requested that the Board review the information and see if they would like to attend. He will need to know by the February 6, 2024 meeting for registration. He also reported that both new hires started work today.

ADOPT PERSONNEL POLICY REVISIONS

Richens presented the board members with a copy of the revised personnel policy to review. The changes address district computer uses and CDL's. The Board received the updated version, and if the changes are approved then this will be each board member's copy. The first change is on page 21 under Personal Use of Equipment. There is a section called the Computer Use and Cyber security/Telephone Use. All of the proposed changes to the policy are items 1-7. Item one is to have our facilities free from distractions. Item two has three purposes; to prohibit the unacceptable uses of the district's computer network, to reduce the risk of exposure to the district's network information system, and to educate employees about their individual responsibilities. Item three says this policy covers all computers, tablets and any electronic devices that access the District's network. The District will not give outside users' full access to the network. They will be given a guest network access. There is a list of "don't"s including don't give away your passwords, don't misrepresent your identity, don't copy, install or use software without copyright, don't modify or configure district computers without authorization, and don't store data on district computers without authorization or as prohibited by law. The Board also talked about the required changes of emails to .gov. The next changes are on page 64 and address the CDL requirements bringing them in line with current practice. B. Unless medically disqualified by a licensed physician or otherwise exempted by the District's Board of Trustees, all operational employees who work at the WTP, WWTP, Fleet and Maintenance departments are required to obtain a Utah Commercial Drivers Licenses within 90 days of completion of the District's ELDT course and maintain this license thereafter. The second change addresses reimbursements to the

employee for CDL testing fees to align with practices for our certification policy. All costs will be reimbursed on the first test and the last test. Zauss moved to approve the revised PRWID Personal Policy and Procedure Handbook. Jensen seconded and the motion passed unanimously. AYE: Jensen, Kourianos Peterman and Zauss.

REVIEW WAGE SCALE AND WAGE/BENEFITS HISTORY

Richens passed around wage scale histories as well as current employees' wage and benefits histories to the board members. Marrelli asked for a copy of the forms passed out to the board and Richens stated that the board would need to tell him who to give it to as he prepared this for the board at their request. Kourianos asked for Richens to give him the history of why we are here. The wage scale came into play in 2014. He said that some employees felt that, before the wage scale, if the supervisor liked you then you would get a raise and sometimes the board would say we are going to give you 2%, 1.5% or 4%. There were complaints that you did not know what to expect and that 4% for a supervisor compared to a regular employee were not equal so the scale was created. Richens explained how the wage scale works with steps and lanes. When you are new, you start in lane one and your steps were every year depending on if you were completing your certifications. The only thing that would change as a new employee is you start at whatever level you start, you take a step at 6 months, but the next January you don't take a step until the following January. The board then would decide each year to roll up the wage scale \$0.25 or \$0.30 or whatever it was, and everyone would get that. So, some employees would get a step which is \$0.55 plus the \$0.25. Some would only get the \$0.25. When you are new, you would go up one step each year if you were passing your certification tests that needed to get done. If you were not in a supervisory role and you topped out, then your steps would come once every third year, but you still receive the roll ups. When you become a supervisor or assistant supervisor, you started down again and there are five steps every other year. If someone passes a grade one but not a grade two, then he changes lane sideways over a three-year period until he passes the grade two. To go to the bottom, you must fully certify. Richens explained that wages were raised \$3.50 for everyone about 16 months ago with the agreement that no one would advance in the wage scale. He said some of the employees are saying that we should have taken a step. They are also saying that the \$0.30 is not keeping up with inflation. Richens gave a history back to 2017 to show the steps and lanes that were given. He explained another print out showing the wage proposals from 2018 to 2024. This shows what each employee received for past six years. The last print out given shows what each employee earned from 2017 to the current year. Chairman Pro Tem Peterman asked if this form shows the standard increase. Richens said it is what the budget was approved for in the last meeting. It lists names and their wage for 2023, whether they got \$0.30 or the \$0.30 and \$0.55, and what their 2024 wage is. Chairman Pro Tem Peterman asked if someone was missed in a step. Richens explains that he does not see where anyone was missed.

