

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF THE
VICTOR VALLEY WASTEWATER RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
January 18, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Peter Allan called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. in Room 146 at the Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority Administrative Offices, 15776 Main Street, Hesperia, California, with the following members present:

**HESPERIA WATER DISTRICT
TOWN OF APPLE VALLEY
CITY OF VICTORVILLE
ORO GRANDE (CSA 42) AND
SPRING VALLEY LAKE (CSA 64)**

**Thurston Smith
Peter Allan
Rudy Cabriales
Dennis Nowicki**

VVWRA Staff and Legal Counsel:

**Logan Olds, General Manager
Piero Dallarda, Legal Counsel (BB&K)
Chris Anthony, Project Construction Manager
Gilbert Perez, Director of Operations
Joe Del Monte, Operations Supervisor
Bruce Correia, IS Coordinator
Kellie Patterson, Account Tech III**

**Patricia Johnson, Secretary to the GM/Board
Angela Valles, Director of Human Resources
Linda Ellsworth, Management Technician
Robert Coromina, Network Supervisor
Courtney Pascoe, Database & Web Technician
Richard Pallante, Maintenance Supervisor
James Bryant, Operator**

Others Present:

**Blake Anderson, Blake Anderson Consulting
Joe Flores, City of Victorville
Kathy Whalen, San Bernardino County
Al Vogler, Hesperia Resident**

**Alton Anderson, MWH
Dennis Cron, Town of Apple Valley
Jackie Lindgren, MDRCD
Dave Larsen, SSC Construction**

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Peter Allan called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – CLOSED SESSION AGENDA

Chair Allan asked if there were any comments from the public regarding any item on the Closed Session agenda. There were no comments from the public.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Cabriales made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:30 a.m., which was seconded by Commissioner Nowicki and approved by unanimous voice vote.

REGULAR SESSION

Chair Allan called the regular meeting to order at 8:41 a.m. and announced that there were no items to report from Closed Session. He also announced that Bob Sagona will be coming back in February. He asked Manager Olds when the February meeting will be held. Manager Olds said that it is being requested under Item 10 of the consent calendar to change the date of the February Board meeting from February 15 to February 22, which is the following Friday.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

Chair Allan asked if there were any other comments from the public on the Regular Session agenda. There were no comments from the public.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

5. Possible conflict of interest issues

Manager Olds reported that he was unaware of any conflicts.

6. Operations & Maintenance Donation to Salvation Army

Gilbert Perez announced that a charitable donation in the amount of \$1,640 was made by the O & M department to the Salvation Army. He asked James Bryant to provide more details concerning the donation. James said that former VVWRA employee Andy Gyurcsik owned and maintained a candy machine during his employment. James said that when Andy left the agency, the candy machine remained at VVWRA and he took over its maintenance. James reported that a soda machine is also stocked during the year and the money from both machines is donated to charity at the end of the year. James said he read an article in the newspaper stating that the Salvation Army was low on funds. He went to the Salvation Army office and after speaking to two volunteers, the donation was made. Gilbert announced that James does this work on his own time for the benefit of the staff.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

- 7. Approve the December 2007 Warrant Register (No. 1207)**
- 8. Approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on December 7, 2007**
- 9. Resolution 2008-2: Amend FY 2007-2008 Holiday Schedule**
- 10. Request to Reschedule Date or Change Location of February 15 Board Meeting**

Commissioner Nowicki made a motion to approve the consent calendar, including the February Board meeting date change from February 15 to February 22, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved by unanimous voice vote.

REPORTS OR PRESENTATIONS:

11. Management Information Systems (MIS) Department: Technology Solutions through Creative Innovation: Robert Coromina, Network Supervisor, provided a presentation on the changes that have been made by the Management Information Systems (MIS) department since he joined VVWRA 18 months ago and the future plans of the department. Robert said there were some very unique challenges that had to be addressed upon his arrival. He said that all in all they have done a great job and have a lot of challenges in the future that they are looking forward to meeting.

Robert said that he and his staff have come up with some very innovative and creative ideas to meet the challenges that are faced at VVWRA. The location is quite remote and there is not a lot available out there, so they had to be creative to get things done. Robert introduced his staff, Bruce Correia – Information Systems Coordinator and Courtney Pascoe – Database and & Web Technician. He said the reason he introduced them is because they are both are extremely sick, but showed up for today's meeting to support him and he appreciates this very much.

Robert reported that technology has greatly changed in the past three or four years. He said there are several reasons why we need to keep our technology up to date. The threat of Cyber-terrorism is a very real threat, especially after September 11. He said we need to maintain our systems to be up-to-date and safe against that threat. Computer hackers are using the very best technology available and we all see in the news every day that identity theft is the number one and fastest rising crime. We want to protect our systems against those things to the best of our ability.

