

7:04pm January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, RW&SD board meeting called to order by Board Chairman Robert Montague.

Shawna Grassie gives opening prayer.

Flint Tietjen leads the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Board members present are Robert Montague, Shawna Grassie, Whitney River-Croley and Michael Croley.

Board members absent are Blanche Clawson.

Also present are Operator Flint Tietjen and Secretary Michele Macias.

Board chairman asks if all board members present had a chance to read the minutes from the previous meeting in December 2024, everyone says yes, Board Chairman asks if there are any changes that need to be made. No changes required.

**Shawna Grassie makes a motion to approve the minutes from the December 2024 meeting. Michael Croley seconded the motion. Board Chairman called for a vote, all in favor said, "Aye." Motion passes unanimously.**

All board members present agree to move board chairman appointment to the beginning of the agenda. Shawna Grassie asks if there are any nominations for a new board chairman. Whitney River Croley suggests keeping the board chairman as Robert Montague. No other nominations for board chairman are presented.

**Whitney River-Croley makes a motion to keep the board chairman the same as the previous year's 2024 board chairman, Robert Montague. Michael Croley seconded the motion, all in favor say, "Aye." Motion passes unanimously.**

Flint offers the operator's report. The new meter pole for the HWY well has been hooked up and is working, the old pole has been removed. All limbs from the park area have been moved to the other area and as soon as we have moisture and get a burn permit, we will burn the limbs. The board asks operator if we are still looking into buying a woodchipper. The operator says he would like to find a commercial woodchipper for the approved spending

price set by the board in a previous board meeting. He will continue to look at auctions online, since there is no rush to purchase a woodchipper for RW&SD at this time. The board agrees with the operator on waiting and looking online to see if we can find a quality commercial woodchipper. The operator has locked the gate that allows access to the park area, so that no one else will dump yard debris and limbs there, the plan is to order no dumping signs for that area as well.

Board members discuss whether it would be an option to allow dumping limbs in the area that we currently moved the other limbs to near our sewage treatment system. It is discussed by the board that the road to access RW&SD's sewage system crosses private land and RW&SD has an easement agreement to access the sewage area, but the right of way does not allow access for the general public to use. It is also discussed the concerns of the possibility of people dumping other trash in that area, other than limbs, because it is less visible. It is discussed that customers could get burn permits from the fire chief and burn their own yard debris and limbs on their own property. It is discussed by the board that it isn't part of RW&SD's income and costs (responsibility) to take care of customers' personal yard debris. The secretary will put a notice on the bills that go out to customers, notifying them that dumping limbs and yard debris will no longer be allowed. A suggestion is made about placing on the no dumping notice a fine being assessed if someone dumps.

The operator purchased the new heating and cooling system for the district office, and it should be delivered January 24<sup>th</sup>, and the operator will install it when he can. For the unit and all the hookup supplies, the cost came to approximately \$1,063. Everything else is going pretty smoothly, no water leaks, but several sewer plugs.

Secretary's report given by Michele Macias. The secretary gave each board members a copy of the December 2024 monthly summary in excel format broken down by income and expenses. Board members also given the W-2 totals for all RW&SD employees for the year 2024, so the board knows how much was spent on payroll in 2024 for all employees. Board members were also given a two page excel summary for both DOT projects completed in 2024. On the first page are the descriptions of the first project L600204

costs, grant money and the amount of money RW&SD spent on the project. On the second page is the second DOT project description of costs, grant money and the amount RW&SD spent on that project. The secretary states the final FY25 budget is still in chief mode, which means it has been approved by our budget analyst but still needs to be approved by her boss at the state local government branch. Once the Final FY24 budget is approved, the secretary can enter the 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly report and submit it. If it hasn't been approved in a couple of days, the secretary will email the state another reminder. The audit of FY24 was completed on time. We have only received 2 applications for the part time laborer position to help the operator.

The board members and operator discuss whether we have the option of getting an intern from GMCSD. A board member is asked if they have more information on that internship program and whether we would be able to qualify for that. Everyone feels it would be a good opportunity for RW&SD and for the student interns. It is discussed that the student interns would only be available at certain times on certain days. Monday through Thursday from 8am to about 11am. Interns are allowed to work only 12 hours maximum per week and the school district pays the student interns. Everyone in attendance at the board meeting discusses whether RW&SD would want one intern or two, one to help the operator and one to help the secretary in the office. The board asks the secretary if she wants to change the office hours to accommodate the student intern. The secretary is willing to adjust the office hours to accommodate this opportunity. The board member will email the information to the secretary with the details to get that process started.

Next item on agenda is the Opens meeting act and resolution for the opens meeting act. It needs to be voted on every year at the beginning of the year. Board members ask if anything has changed, one change is last year we changed the monthly board meetings to the second Tuesday of the month.