Chairman Pro Tem Peterman asked Beau Fausett if the biggest concern was the \$0.30. Fausett explains that the wage scale is not keeping up with the cost of living and that in a few years we will fall behind again like we did last year. Ross Bryner stated that the \$0.55 in 2008 in today's value is more like \$0.80. He just wondered if the \$0.30 could be adjusted to today's value because a \$1.00 back then is more like a \$1.40 today.

Chairman Pro Tem Peterman agreed that we did the big jump to try to keep up and thinks we will end up in a place that people will not want to work here. Kourianos asked about the skill level that the wages are based on. Richens explains that if you have experience then you start on a different step but we fit a person in along with the long-term employees. Richens said that, once

you achieve top-out, year one you would get \$0.85, the second year you would get \$0.30, the third year you would get \$0.30, and the next year get a step and you would get \$0.85. Richens presented several options: get rid of the steps once you top out and just rely on the board approving a cost of living increase, calculate the average of all employees' wages and determine the average cost of living that everyone will get. Kourianos asked about infrastructure projects that PRWID is considering. Richens explained about the new building on the East property and how much Ross is saving the district by drawing the plan up in-house. Kourianos stated that PRWID is fortunate to have the staff to help save this money, and as he looks at the wages he asks himself if the district is keeping up from an industrial view. Next, Richens explained that the last column on the form is the wages of the employees and the cost to the district for their benefits. He said that whatever we do to wages affects the benefits as well. Kourianos asked Marrelli if she has looked at the numbers. Marrelli said she hasn't seen anything that Richens presented. Richens said that he put this together from everyone's last paycheck for the year and gathered everything from what Marrelli puts into the computer. Kourianos said Marrelli sees the budget and that she should be able to say if the budget can support these numbers. Marrelli stated that she does not decide, but that Richens usually decides that. Kourianos stated that we must work together on this as she is signing the checks and working with the employees, so it all must work together as a team. Richens stated that he thinks the employees are looking for something long term rather than a quick adjustment.

Chairman Pro Tem Peterman liked the idea of the average wage of all employees to calculate a cost of living increase. "Like what number does that look like?" Jensen said to look at the value of a dollar from then to now.

Fausett asked if the number that the Board is looking at for each employee includes overtime. Richens said that it does. Chairman Pro Tem Peterman asked if what is wanted is a long-term strategy accounting for inflation. Fausett stated that the wages were increased because no one was applying. Now we are trying to keep employees with our wages. An example was given of keeping someone once they receive their CDL. We are trying to keep employees long enough for them to gain experience. It's hard to do a job when everyone is not experienced enough to go on job alone. Kim Wood spoke as an employee and said that she was hired a year and a half ago and that she has worked in the private industry and is used to paying high insurance premiums and deductibles. Coming to a government entity, she took a pay cut thinking that the great benefits would balance the income. Her experience coming to PRWID was hard because of all the deductions for the benefits. She is not using the full benefits that are provided because she made cuts to adjust her pay to fit her budget. She explained that she took this job to retire someday, but fears that because she has had to cut some of the benefits she will still never be able to retire.

Chairman Pro Tem Peterman said she thinks we need options to look at. Jensen said let us look at the average and then look at the difference between the average and the 140%. Richens said that the \$0.55 is what the steps and lanes is and 140% of that is \$0.77. Jensen also wants to see the assistant supervisor and supervisor change lanes every other year instead of every third year. He agrees with Kourianos that skill and experience mean a lot. He is also talking about everyone that has topped out. Zuass expressed that every plan that we came up with is going to have a hole in it. Marrelli stated that the younger people that are being hired are only looking at the dollar amount. Chairman Pro Tem Peterman says she thinks we built a lot of good will with the big bump and the employees are just asking the Board to look more long term.

CLOSED SESSION

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Marrelli asked Kourianos how to spell his last name. Richens expressed appreciation that the Board is listening to what the employees have to say, and that the employees are attending the meetings to have a discussion and not coming with pitchforks and torches.

Zauss moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. Jensen seconded the non-debatable motion.



Keith Cox, Chairman



Kim Wood, Clerk