

**Ramah Water & Sanitation District**

**Board Meeting November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

RW&SD Board meeting called to order by the Board Chairman, Robert Montague, at 7:11pm on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Board Members in attendance: Robert Montague, Whitney River Croley, Blanche Clawson

Board members absent: Shawna Grassie and Michael Croley

Flint Tietjen offers opening prayer

Pledge of allegiance lead by Whitney River Croley

Board agrees to delay discussing the Water Trust Board Grant until Shawna Grassie shows up to meeting.

Board Chairman asks if all board members present read over the minutes of the October 2024 meeting, asks if any changes needed to be made. No changes are needed.

**Whitney River Croley makes a motion to accept the October 2024 meeting minutes. Blanche Clawson seconded the motion. Board chairman called for a vote. All in favor said, “Aye.” Motion passed unanimously.**

Board member asks if Zuni Transportation showed for their presentation. The secretary says she called a couple of weeks ago and didn't receive a call back and then called today and the person that is supposed to present to the board wasn't at work.

Operator's report, offered by Flint Tietjen. The operator says he got the parts needed to repair the company truck, that cost about \$1,000 and he also got the truck aligned after those parts were replaced. Two Solar lights have been installed and seem to be working well. The operator needs to install a pole between the office building and the storage building to install another solar light that will shine on the front of the office building and the stairs. The solar light at the sewer plant is working well. Board Chairman suggests and asks if there are any objections to putting a solar light at the driveway entrance to the district office. No objections. Board Chairman asks if Continental Divide

came out and disconnected the wires to two meter poles on RW&SD property by the district office. The operator says those were disconnected that day. That can be discussed a little later in the meeting. Operator says DOT project on Lambson street is almost complete. Says we need to double check that all the millings were delivered by the County. States we are getting the compacter delivered the next day. Board members comment on how much the millings on the road improve the safety and quality of the road. Board Chairman says he would like to check with the County and the state to clarify who the cattle guard near the intersection of Lambson street and HWY 53 actually belongs to.

Operator needs new batteries for the backhoe, Board Chairman had mentioned to operator that getting new batteries was considered regular maintenance and the operator didn't need to ask permission from the board to purchase those batteries for the backhoe. The operator says he picked up one new battery but hasn't had a chance to install it yet. It takes two batteries, and one doesn't seem to be working. The board suggests that it is probably better to purchase two new batteries, so that one battery isn't pulling too much from the other battery. Board chairman clarifies that he told the operator that purchasing the new batteries is part of regular maintenance of equipment, because they had discussed in meetings past that the operator shouldn't have to come to the board for permission for minor and regular maintenance of RW&SD equipment and vehicles. The other board members agree.

Operator discusses the meter pole that is connected to the highway well that was damaged by some limbs that broke from the heavy snow we received several weeks ago. Operator and part time worker reinforced the meter pole as a temporary fix. Operator states RW&SD needs a new meter/power pole at the HWY well. The operator talked to Shane, an electrician that would help us get the permit for that meter pole. If the Operator sets everything up and has it all ready for inspection, getting the permit should only cost about \$350, if the electrician has to do anything, then it would cost us more. Operator will dig up previously used poles and see what condition they are in, before using one of them, he will also apply treatment to the meter pole so that it will last longer. Board member lets the board know continental Divide sometimes has

extra/surplus poles available for free. It is possible that the free/surplus poles might be used for our solar light installation. Board member suggests speaking with a supervisor at the connections office to find out about those surplus poles and if there are any available.

Operators suggest that RW&SD needs to purchase at least 5 new trash bins, we have several trash bins that are broken and falling apart. The new trash bins are about 139 dollars each.