**Shawna Grassie makes a motion to accept the open meetings act and resolution for the year 2025. Whitney River-Croley seconded the motion. All in favor say, "Aye." Motion carried unanimously by the board members present.**

Next item on the agenda is voting on the safe storage of the RW&SD debit card. It is discussed that the debit card had to be put in a board member's name, because board members are the authorized signers on the RW&SD checking account. It is discussed that it is in the district's best interest to have policy in place concerning the handling of the RW&SD's debit card. It is discussed that the card will be kept in the safe in the office and only be accessed when the board has approved the purchase of larger equipment or supplies. It is the understanding that the Secretary and the board member, whose name is on the card, would both need to be present to make those authorized purchases. It is suggested that at least one board member, different from the board member whose name is on the debit card, needs the combination to the safe in case something happens to the secretary. The bank gave us a temporary debit card and when the card comes in the mail with the name on it, the board member will bring it into the office to store it safely. It is discussed that there is a daily spending limit on the card of \$2,000 and to be able to increase that amount for larger purchases, the board members whose name is on the card would need to call the bank and authorize a larger spending limit for a 24 hour period.

**Michael Croley makes a motion to store the RW&SD debit card in the district's safe. Shawna Grassie seconded the motion. All in favor say, "Aye." Motion carried unanimously.**

Next item on agenda is policy on customers who are habitually late and receive multiple shut off notices during the year. The secretary says she took the information discussed in the previous meeting to write the updated policy. The late fee for the first offense is \$7.50, the late fee for the second offense is \$15 and the late fee for the third offense will be \$25. The reconnection fee for the first shut off during the year will be \$100 and the reconnection fee for the second shutoff will be \$175. It is discussed that the customers who were already shut off by today's meeting will be "grandfathered" in and only have to pay the previously required reconnection fee. The secretary discusses that she was making a few courtesy calls even though the only notice required is to send the shut off notice in the mail to the address on record for the customer, but she will no longer be making courtesy calls if customers are past due paying their bills.

The secretary addresses the concern that when we put this policy in place, we will need to adhere to it and follow up on the shutoff notices. The secretary will include a copy of the updated policy in every customer's bill going out on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Post it on the website and keep it posted in the district office.

**Whitney River-Croley makes a motion to adopt the late bill fee payments and shutoff notice costs. Shawna Grassie seconded the motion. Board Chairman calls for a verbal vote. All in favor say, "Aye." Motion passes unanimously by all board members present.**

Next item on the agenda is discussing and considering voting on whether to sell water in bulk to construction companies for construction projects being completed with RW&SD's service area. The board discusses that it might not be a good idea considering we only have a certain amount of water that we are allowed to use in the Zuni River Basin Adjudication. The construction company is estimating that they need approximately 30,000 gallons of water. It is discussed if we could get "non-potable" water from the Tietjen well that RW&SD owns, but that well is not currently connected to our system, and it is not otherwise being used. It is discussed that 30,000 gallons of water isn't really a lot of water, considering what some of our residential customers use in the summer months watering their yards and in the winter months if the faucets are left dripping to keep pipes from freezing. It is discussed that C&E in Grants/Milan currently sells water at .05 cents per gallon. Differing views are presented on what we might charge, some think .10 cents per gallon is reasonable, some think .05 cents is reasonable, considering our customers actually pay less than that per gallon. Also, in the past when RW&SD sold to the county we charged less than .05 cents per gallon and the county thought we were asking for too much at that time. The board discusses that the pump for that well pumps 35 gallons per minute. The board discusses that if we sell water from the Tietjen well, that money needs to go toward the costs of certifying the well to be included in RW&SD's supply system. The board also considers how dry it has been lately. A board member discusses that it may be that we can consider whether we sell water in bulk on a case by case basis. It is discussed where there are water and sewage lines available for the where

the new business will be built and to connect to our services, the business would need to get the permissions and right of ways to go under the highway to get access to our services. The Tietjen well has a meter on it to be able to ensure exactly how much water the construction company would be getting. The operator will need to get a fire hose set up if we end up selling the water to the construction company. The board asks the operator what he thinks the rate should be set at.

**Whitney River- Croley makes a motion to sell water in bulk for .05 cents per gallon to the new construction project that is coming up in RW&SD's service area, and when new construction projects come up and/or new customers want to purchase non-potable water in bulk, RW&SD board will consider whether to sell and at what price on a case by case basis. Shawna Grassie seconds the motion. Board chairman calls for a vote. All in favor say, "Aye." The motion carries unanimously.**

The secretary will call the company and let the contact know they can purchase non-potable water in bulk at .05 cents per gallon and also let them know it would be from a well pump, not a fire hydrant.

