**MEDFORD IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

**Regular Board Meeting Minutes**

**December 18th, 2024 @ 1:30 pm**

Present: Dennis O’Donoghue, Tom Brookins, Sean Naumes; Matt Borman; Jack Friend: Manager/Secretary

Absent: Henry Vaninetti

**Call meeting to order:** Vice Chair O’Donoghue called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**Minutes:** The regular board meeting minutes on November 13th, 2024, were reviewed. Vice Chair O’Donoghue asks if there are any comments or corrections to the minutes. Director Naumes motions to approve November 13th, 2024, minutes, Director Borman seconds the motion, and the motion carries.

**Financials:** Manager Friend: Not a whole lot of changes. We are getting closer to what we budgeted.

Director Brookins: How are we looking as far as carry over for next year?

Flanakin: There won’t be much to carry over. We have about 10K in payables to pay and I believe we are left with about 16K.

Director Brookins: I just noticed that the reserve account was up from what was projected.

Friend: Tammi did break out some of the projects and is moving along. We are looking to submit bills prior to paying them. With 4 projects going on at the same time we need to receive the funds to be able to pay. We have been working diligently to get the bills approved for payment with all our projects. Delays seem to be with the sources at the moment. The initial first and sometimes second round takes time to get established and the bugs to be worked out.

Vice Chair O’Donoghue: Any other questions on financials?

Director Borman: How many other projects have you managed, 3, 4, 5, 6 years ago? How do going for the funds and the process compare to prior years?

Friend: We haven’t had any projects like these during my management position until now.

Vice Chair O’Donoghue: Do we have a motion to accept the financials?

Director Brookins: I motion to accept the financials for November 2024, Director Naumes seconds the motion, motion carries.

**Delinquent Accounts:** Flanakin: The Taylor/Miner account is paid. We sent the court document showing paid in full to them.

Director Brookins: I wanted to bring up the new account fees that are being assessed to the accounts that have had an ownership change in their property. Are we charging interests for those?

Flanakin: No, the assessment codes get charged the interest. Those left with a balance of less than $10.00 are not re-built and added to the following years billing.

**Elections:** We need to appoint division A for 2025.

Vice-Chair O’Donoghue: Before we make a motion, full disclosure, sometime early next year I am moving to Virginia. I am still going to be a landowner because I still have the vineyard. I am happy to zoom in. When I am out here looking after the vineyard, I am happy to show up in person, however, my availability is going to be very nil. I’m happy to stay on the board, happy to serve. I don’t feel that I can be chairman next year being so far away across the country. I could be leaving as soon as March 2025.

Director Naumes: We can always start looking and appoint someone when you head out.

Director Brookins: I make a motion to appoint Dennis O’Donoghue and Matt Borman to represent division A and D of the Medford Irrigation District.

Director Naumes: I second the motion, motion carries.

**Administration:** Manager Friend: The snowpack is off to a good start. Snotel data for 4-mile shows 38” with a 10.4” snow water equivalent. That is 158% of the median. Billy Creek is reporting 36” with a 10.9” SWE. That is 230% of the median. Fish Lake has 11” with a 3.2” SWE. That is 292% of the median although, the data at this site has only been reporting data since 2013. It looks like a more even distribution of snowpack this year in my opinion.

Forecasts show the La Ninia is still a factor moving into the next year after some ridging to our west breaks up. The ridge that has been set up to our west has been creating a split flow on the west coast keeping these systems from hitting us directly. Fortunately, we have held on to our early snowpack and some of these storms have been breaking through and giving us some moisture in the meantime. Looking forward to what January brings. I have attached the Drought Monitor for Oregon dated December 10. It shows Jackson County is drought-free. We have not been in this category since the end of 2019, as you can see on the 2013-2025 graph. Hopefully, we can continue to build the snowpack and start filling reservoirs.

The Solar project is moving forward. Contracts with the distributors were signed by Imagine Energy and materials are being ordered. The Department of Energy has finally posted BABA wavers for the projects they fund. We were able to receive a waiver for our Modules so that will keep the cost of the project down to 3.8 million versus 4.1 million. At this point, it looks like the project will start being built in February 2025.

The Joint system canal phase 1 project is moving along. DOWL has completed the alternatives analysis, and I have reviewed it with FCA and provided comments. We will schedule a meeting with DOWL on our preferred alternative for the SF creek crossing so DOWL can finish the preliminary designs. EPA will then review the design and determine what NEPA processes need to be completed before construction. We are currently still on schedule for construction this fall depending on how long EPA’s review takes. We have communicated that we need to move forward quickly as contracts with matching funds from OWRD have an expiration date.

The EIS watershed planning process for the rest of the JSC is still moving forward. I have attached the document Kate Hart with FCA has sent me regarding the next step in the planning process around conserved water. I have been discussing this with Brian at RRVID as well as the local Watermaster. WE believe that 25% of the conserved water from the project should be protected instream via the Allocation of Conserved Water program. That would give us 5 years after the project is built to quantify what that number from our water loss study for the watershed plan. The ACW process will protect that flow instream while the districts are in operation, and we will not have to dry up any lands on our certificate. This seems to be the process that fits the best and will garner the most support for match funding after we start accessing the NRCS PL-566 funding to build this project.