**Whitney River Croley makes a motion to allow the operator to purchase 5 new trash bins at approximately \$139 dollars each, which comes out to about \$695 dollars plus tax. Blanche Clawson seconded the motion. Board chairman calls for a vote. All in favor said, "Aye." Motion carries unanimously.**

Board discusses raising operators credit card limit. It is discussed that the current limit is \$1,500 dollars per month (billing cycle). Discussion includes if the board votes to approve a larger purchase such as parts to repair the company truck or supplies to rebuild the ramp and steps into the district office, the operator uses the credit card to make those larger purchases on the same credit card that he uses for regular maintenance and fuel purchases and reaches the credit card limit too quickly. Part of the issue is that by the time we receive the bill in the mail, write the check to pay the credit card bill, get that check signed and get that check in the mail, the time delay when using the mail doesn't allow the operator enough funds to use the credit card for those board approved larger purchases. The operator has used his own credit card in the past and has gotten reimbursed for some larger purchases. The board discusses if RW&SD could talk to the credit card company and ask about giving permission for a larger purchase on a specific date, in the event the board approves a purchase, then the operator could use the company credit card for that purchase. The secretary says there is an option online to request a credit limit increase. Board discusses keeping the operators monthly limit at \$1,500, but when the board does vote on specific purchases during board meetings, would raising the monthly credit card limit to \$2,500 or \$3,000 give the operator enough funds to work with every month. It is discussed that \$3,000 monthly credit card limit should be enough to work

with, unless there is a big equipment purchase, like the mower or a mulcher. If there is a big purchase voted on by the board, is there a way RW&SD could contact the credit card provider and ask for permission for that one time larger purchase on the card? The secretary can call the bank and ask what that process might look like for big purchases and for raising the credit limit.

**Whitney River Croley makes a motion to increase the operator's RW&SD credit card limit to \$3,000 monthly per (billing cycle) so the operator has more available funds to make the purchases that the operator needs to make. Blanche Clawson seconded the motion. All in favor, said, "Aye." Motion carried unanimously.**

Board Chairman asks secretary to look into who needs to request the credit limit increase.

Board discusses woodchipper purchase. Secretary hands board members a printout of a woodchipper that she had asked the operator if that size and style woodchipper would work for RW&SD. The woodchipper example costs about \$3,900. The board and operator discussed that an industrial size woodchipper would cost more than \$5,000. A good used industrial size woodchipper would probably cost at least \$9,000. The example woodchipper is 34 horsepower and says it will mulch 6 or 7 inch limbs. Operator says anything larger than 6 or 7 inches would be cut up and used for firewood instead of mulching it. The operator doesn't know if this size woodchipper would be large enough to mulch all of the brush and limbs currently stored on our vacant land next to the district office. The board discusses that there is a limb that fell in front of/near a community member's house, that might belong to RW&SD and may need to be cleared by us.

The board discusses that once the new meter pole is set up and we get a permit, then RW&SD will call continental divide and ask them to double check the lines going into that meter pole to ensure there isn't any other damage.

Board Chairman asks if anyone is interested in RW&SD purchasing the woodchipper. The secretary suggests that it would be good equipment for the RW&SD to own. The board had previously discussed renting a woodchipper for a week and that cost only about a thousand less than purchasing one. The operator suggests that a woodchipper this size would be good to have for

when limbs do get cut and or fall and need to be mulched. Board Chairman brings up the need for a safety briefing and safety precautions for anyone that operates the woodchipper once it is purchased. Operator agrees.

Board members ask if we still have the part time worker that helped the operator from time to time. The operator says that one part time employee is no longer available. The board discusses that RW&SD will need to put on next month's agenda the option of asking for applications, voting and hiring a new part time laborer/worker. The other previous part time worker is no longer available as well. The operator says he does need another part time laborer available to help him. When the DOT project is done, the operator would like to trim trees, but he needs at least two other workers' help to safely trim trees.

The operator says if the board wants to approve up to \$5,000 for RW&SD to purchase a woodchipper, then he can look and see if there are any options better than the example woodchipper printed for that amount.

**Whitney River Croley makes a motion to approve up to \$5,000 for the operator to look for and purchase a commercial grade woodchipper. Blanche Clawson seconded the motion. Board Chairman called for a vote, all in favor said, "Aye." Motion passed unanimously.**

Board Chairman explains if the operator finds a good woodchipper for that amount he can make that purchase and won't have to come back to the board for permission.

The secretary's report was given by Michele Macias. Fiscal year 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly report was sent in an email to all board members and is also printed out for board members to look at during the meeting. Secretary says the monthly summary for October 2024 is on an excel spreadsheet and the format in which she presents the information to the board is also the format used to give that information to the auditor when the auditor requests detailed monthly deposits and expenditures. Monthly summaries are then used at the end of the quarters to compile the quarterly data. Board is also given a copy of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly report for FY25 which includes (July, august and sept 2024). In the excel spreadsheet the budget category is in the first column, the budgeted amount is in the second column, and the amount received and spent during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> column.