Robert said that some may wonder what the correlation is between identity theft and a wastewater treatment plant. He said there is a very big correlation. One is that we maintain Human Resources files that contain confidential information that need to be protected. In 2007, Forbes Magazine published an article entitled, "America's Hack-able Backbone" that specifically mentioned SCADA systems. VVWRA maintains a SCADA control system at the Regional plant. SCADA systems are used around the world to control our infrastructures for water, wastewater, natural gas, subways, and other applications. If someone were to hack into the system, they could do a lot of damage. In 2000, a 40 year old man was fired from his job and hacked into that agency's SCADA system to deliberately dump toxic sludge into the waterway. It was his hope that they would re-hire him so that he could fix the problem. Robert said if that gentleman could do that, just imagine what a motivated individual with a little bit of savvy could do. Yahoo, one of the largest search engines, was brought to its knees by a Server attack, which caused their Server to crash and cost them millions of dollars. The lesson that was learned by the industry was that if they could shut down Yahoo, they could shut down anyone. So we have to be prepared and we have to be vigilant to protect our systems.

Robert said prior to his arrival at VVWRA the agency had a very simple network setup known as a Star topology. This was a series of computers connected to each other that communicated over a backbone of cables that controlled the signal. At that time, there was a very limited budget as well as limited manpower and connectivity options. The MIS department consisted of one employee, Bruce Correia, who maintained the computer and SCADA systems by himself. Robert said that Mr. Correia did a wonderful job despite those hurdles and with what he had available to him.

Robert reported that four major improvements were made upon his arrival. The first related to the very slow and unreliable network connection that existed. Robert said this is where he and Bruce got a little creative. They investigated the various options that were available and ultimately decided upon the implementation of a T-1 connection that was available through a company called Global Solutions. Robert explained that a T-1 line is a dedicated line that goes from the user directly to the Internet to provide broadband speed access. This line also provides plant to plant support to the Hesperia location. Next, individual security was improved through the creation and implementation of a Domain Model to protect the entire network. The third improvement addressed the issue of unreliable email through the implementation of Microsoft Exchange 2003 and a software program called POPcon, which was also required. Those two programs working together provided a reliable connection to our email provider. All VVWRA management staff now carries a Trio that allows real-time access to their business email account. Robert said the fourth and biggest problem was Network security. Once the T-1 line was in place, our network was wide open to attacks. This required a quick solution. A firewall was installed between the internal network and the external network to provide security by blocking intrusion and detection by hackers.

Robert reported that some of the future projects of the MIS department include the implementation of a Disaster Recovery Program using the latest virtualization software that is available, Network Security with CCTV systems, SCADA redesign, Geographic Information System, and an internal Intranet system that will provide a centralized point of information and decreased processing time. He said the MIS department looks forward to meeting these challenges.

Commissioner Nowicki asked if the firewall that was installed also cover wireless card connections on laptops. Robert said that rather than to open up a wireless connection, they made them into access points that are protected by a password and an IP address to secure it online. Chair Allan asked if there was VVWRA an MIS mission statement. Robert said there is no Mission Statement for MIS at this time, but he is looking at creating one. Commissioner Smith asked Manager Olds to pass the information they received at last week's CASA Conference to MIS to be implemented into the SCADA system. Manager Olds said what Commissioner Smith is referring to is a way to monitor problem locations in the collection system.

Commissioner Nowicki asked if the agency has digitized its sewer atlas. Robert said the sewer atlas has not yet been digitized. This would occur at the conclusion of the GIS project. Commissioner Nowicki asked if those efforts are being coordinated with the member agencies. Robert said there is a coalition that includes representatives of each member agency as well as the Mojave Water Agency and Victor Valley College who are discussing the purchase of imagery, file sharing, and other issues. Robert said it is a great collaborative network.

Robert concluded his presentation by stating that it is the agency's goal to bring VVWRA up to the technological level of its member agencies. He thanked Manager Olds for his support and understanding. He also thanked Angela Valles for her unwavering support and direction and Gilbert Perez for having the foresight to include the MIS staff in his projects.

ACTION & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

12. Election of Officers for 2008

Piero Dallarda reported that under Section 23 of the Joint Powers Agreement it is stated that elections are held at the beginning of each fiscal year, which is July 1. He said the elections were held in January last year, but he would suggest that the language of the JPA be followed and to hold the elections in July. He said the election may be held today if the Commissioner would like to do so. However, he recommends that the election be held at the beginning of the fiscal year.

It was the consensus of the Commissioners to hold the Election of Officers at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

13. Request from Jackie Lindgren of Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District: Manager Olds introduced Jackie Lindgren of the Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District. He reported that this item relates to the request to remove Tamarisk, also known as Salt Cedar. Jackie provided a brief description of the scope of the project that is currently underway by her agency. She reported that a contractor has been hired and a site visit was conducted at VVWRA. What is mainly being requested is approval to come onto the property to stage equipment. Manager Olds said the specific location of the invasive species is just above the north percolation ponds. Manager Olds asked the Commissioners if they would like authorize him to move forward with this project.

