**MEDFORD IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

**Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

**March 15th, 2023 @ 1:30 pm**

Present: Sean Naumes, Dennis O’Donoghue, Henry Vaninetti (ZOOM), Dave Urton, Jack Friend-Manager/Secretary

**Call meeting to order:** Chairman Naumes called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

**Minutes:** Chairman Naumes asks if there are any comments or corrections to the minutes. Chairman Naumes called for a motion to approve the regular board meeting minutes as corrected for February 8th, 2023. Director Urton motions to approve the February 8th, 2023, minutes, Director O’Donoghue seconds the motion, and the motion carries.

**Financials:** Friend: The Southern Oregon Ready-mix check was for the shotcrete jobs and was covered by grant funding. Chairman Naumes called for a motion to approve the financials for February 2023.

Director O’Donoghue motions to approve the February 8th, 2023, minutes, Director Urton seconds the motion, and the motion carries.

**Delinquent Accounts:** Flanakin: Today would have been the last day for the 30-day foreclosure letter responses. We had one of the 6 patrons come into the office and pay their entire bill, which was the largest account owing. A couple of others have phoned and inquired about their account but have not made any financial effort to rectify their balances. There is currently a foreclosure placed on one of the accounts that was filed in December 2022. We will wait to see if that property sells. One of the accounts has been making monthly payments of 200.00 to help keep the interest accruing. I would recommend holding off on accounts King, Garrett, and Jackson.

Director Urton motions to proceed with the foreclosure process for 2 of the 5 patrons that are currently over the 5 years owing; Director O’Donoghue seconds the motion, and the motion carries.

**Administration:** Friend: We are significantly higher than we were last year at this time pre-snow melt. 7,431 af combined storage compared to 2000 less last year at this time. Still well below average. The southern reservoirs are 24,945 af. combined. That is 15,000 af more than last year at this time.

Snowpack at Fourmile has 84” with a snow/water equivalent of 98% of the average. Billy Creek has 79” with a snow/water equivalent of 128% of the average. Fish Lake has 46” with the snow/water equivalent of 112% of the average. Howard Prairie has over 30”. We have been receiving consistent weather events, but until the reservoir levels return, we will stay in drought conditions.

We are running Agate Lake fill water out of the Little Butte system for RRVID at this time. They have a senior water right for stream flow. There appears to be enough streamflow to begin running frost-protection water. Crews will begin moving that water into the valley next week. This will give us a chance to begin flushing the canal and preparing for the season. April 1st is the earliest we could utilize our permitted water right for irrigation purposes. We will want to decide how we want to operate once we see where stream flows are at. It may be an opportunity to initiate a drought protocol that uses available stream flow before the demand is there. The water could be distributed to bulges in the system and for testing/flushing purposes. This would allow the canal to be ramped up slowly and safely. The soil moisture is in a lot better shape than last year. We have fixed quite a few leaks and shouldn’t be as it was last year. This will give us a chance to address any others that pop up.

Worked with FCA last week to wrap up the EPA grant and submitted it on Grant’s.gov. It has begun the review process. If everything goes as planned, we should have access to the engineering dollars to bring the Joint System Phase 1 project to 100% design. Potentially in a month. At that time, we would begin the contracting part of the project. This will be for the north-fork canal and south-fork canal to the junction including work that would need to be done on the two fish screens locations. At the junction would be a pressurized system. This will be a great start to the watershed plan. Would begin in 2024 possibly fall 2023. I will have a better idea of the timeframe for breaking ground next month.

Keith Kueny with FCA is working on the Floating Solar project and will provide an update for the Board today. Mike Bromund with Rubicon Water is giving a presentation today for the Board to showcase what they have to offer irrigation districts. I am hoping their success with other districts can be a good fit for some of our water management issues in these drought conditions. More automation and SCADA would help with that. They also have a grant writing staff that I believe may help us get funding on some of the lateral projects that we would like to pursue.

I have been researching the Lost Creek water option. Speaking with the watermaster we would need to file for a surface water permit through OWRD and then apply for Contract water from the BOR. I have attached the Contract water application. From my understanding, we could apply for Lost Creek water and put a beneficial use date that would be in line with our ability to get the infrastructure in place to pump the water. This would reserve the water right for our use and we would have a current application on file before any legislation potentially halts water right transactions until an OWRD audit is completed. I would like to have Shavon participate in discussions on this at our next Board meeting if the board agrees. A portion of the water in Lost Creek is for irrigation. There are 23,000 af getting flushed with the fish flows. The BOR operates the flood and fisheries. There hasn’t been a call for it as of yet. It is $8 an acre-foot. What is not used will be credited.

