

NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT
Administrative Practices Committee

January 7, 2020

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Ricki Heck, Division I
Chris Bierwagen, Division II

Committee Staff Members Present: Remleh Scherzinger, General Manager
Greg Jones, Assistant General Manager
Marvin Davis, Finance Manager/Treasurer
Jana Kolakowski, Human Resources Manager
Kris Stepanian, Board Secretary

Public Comment

- Mike Pasner, owner of Indian Springs Organic Farm in Penn Valley, spoke to the Committee in support of audio or video recordings of Committee meetings to be kept in perpetuity.

Minutes of the December 9, 2019, Special Meeting

Minutes will be brought back to the Committee for approval to include more detail pertaining to spending limits within District Policy 3080 – Procurement.

Revisions to Sections 6.0 of the Rules and Regulations

Chip Close, Water Operations Manager, presented the item, explaining that the purpose of the item is to review and discuss sections of Section 6 of the District's Rules and Regulations for compliance with SB998.

On September 28, 2018, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 998 (SB 998), into law: The bill requires urban and community water systems that supply water to more than 200 service connections to have a written policy on discontinuation of water service available on the system's internet web site. It should also be provided to customers upon request. SB 998 also mandates that water systems may not discontinue residential water service for nonpayment until payment has been delinquent for at least 60 days. Prior to disconnection, water systems must attempt to provide notice to customers by telephone or in writing. In addition:

- Water systems must offer eligible customers the ability to defer or amortize charges when all of the following conditions are present: 1) a primary care provider certifies that the discontinuation of water service will pose a serious or potentially fatal threat to a resident; 2) the customer demonstrates inability to pay, and 3) the customer is willing to enter into an alternative payment arrangement. A customer can demonstrate an inability to pay based on the receipt of certain

public assistance by someone in the household, or a declaration from the customer that the household is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

- Water systems must limit eligible customers' reconnection fees to no more than \$50 during regular business hours, and \$150 during non-regular hours.
- Water systems must attempt to provide notice to renters and mobile home residents that service may be discontinued due to delinquent payments by the property owner, and that the residents have the right to become customers of the water system without paying the past-due amounts on the property owners account.
- Water systems must annually post on their websites the number of times the system has discontinued service due to inability to pay, and also report that to the State.

Urban water suppliers must comply with SB998 on or after February 1, 2020. Therefore, Staff has modified Section 6 of the District's Rules and Regulations to ensure compliance. Redlined versions of the proposed changes are attached for reference.

Discussion ensued regarding the timing of delinquency notifications and associated administrative costs.

Director Heck shared her concern about the turn-off of water service for those who have a master meter.

Aurora Tipton, Customer Service Administrator, shared that in her ten years with the District, she could not think of a time when a turn-off notice was delivered to a master meter. The goal is to never turn off water, especially in a master meter situation. The District would make every effort to make sure the residents are aware, and that the District has provided plenty of time for the owner(s) to take care of or make arrangements to bring the bill current. Notices would be posted in a common space.

Director Heck suggested changing the notice title from "Courtesy Delinquency Notice" to "Delinquency Notice" and to bold and underline "including suspending your water service" in the second paragraph on the notice.

Discussion ensued regarding Director Heck's suggested updates, and Remleh Scherzinger, General Manager, suggested underlining "including suspending your water service."

Director Heck requested that the staff report to the Board note that staff does not recall ever turning off service to a master meter customer.

Public Comment:

- John Norton, resident of Penn Valley, commented about the number of notices that are sent out and spoke about an option for electronic payments.

Mr. Closed responded that the District is working on establishing automatic and online bill pay.

Discussion ensued regarding the onboarding of electronic bill pay and the anticipated cost from the service company.”

The Committee unanimously agreed to advance a recommendation to the Board of Directors to approve Revisions to Sections 6.1 of the Rules and Regulations, as amended to underline “including suspending your water service” on the Courtesy Delinquency Notice. (Consent)

Updates to District Policy 5030 – Board Meeting Conduct

Remleh Scherzinger, General Manager, presented the item.

In an effort to address the expanding use of electronics in our communications and to provide transparency to the public, updates are being proposed to the District’s existing policy to consider how the Board will use such devices during its meetings.

District Policy 5030 - Board Meeting Conduct currently states that disruption of any of the meetings of the Board of Directors shall not be permitted. It does not define the use of personal electronic devices, such as cell phones, tablets, or other electronic devices. The proposed update to the policy will include the use of personal devices as grounds for disruption of meetings.

This modification also addresses transparency as it ensures that all actions taken by the Board and the supporting communications are open to the public for their review. This further ensures compliance with the Brown Act and its intent.

Discussion ensued regarding adding verbiage to the agenda pertaining to the use of electronic devices.

Public Comment:

- John Norton, resident of Penn Valley
 - o Inquired if it would be against the policy for members of the public to use personal electronic devices, such as an iPad during the meeting

Mr. Scherzinger replied that this is tied to the Board’s conduct and does not relate to the public.

The Committee unanimously agreed to advance a recommendation to the Board of Directors to approve proposed updates to District Policy 5030 - Board Meeting Conduct. (Consent)

Establish District Policy 5300 - Standing Committees

Remleh Scherzinger, General Manager, presented the item.

Members of the Board of Directors have requested the development of a District policy defining the roles and responsibilities of the District's standing committees and ongoing Ad Hoc committees, as such a policy does not currently exist.

Much of the District's work is done through its committees, which are designed to undertake work delegated by the Board and streamline the approval process. By way of their work, committees have the ability to enhance productivity and expand transparency regarding the District's decision-making processes.

The establishment of the proposed policy will better identify the purpose, assignment, membership, activities, and regular meeting times of committees.

Mr. Scherzinger requested the following modification to the proposed policy, adding the following underlined verbiage, which will help accommodate any scheduling needs for Board members:

5300.4 Regular committee meetings will be held at 9 AM on the Tuesday in order of succession unless directed by the Board.

Discussion ensued regarding committee activities, and District Policy 5040.3 pertaining on how to bring items to a committee, which is referenced in Section 5300.7 of the proposed policy.

Public Comment:

- Mike Pasner, resident of Penn Valley
 - o Commented about the Integrated Management Working Group, and inquired how to get more input from the public in working groups

Mr. Scherzinger explained that working groups are different than committees. Working groups are not a public forum. They are an internal action. The General Manager creates working groups when information or support is needed for staff.

Ad hoc committees may be formed at the Board President's request with Board consensus. Ad hoc committees do not have members of the public on them unless the Board wants to appoint members as their representatives, as was recently done with the Rates Ad Hoc Committee.

The Committee unanimously agreed to advance a recommendation to the Board of Directors to approve establishing District Policy 5300 – Standing Committees, as amended to include “unless directed by the Board” to Section 5300.4.

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