Commissioner Nowicki made a motion to authorize the General Manager to move forward with the request from the MDRCD and to obtain an insurance certificate, which was seconded by Commissioner Cabriales and approved by unanimous voice vote.

14. Change Order No. 19 – 14.5 MGD Expansion Project: Manager Olds reported that Change Order No. 19 is mainly for some electrical revisions that total \$13,722.31.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve Change Order No. 19 for the 14.5 MGD Expansion Project in the amount of \$13,722.31, which was seconded by Commissioner Nowicki and approved by unanimous voice vote.

15. Change Order No. 13 – 18 MGD Expansion Project: Manager Olds reported that Change Order No. 13 is more substantial, totaling \$167,913.75. There were some issues with the Blower Building and a great deal of work was needed to re-do the roof and the plumbing elements for the building. Commissioner Nowicki asked if this amount still falls within the budget for the project. Manager Olds confirmed that the amount does fall within the budget. He said Chris Anthony has done an excellent job on this project. Chair Allan asked why these elements were not identified in the original

project and if it was an oversight. Manager Olds confirmed that it was an oversight, due to a shortened design process.

Commissioner Nowicki made a motion to approve Change Order No. 13 for the 18 MGD Expansion Project in the amount of \$167,913.75, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved by unanimous voice vote.

STAFF/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REPORTS:

16. Construction Management Update: 14.5 and 18 MGD Expansion Projects; Oro Grande Pump Station & Levee 9 Repairs – December 2007: Manager Olds reported that we are at greater than 90 percent completion on both projects. We hope to start the new digesters in March and the new blowers in May of 2008. We are nearing and anxiously awaiting completion of these projects.

17. Operations and Maintenance Report for December 2007: Gilbert Perez reported that the Treatment Plant is operating fairly well during winter operation.

18. Pretreatment and Interceptor Cleaning and Inspection Reports – December 2007: Manager Olds reported that we are remaining focused on what is occurring at the I Avenue Interceptor after the two spill events that occurred in November and December.

19. Septage Receiving Facility Reports – December 2007: Manager Olds reported that the agency is currently in negotiations with Lahontan and nitrogen is an extreme concern. We have not allowed the reintroduction of Port-a-Potty waste into the wastewater treatment plant. Based on the numbers we are receiving from Lahontan, it is doubtful that we will be able to allow that waste in the near future. We continue to receive regular septage, but Port-a-Potty waste is a high strength material that introduces problems for the plant. Chair Allan asked what the various classes of Permits are. Courtney Pascoe reported that Class 1 is for Industrial, Class 2 is for Flow-based large flow, Class 3 is Grease traps in restaurants, Class 4 is Temporary, and Class 5 is Septage Receiving.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

Report from Ad Hoc Management Committee: Manager Olds announced that it is Blake Anderson's intent to hold an additional Strategic Advisory Committee meeting between now and the next Board meeting and he will provide a report to the Commissioners on that meeting.

Interceptor Connection Requirements and Enforcement and Industrial Pretreatment Program: Manager Olds reported that work on this program is continuing with Larry Walker. He hopes to have a draft before the Commissioners in the first or second quarter of this year.

Recommendation to Authorize HDR Engineering to Prepare a Pre-design Report for the Eastside Regional Water Reclamation Plant (Mar/Apr 2008): Manager Olds reported that the pre-design for the Eastside Regional Water Reclamation plant was discussed yesterday. An overall strategic plan is being developed that will determine timelines and when Board action will be needed.

Semi-annual Revisions to Interceptor Flow Projection Study by RBF Consulting (May 2008): Manager Olds reported that the agency is preparing for the next Flow Projection Study. He said there are a number of projects currently in process. As a result of issues we have faced over the past several months, he is fast-tracking the improvement work and several proposals will be presented at the February meeting.

NEXT SCHEDULED BOARD MEETING:

February 22, 2008 - Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Chair Allan said it was reported to him that the odor in Apple Valley has gotten worse lately. Manager Olds said VVWRA began adding a new product at the lift station called Bioxide, which is significantly less costly and works quite well. There was a problem wherein the level gauge was reading incorrectly showing that we had chemical but actually did not. This occurred over a one week timeframe over the holidays. Dennis Cron said there has been no increase in the number of odor complaints reported to the Town of Apple Valley. Manager Olds said staff is actively addressing this and we do not anticipate having a similar condition.

Chair Allan said he has enjoyed sitting in for Commissioner Sagona who will return in February. He said he will now entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:25 a.m., Commissioner Nowicki made a motion to adjourn the Regular meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved by unanimous voice vote.

APPROVAL:

DATE: 2/22/08
Approved by VVWRA Board

BY: Dennis Nowicki
Dennis Nowicki, Secretary
VVWRA Board of Commissioners