We put out an RFP for the Joint System Canal Hydropower Design Project. We plan to have 50% of the design done by the irrigation season. This is being fully funded by Energy Trust and the Department of Energy. FCA is facilitating the funding and development of this project as well as making sure it aligns with the Watershed planning process work that is happening on the JSC above their potential hydro facility. Bids are due this Friday and we will make a selection asap.

We were able to take advantage of a good deal on a flatbed truck to replace our 1985 Flatbed that finally died. We picked up a ’94 Chevy 3500 with a nice bed. It was a pacific power truck that was well maintained, and we paid $5,500. It covers 130K miles and rivers are very smooth. It meets our needs well and the crew is happy. We don’t need a flatbed every day, but we can’t operate without one during the winter with our projects, so this is a great addition and keeps the guys moving on their maintenance work. I will get a list of surplus vehicles that we can decide on at the next board meeting so that we can clean up our yard and get rid of what we can no longer use.

We have several legal items to discuss in executive session.

**New Business:** Friend: At a prior meeting we had increased the Solor Project loan amount with an amendment #1 and now we are increasing it again to $3.8M. Once again, we want to capitalize on the principal forgiveness, so we want this at cap. Resolution 2024-11 is Amendment #2 for the new loan amount and to be signed by the district manager. We shouldn’t see any more price changes in the future.

Director Brookins: Can you explain what and why we are doing these things?

Friend: Build America Better is one of the stipulations in the federal funding projects. It requires American made and assembled only. All materials must be American made. Some of the unique projects that have material which is not made or found anywhere in America requires a certification waiver.

Vice-Chair O’Donoghue: Do I hear a motion to approve? Director Brookins approves and motions the resolution 2024-11, Director Borman seconds the motion, motion carries.

**Transfers:** Manager Friend: Before we move forward with the customer completing the paperwork for the transfer, we need to discuss the significant draw the would-be taking place for the 5 acres of water rights that they are requesting to purchase. There is a lateral on the property, and they use a pump to access the water. However, when we are trying to push water down the line it causes the water not to make it all the way through the system. There are many acres and many patrons below them that has been a fight to get it through the system this past season due to them accessing the water when they didn’t have a water right. They would like to purchase the water rights, but this will put hardship on those below them. I do want to do a walk through to see the situation with the board member that oversees that division, (Matt Borman) to make sure that there wouldn’t be any injury to those patrons below them.

Director Brookins: How many acres to we have in our pool?

Friend: At least a couple hundred. We have enough certificated water right, just not enough water.

Director Borman: This parcel isn’t too far from the other patron we spoke with this last season. It’s such a neighborhood that people are pulling all the time. Many things have contributed to changes in the delivery system that have affected the quantity of water available.

Friend: The transfers must be pressurized and not flood to conserve water.

Director Naumes: Was there an existing pressurized system on this property before?

Friend: It is a liner, and I believe there are some check slots as well.

**Old Business:** Friend: I know that we had a long discussion last time on the Employee handbook. We reviewed and discussed Vanessa’s memo. One of the discussions was the sick hours. We wanted to figure out those on the current policy and how to handle the ones with close if not at maximum accrued hours (480). The OWRC collects data on each of the districts who want to participate and creates a booklet of the different benefits and wages but does not list the district names. Some do not have a cap for sickness accrual, and this can be due to PERS having an agreement to that effect. Dennis brought up the 480 hours of sick accrual that we currently have and said that it seems extremely high. In the Ag industry, it seems that the 480 hours is pertinent to this. We figured with your experience in the Ag industry, you can shed some light on this issue.

Director Borman: I currently have 160 hours that I can bank with a bonus discretionary 40 hours that adds to that if I have perfect attendance.

Flanakin: When making the document up with options for modifying the current sick policy, one idea was to cut the current 480 into 240 and as the employees make different levels of seniority levels would accrue more hours each payday but still keep the cap at 240. In observing the paid leave Oregon, their wage calculator for 100% weekly pay caps out at 40K per year. Over 40K per year would result in a percentage weekly wage which would make the pay less for the week. All of our employees are working over 40K per year.

**R.B.W.U.C.I:** Friend: The RBWUC, Inc billing for October, November and a missed bill from ESA for our Fourmile Creek study work is $3,408.78. October Billing $1,232.49; ESA billing $1,803.79; and November Billing $372.50. Director Naumes moves to approve the three RBWUCI bills as presented, Director Brookins seconds the motion, motion carries.

**Adjourn:** 2:55 pm

**Executive Session**

**Call Meeting Back to Order:** 4:25 pm

Vice Chair O’Donoghue: Can we get a motion for Director Borman to be our representative for MID on the RBWUCI board of directors? Director Brookins: So, moved, Director Naumes seconds the motion and the motion carries.

Director Borman motions to approve the 2025 budget as presented, Director Naumes seconds the motion, motion carries.

**Adjourn:** 4:26 pm

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Vice Chair Dennis O’Donoghue Jack Friend – District Manager/Secretary