

MEETING MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
CATERPILLAR TRAIL PUBLIC WATER DISTRICT OF WOODFORD
COUNTY ILLINOIS ON JUNE 13, 2022, AT 7:00 PM, VIA ZOOM AND
AT 404 TEN MILE CREEK ROAD, EAST PEORIA, IL 61611-9240

Attendance by Board Members, Staff and/or Guests:

Physically present – R. Sutton, J. Howard, P. Pitcher, C. Slagel, Z. Taylor, K. Webber, J. Zulu
Via Teleconference – J. Heiple, A. Keil, G. Long
Excused – T. Stanley
Guests – Steve Smith (CEDG)

Chairman Sutton called the meeting to order at 7:02p.m., declaring a quorum present.

Public Comments

None.

Minutes Approval

Revision to the May 26th Special Meeting under Financial Report should clarify ‘for the month of April.’

Zach Taylor moved to approve the May 26, 2022, Special Meeting Board Minutes with the revision as noted; seconded by Kay Webber. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer/Billing

District Water Billing – Patti Pitcher reported a total of 2,031 bills with a read date of May 25, 2022, were sent totaling 9,670,206 gallons. Water billed was \$122,413.67. Loan service billed was \$10,111.16 and penalties billed were \$1982.22, for a grand total billing of \$134,507.05.

Kay Webber moved to approve Treasurer/Billing report; seconded by Josh Zulu. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Results

Not available this month due to Tiffany Stanley being on vacation.

Angie Keil explained a new printer was purchased for the office due to ongoing supplier issues, inadequate printing speed and to consolidate equipment supplies.

It was also noted payroll details should be summarized, not itemized, as previously agreed.

District Superintendent’s Report

Greg Long reported 12,058,000 gallons were pumped in May, explaining the significant increase is due to the recent [fire] hydrant flushing. Bacterial test was good and the fluoride level was .683 (target 0.6 to 0.8) with the hardness testing at 4.7 grains per gallon.

Staff has been busy with hydrant flushing as well as locates for MTCO’s fiber optic lines.

Repairs to Plant – Greg requested a quote from Fritch Heating and Cooling to replace the two heaters at the plant, which are budgeted for next year; however, when the bid came in at \$26,000, he contacted AAA Northgate One-Hour HVAC and Triple Service, Inc. HVAC for bids as well. Only AAA Northgate responded with a bid for \$12,500 which is valid for 60 days. Due to the volatile market, price increases of 20% are expected by Fall 2022; therefore, Greg recommends securing the bid with AAA Northgate. He noted CTPWD would need to purchase four sheets of ¾” plywood to protect the catwalk during the removal process of the old units, retaining the plywood for future use. No objections.

Old Business

Status Review of Electrical Contract – Chairman Sutton explained that our contract with Homefield Energy (at 4.7 c/kWh) expires this month. He and Josh Zulu have been reviewing options, including a solar panel system. To renew with Homefield for one year, the rate would be 13.8 c/kWh or 10.0 c/kWh for five years. Currently considering a 3-month renewal (July through October) at 14 c/kWh.

New Business

Potential Solar Alternatives – Chairman Sutton introduced Steve Smith of Clean Energy Design Group [CEDG], who has an extensive background in renewable energy as a retiree of CILCO (20 years), a retiree of Illinois-American Water Co. (10 years) and worked on renewable energy projects for Farnsworth Group.

Detailed discussion was had regarding current Ameren rates and solar panel alternatives for CTPWD. Specifically, Steve reported he receives a daily Ameren hourly rate report on their cost per kWh. Effective tomorrow, June 14th, hourly rates will be increasing to 9.7 c/kWh in the morning and will more than triple to 35.1 c/kWh by late afternoon/early evening. Third-party energy sources aren't accepting new customers, leaving citizens and businesses alike at the mercy of Ameren.

Discussion was had regarding community solar vs. on-site solar options. It was determined the best cost savings for CTPWD would be a private on-site grid.

Chairman Sutton stated installing solar panels on CTPWD's roof would negate the roof material warranty, so only interested in solar panels installed at ground level within a fenced area. Brief discussion was had regarding two possible locations – Option A and Option B – within the CTPWD property. [Map distributed.]

Steve Smith explained if CTPWD were to pursue the solar panel option with CEDG, there wouldn't be any upfront costs as CEDG would own the system and they routinely fence in their solar fields. Because CEDG would own the system on our property, they would pay CTPWD a small monthly rental fee. While the panels are practically indestructible due to weather, CEDG would insure for both vandalism and weather, recommending CTPWD insure for vandalism as well. A CEDG system also comes with a 20- to 25-year warranty. The system includes a two-way meter showing energy in and energy out which allows a credit to accumulate during the summer months, for example, as winter may not produce enough energy, ultimately balancing out overall. Steve can have a Proposal ready by our July 11th meeting with a targeted date of late 2022 to have the solar system installed and operational. He also offered to give the Board a tour of an existing system, if desired.

In order to facilitate an on-site solar grid, CTPWD would need to upgrade the Well #5 pump assembly, requiring specialized equipment by an outside contractor. Greg will get an estimate. Germantown Hills also has a standing Solar Ordinance that requires further investigation before Steve drafts a Proposal.

Jason Howard moved to approve pursuing this CEDG solar panel project; seconded by Zach Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

In the meantime, it was agreed CTPWD should renew a short-term (6-month) contract with Homefield Energy while we give further consideration to a solar panel system. Chairman Sutton asked Josh Zulu to lead this project, with Zach Taylor assisting. No objections.

2023 Officer Election:

Chairman Sutton announced 2023 Officer Elections are open if members are interested. Jon Heiple stated due to John Ezzell's previous resignation, the resulting Vice Chairman vacancy is required by Statute to be filled in case Chairman Sutton is unavailable for official duties. Josh Zulu agreed to fill the Vice Chairman position. Additionally, positions currently held by Tiffany Stanley and Patti Pitcher are also open.

Zach Taylor moved to retain the current Officers as noted above with the addition of Josh Zulu as Vice Chairman; seconded by Jason Howard. Motion passed unanimously.

Board Member Items:

None.

Adjournment

Zach Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:29p.m.; seconded by Josh Zulu. Motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

Monday, July 11, 2022, at 7:00p.m. Please call to be excused if you are unable to attend.

*P. Pitcher
Board Secretary*