Shawn Grassie shows up to the meeting during the secretary's report.

The secretary shows board members the 4<sup>th</sup> quarterly report for FY24, which includes all quarters for FY24 (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024).

Secretary reminds board, we are waiting for resolution passed to increase the budget by the DOT grant money amount of \$19,655 from the board before submitting the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly report to the state. Then after the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly report is submitted, the final budget for FY25 can be submitted for approval. We also have a resolution for a budget increase for FY25 for the Lambson DOT project grant money.

Secretary and operator update board on drinking water testing requirements. In the past RW&SD was only required to get 5 samples of drinking/tap water and send those samples to our testing facility. Recently RW&SD received a bill from our testing facility that said the state rejected paying for the 5 samples because those samples didn't meet state compliance requirements. The Secretary contacted NMED and they contacted RW&SD's compliance officer at the New Mexico Environmental Department to see why the state didn't pay for the tests. The compliance officer returned an email saying that RW&SD testing sample requirements had been changed to 10 samples in 2023 and no one from the NMED contacted RW&SD to inform us officially of that change in compliance requirements. So RW&SD will have to pay for the 5 samples tested and between June 2025 and Sept of 2025 RW&SD will need to take 10 water samples to be tested and those 10 samples will meet current NMED compliance requirements and if they meet compliance requirements, the state will pay for those samples being tested.

The secretary asks board members for permission to attend the DFA budget conference in Albuquerque. The budget conference costs \$275 to attend and is scheduled for 3 days, 2 nights, so if the secretary went it would cost 2 nights in a hotel as well. The board members ask when the conference is being held, it is scheduled for Wednesday Nov 20<sup>th</sup> through Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>. The board discusses that mileage to and from the conference would need to be paid as well and possibly per diem. The board discusses that the secretary has signed a non-compete agreement and that the secretary is willing to invest in RW&SD, the RW&SD should be willing to pay for the training the secretary needs to do the

job well. RW&SD does have a set amount to reimburse mileage but does not have a set amount for per diem decided. The secretary says she could work in the office on that Monday and Tuesday and then attend the budget conference on the Wed, Thurs and Friday.

**Whitney River Croley makes a motion to approve for the secretary to attend the budget conference/training in Albuquerque for \$275 dollars cost, and for two nights hotel stay, stipend for meals and per diem for gas. Blanche Clawson seconded the motion. Board Chairman called for a vote. All in favor said, "Aye." Motion passed unanimously.**

The board discusses the Water Trust Board Grant resolution, and the other legal paperwork involved in accepting the grant, now that all but one board member is present at the meeting. Board Chairman brings to everyone's attention that one of the maps in the agreement is actually a map for the Ramah Land and Irrigation/Ramah Acequia irrigation piping and not a map of RW&SD water or sewage lines. The operator and other board members look over the map in question and agree it is not a map of RW&SD's lines. Board members point out that Shawna Grassie cannot sign as the Secretary/Treasurer of RW&SD and also sign as the notary on the paperwork. Secretary, Michele Macias, is asked if at some point she would want to become a notary. The secretary is willing to become a notary, board discusses that process cost about \$500 and takes months to become approved. Board discusses who else in town is available as a notary. Notaries have to pay to be bonded and insured, along with a 12 hour class and lots of paperwork is involved. The board discusses if anyone besides Shawna Grassie and Robert Montague could sign, but the paperwork specifically states those 2 names. So, Robert Montague and Shawna Grassie could both get with a notary at a different time to sign and notarize the paperwork. The adoption of the resolution requires all of the board members' names and who is present and which board members are absent, but does not require all of the board members' signatures. It is brought to the attention of the board that the paperwork needing to be signed already has a date on it and a notary cannot notarize an already dated document. The Board asks secretary to notify persons involved in WTB grant paperwork that the map is incorrect, that paperwork shouldn't have a date on it and the possibility of changing Shawna