I spoke with our legal counsel regarding the conversations around the lateral in the Sunnyvale area. The overall advice was to keep it a district-owned lateral to what would be a new point of delivery for each parcel if we wanted to have control over the design, function, and water use of the system. This would allow the district to control delivery to these patrons and reduces the chance of potential conflict from a private system between our system and other patrons. The biggest hurdle was how do we handle the easements. We would want the facility to be district owned to eliminate any issues with new patrons. We need to find out how we are getting it designed and funded. We have many connections that would help us with this project. We currently have easements on each property that we service, we would need to tighten those up and finalize the specifics. MID would operate and maintain this project and its facilities. Our crew would be able to do most of the work to help cut costs as well. The efficiency of the project would be huge and save water.

Crews have been working hard cleaning the canals and getting them ready to run water. Having a full crew has helped get many items checked off the maintenance list.

Monday, we received notice from OWRD that they validated the call from the Klamath Tribes and they are regulating off junior users as of the date of the order. This includes our right to store water in Fourmile. We only would have the 4,000 af currently as of March 10th of the order. Any water beyond that point is going to be regulated by the watermaster for Upper Klamath Lake. There aren’t any outlet works for that side. There are a lot of legal questions that we have. Henry and I convened with the other district RBWUC members yesterday to review our action plan in response to this order. We will need to hold an executive session after this meeting to discuss legal matters concerning this.

The district staff was shocked to learn about the passing of Director Angelo Grestoni. We are thankful for his 5 years of service and leadership on this board, and he will be missed.

I would like to initiate frost protection water for patrons to do testing and utilize the bulges that are currently assessable for beneficial storage use. The ditch riders will follow the water, take orders, and keep good records of water users. Every area that we service has been cleaned. If we have any issues with getting the water through the system, we can have an emergency meeting to address regulating the water. There isn’t a demand for it right now.

**Old Business:** Keith Kueny with FCA presentation with the update of the floating solar project. The district revenue will be between $40-$60k per year. The total construction cost is $2.5 million. The project management is $12k per year. All will be funded by the congressional direct spending bill of $1.12 million; Tax credit of 800K to 1 million; DEQ revolving fund loan forgiveness of $500K. This will leave -0- overhead. The overview will be a separate community solar queue. The power is sold to users, who are then compensated by the utility through credits. It will provide discounts for off-takers. These will be 20-year contracts. 40% of the project will go to a single industrial (anchor) tenant and the rest to residential customers. This project will be completed by April 2024. The project management will be managed by FCA through interconnection and construction. MID will have to carry the insurance for the project in case of equipment failure. This will be handed over to Bonneville Environmental Foundation will be the long-term project manager.

**New Business:** Mike Bromund Presentation Rubicon Water, efficient water SCADA system and equipment. Rubicon targets water scarcity by providing solutions to governments, water management authorities, and farmers that increase water availability and agricultural productivity through improved water-use efficiency. Total channel control is the integration of four innovative components: Actuated Gates, Scada over radio telemetry, planning & scheduling software system; and revolutionary irrigation process control system to balance supply and demand from source to point of demand. The benefits of TCC are improved customer service, water savings, productivity savings, and occupational health and safety improvements. Rubicon offers a completing complimentary service to assist with government grant applications. These steps are: Scoping the project; Aligning objectives to grant availability; Developing a proposal with our Sales Engineers; Document formatting and criteria matching; and Grant Submission. Our solutions are: controlling the delivery of water so that farms are reliably supplied when needed, without spills; Timing the application of water to crops precisely; and applying the optimal amount of water to crops.

**R.B.W.U.C.I:**  Additional $3,000, February bill: $1,163.16, March bill: $1,570.15 Urton motions to approve the payment to RBWUC bills, O’Donoghue seconded, motion carried.

**FYI:** FCA Monthly district update. The EPA grant that they submit was entered into NRCS for 1 million addition. We then will be ready to commence on the watershed study portion.

**Public Comment:** Debbie Wimer: Where are we at for our water problem to be fixed?

Friend: Re-iterating the admin report regarding the Sunnyvale area. A repeat of the last meeting. No water complaint.

Most patrons present would like to have more updates available and accessible.

**Adjourn Regular Session:** 3:49 pm

**Call to Order Executive Session:** 3:54 pm

**Adjourn Executive Session:** 5:19 pm

**Call to Order Regular Session:** 5:20 pm

**Adjourn Regular Session**: 5:20 pm.

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Sean Naumes – Chairman Jack Friend – District Manager/Secretary