The next item on the agenda is the applications for new DOT projects. The board discusses the need to improve South Bloomfield leading to the high school, because the road doesn't have any shoulders and the road on the sides is breaking down. Board members discussed that it would be good to put in the application to NMDOT all of the RW&SD roads, so that we could do whatever work needed to be done on those roads and get what grant money we could from NM DOT to make those improvements. The board says that we can name all the roads and all improvements in the application, then we can do the work that everyone agrees needs to be improved in our area. The board discusses that we need to send along with that request or application, RW&SD needs to send a cost analysis estimate and we know we wouldn't necessarily get as much money as we requested. It is obvious that if the DOT did come out and physically look at our roads, that all of our roads need to be improved. It is discussed that the road to the sewage plant is mainly for the operator's usage, and it wouldn't be a good idea for that to be included on the project request, because that is not considered a public road and the NMDOT funds that we use, we would want



those to be used on the public roads that RW&SD is required to maintain. There is a discussion on when the NMDOT needs those project applications by what date and needing to get clarity on the due date. So, it is good for the board to vote on it now, so that the operator and the secretary can get that paperwork ready before the due date.

**Shawna Grassie makes a motion for the new DOT projects ideas that we name all our streets (RW&SD's public use streets) and the operator will name the common issues that need to be corrected in the report to seek funding from the DOT for the projects for the FY2025. Whitney River seconded the motion. Board Chairman calls for a vote. All in favor said, "Aye." Motion carries unanimously.**

Next item on the agenda is the discussion and possible vote on hiring an electrician to give RW&SD a quote on what it would cost and what supplies we would need to replace all the electrical components on the sewage treatment plant system. This option had been discussed in a previous meeting, that RW&SD might replace the electrical components on the current system, to get our current system to last longer for less money, instead of the much higher cost to put in a whole new sewage treatment system. We need to pay an electrician to give us an analysis of what electrical components and parts we would need to replace.

**Whitney River-Croley makes a motion to hire an electrician to come out and look at the sewage treatment plant to get a quote on what it would cost/take to replace all electrical components. Shawna Grassie seconded the motion. Board Chairman called for a vote. All in favor said, "Aye." Motion passes unanimously.**

The board asks Flint to contact an electrician for that purpose.

Next item on agenda is discussing the wastewater treatment preliminary engineering report from DePauli. DePauli suggested that we all meet on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, the next board meeting to finalize the wastewater PER, so that it can be completed. Depauli suggested that the board look over the rough draft PER to see which option would be the board's preference. The board discusses some of the options are the lagoons or another plant like our current sewage treatment plant. It is discussed that lagoon sewage

treatment systems have to be cleaned regularly as well. The secretary will add meeting with DePauli and that PER discussion to the February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, board meeting agenda.

Next item on the agenda is voting to allow/approve the secretary to attend the budget conference/training in 2025 and audit compliance training offered in 2025. The board discusses what was considered last year as far as per diem, hotel allowance and mileage costs. The secretary doesn't remember if we had set an amount when we discussed it last year. The board discusses the amounts the school system allows per diem is \$59 dollars per day if you travel without students, the hotel allowance is \$139 per day and the current federal mileage reimbursement rate is .70 cents per mile traveled for work. The board members feel those amounts are reasonable. The board members discussed making two different motions, one for setting the reimbursement rates and one for allowing/approving the secretary to attend the various trainings.

**Shawna Grassie makes a motion to set in place mileage, hotel and per diem for the secretary to travel to conferences/trainings to support RW&SD, mileage at .70 cents per mileage (per federal rate), per diem (per day) \$59 and hotel at \$139 per night plus tax. Michael Croley seconded the motion. Board chairman called for a vote. All in favor said, "Aye." Motion carried unanimously.**

**Shawna Grassie makes a motion to allow the secretary to attend the budget training in 2025 and the audit compliance training in 2025. Michael Croley seconds the motion. All in favor say, "Aye." The motion passes unanimously.**

Next item on the agenda is to discuss and possibly vote on employee raises and cost of living raises. Board members talked about last year having these discussions in an executive meeting. One of the board members attended a county meeting and the county employees pay rates were discussed in an open meeting because they are employees of the county. The board discusses several options for cost of living increases, one was 2% and one was 2.4%. The board discusses whether they want to raise the current RW&SD employees pay rates.



**Michael Croley makes a motion to raise the employees' pay rates by 2.4%. Whitney River-Croley seconded the motion. The board Chairman calls for a vote and each board member present says, "Aye." The motion carries unanimously.**

The secretary asks about her contract/agreement that she had previously negotiated and signed with RW&SD about a yearly raise in her pay rate and the board confirms that the cost of living pay raise, is in addition to her already negotiated contract yearly raise. The board also discusses that if an employee works on a federal holiday, that employee is supposed to be paid time and a half. It is discussed that the secretary will ask the operator what hours he works on federal holidays and pay time and half for those hours worked, the same if any employee needs to work on a federal holiday. It is discussed that current laws require an employee to be paid time and a half for those hours worked on federal holidays. The operator says that if he has to work on a federal holiday, he usually works the minimum hours needed to complete the tasks required and then makes up the rest of the hours during the rest of the work week. It is discussed what days are federal holidays. Unless there is work required, we are closed on federal holidays.

**Shawna Grassie motions to adjourn the RW&SD general meeting at 8:12pm on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Michael Croley seconded the motion. All in favor say, "Aye." The motion carried unanimously, meeting adjourned.**