Grassie's name on the paperwork, if we need a notary seal. Board members discuss the specifics of the maps, one map does show RW&SD lines and the other map shows Acequia irrigation lines. Board Chairman says the only paperwork they can approve in this meeting is the resolution. The board sets aside paperwork requiring a seal. The board looks through the resolution to accept the grant award. Shawna Grassie showed up to the meeting at about 7:50pm. The board asks when the resolution will be voted on that the secretary will call out each board member's name and they will verbally say how they vote "Yea" or "Nay" for the resolution to accept the grant award from the Department of Finance and the Water Trust Board. Resolution authorizes the execution of the agreement between the Department of Finance and RW&SD for the planning grant awarded in the amount of \$440,000. In the paperwork it is required that we show who makes the motion, who seconds it and how each board member votes on the resolution, and that we also write who is present. We also have a sign in sheet for the meeting.

**Whitney River Croley makes a motion to adopt resolution number FY25-002 to accept it. Balance Clawson seconded the motion to accept it. Roll call given by Michele Macias, the secretary for RW&SD, Blanche Clawson votes, "YEA.," Robert Montague votes, "Yea.," Shawna Grassie votes, "Yea.," Whitney River Croley votes, "Yea." Michael Croley, Absent. Board Chairman states motion is carried unanimously by those present, which is a quorum.**

Secretary and the board members discuss what we need to do as far as getting an agreement with McKinley county for being the fiscal administrator/agent concerning this grant award and if we need to type up the agreement or does the county type it up, and if the agreement just needs to be signed by both parties or does RW&SD need to go in front of the McKinley County Board for the agreement.

Board members discuss resolutions to amend/increase the RW&SD budgets by the amount of NMDDOT grants received.



**Shawna Grassie makes a motion to pass resolution FY24-004 to amend the RW&SD FY24 budget with the adjustment/increase of \$19,655 to account for the DOT grant for project L600204. Whitney River Croley seconded the motion. All in favor said “Aye.” Motion carries unanimously.**

**Shawna Grassie makes a motion to pass resolution FY25-001 to have an adjustment/increase to the fiscal FY25 budget in the amount of \$16,628 to account for DOT project L600218 grant. Whitney River Croley seconded the motion. Board chairman called for a vote. All in favor said, “Aye.” The motion passed unanimously.**

Board discusses the need to warn customers and community members about parking in the town’s right of way and discusses RW&SD’s liability and needing a resolution to be passed by the board and notifying the residents of that resolution and warning the community that if a tree limb possibly falls on a vehicle that is parked in the right of way, that we show RW&SD has notified customers and community members about the risk they are taking parking in town right of way. The board discusses letting customers/community members know that if they park on the side of the street, that parking vehicles or equipment in the road and in the right of way, creates problems and possible issues when we are plowing snow in the winter and/or mowing in the summer. The board discusses that the right of way is 90 feet or 45 feet on each side from the center of the road. The board discusses whether they need to make a resolution during this meeting or whether to place it on next month’s agenda and have a resolution ready and typed up for the next meeting. RW&SD has no jurisdiction to enforce those rules except for calling the sheriff’s department if there is an issue or problem.

Board member brings up if customers are habitually late and have their water services shut off, that the board needs to come up with a policy for those customers, like requiring the customer to come before the board to get their water services reconnected if it is their second or third time being shut off. Board members say that can be put on next month’s agenda for a vote. It is discussed that there are customers that are habitually getting shut off notices and that takes the secretary’s time as well and possibly having a larger monetary reconnection fee or something to that affect that would keep

customers from being habitually late and receiving shut off notices every couple of months.

Board Chairman says the board can come up with ideas for the resolution for the right of way issue and bring it to the December board meeting.

The board agrees to put a note in the bill asking customers to not park cars or equipment on the road to ensure safe snow plowing.

Liability insurance update, the liability insurance underwriter would not cover snow plowing on the roads, even though the roads are considered RW&SD's responsibility. The secretary asked the insurance agent to find out if we could get the snowplow attachment covered under our commercial vehicle insurance coverage. The board discusses it is good to have liability coverage on vacant land that RW&SD owns. The liability coverage cost is similar to what RW&SD paid 2 years ago in liability insurance.

**Whitney River Croley makes a motion to end the regular board meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:28pm. Shawna Grassie seconded the motion. All in favor said, "Aye." The motion passed unanimously.**