



FORT SMITH WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
Board Meeting Minutes-Thursdays, February 27, 2025

-OPENING – ROLL CALL- Alan Shaw called the meeting to order @ 9:00 AM on February 27, 2025, the meeting was held in person and via phone conference; call in number was 1-571-317-3112, Access Code: 657-607-829; Board members attending: Alan Shaw, Katie Steele, Jim Hyde, and attending via phone: Steve Saville; Employees attending: John Mangan and Sandy Kust, attending via phone: Josh McCraw; public attending via phone: Jeff Buszmann.

-APPROVAL OF JANUARY 17, 2025, MEETING MINUTES- Motion by Ms. Steele to approve the meeting minutes from January 17, 2025 as printed, 2nd by Dr. Shaw, motion carried unanimously.

-FINANCIALS/BILLS- Mr. Saville presented the treasurers report for February, 2025. Expenses: \$14,397.06, income: \$19,132.92; checking account balance: \$130,033.46 + CDARS \$29,976.00; total: \$160,009.46. Motion by Mr. Saville to pay the bills, 2nd by Ms. Steele, motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Dr. Shaw to move \$10,000 from the Water Bond Reserve account into a CD or a saving account, depending on which has a higher interest rate, 2nd by Mr. Hyde, motion carried unanimously. Sandy Kust will visit with representative from 1st Interstate Bank on CD's versus savings and present at the next board meeting.

-DELINQUENT REPORT- Currently there are 9 accounts that are past due, totaling \$2,741.14; the water is turned off on 3 accounts and 5 have been sent turn off letters if not paid by February 28, 2025.

-WASTEWATER PROJECT

1. **WASTEWATER CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATE:** Dr. Shaw gave a presentation of the wastewater project and stated the contractor is waiting for the weather to warm up to haul remaining sludge to the Hardin landfill. Also, Chris Hayes will look at the roads this spring and compare to pre-construction to ensure roads were restored back to pre-construction and if not, the roads will be restored using project funds, Chris Hayes is to contact Jim Hyde and schedule the final walk through and review of the road conditions. The last rail car will not be pumped, due to the District needing to rent a pump and enough hose to pump it out.
2. **MONTANA FENCE QUOTE: Purchase & Installation of privacy slates into fencing and gate around lift station:** The District received a quote from Montana Fence to purchase and install privacy slates into the chain link fence and gate surrounding the lift stations, due to the cost the District will not have the privacy slats installed. Ms. Steele stated the District could, perhaps do a green fence with shrubs and trees. The District Board has decided to wait and if the homeowner says something about the chain link fence, the District Board will revisit at that time.

- 3. SEWER BACKUP/BILL FROM CONTRACTOR:** Chris Hayes contacted Western Municipal to see if they would reconsider the cost of \$6,709.01 for excavation of a sewer line clog thought to be right around the coupler were the service line tied into the main sewer line. Chris stated the contractor will not reconsider the cost and bill must be paid in full. Chris stated the bill is able to be paid for using project funds.

When a customer contacts John or Josh regarding a sewer backup, they check the manhole before and after the backup to ensure that manholes are flowing and show no signs of backing up, tells the operators the backup is on the customer side.

-OPERATOR REPORT- Josh stated John Mangan read the meters and there are 2 leaks, John met with the manager on account # 244 and found the leak and turned off the water until leak is fixed, John contacted the owner on account #251 and informed him of a leak and turned the water off until leak gets fixed. Josh also said he checked the meter at account # 74 as continues to have high usage but did not find any leaks and owner stated she uses a lot of water but is trying not use as much. Josh said he looked at the property that the well, generator, pump house, and office sits on and there would be enough room should the District decide to build a shop for storage. Josh and John stated everything else seems to be going well.

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS: Big Horn County Election Department stated 2 people filed for the upcoming board positions that will be held on the May 6, 2025, election and if nobody files as a write in candidate then there will not be an election as there were only 2 board seats available.

Dr. Shaw stated there is still a vacant seat on the board and Tina Power is interested in becoming a board member. Dr. Shaw made a motion to appoint Tina Power to the Fort Smith Water & Sewer District Board of Directors, 2nd by Mr. Hyde, motion carried unanimously.

FORMAL APPRAISAL FOR DISTRICT PROPERTY (BLOCK L LOT 2) AND (RECLAIMED LAGOON)/OLD LAGOON SITE/ANNEXATION: Mr. Saville has contacted 5 people that do appraisals and 3 said they would not do it and 2 said they would do the appraisal. Discussion took place as to whether an appraisal is even needed or if relators could be contacted and put a price together. The District will review the MCA code regarding the requirement of an appraisal. Discussion also took place about using the 6.1-acre site to build a building for storage or look at purchasing the service station that is for sale or build on the property that houses the office. Josh and John will determine the equipment that would be stored, the square footage needed, and whether storage building would be heated or not, and present this information to the board at a meeting, then the board would know how much space is really needed. Discussion also took place about annexing the 6.1 acre site into the District boundaries before putting up for sale as property would be worth more, the District will look into the MCA codes for annexing or amending the boundaries for this property to be brought into the District.

NEW BUSINESS:

TRESPASSING ON DISTRICT PROPERTY: Ms. Steele stated vehicles continue to park on District property which has a well, generator, pump house, shed and office. The owner has been warned to tell his tenants to quit parking on the District property or the sheriff's department may be called, vehicles may be towed, and suspension of water services may happen. Josh and John will use the metal detector to find the property pins to determine the property line and put tee posts to mark the boundary. The District may also post signs and place boulders around well and generator for protection.

TINA POWER APPOINTMENT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Dr. Shaw stated there is still a vacant seat on the board and Tina Power is interested in becoming a board member. Dr. Shaw made a motion to appoint Tina Power to the Fort Smith Water & Sewer District Board of Directors, 2nd by Mr. Hyde, motion carried unanimously.

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY MEETING AND RESORT TAX: The Fort Smith Water & Sewer District has nothing to do with the resort tax and community meetings, but updates were provided at the meeting.

Community members continue with the process to get the resort tax implemented. A website will be created for the public to ask questions and get answers. The public is interested in getting a volunteer fire department and training on how to use the hydrants and connecting the hoses to the hydrants and having the fire chief from Hardin be included in the training. Josh flushes the fire hydrants in the spring and fall and is willing to do a training. Jim Hyde will contact the fire chief in Hardin to see if he would be interested in assisting with the training.

MARCH MEETING- Friday, March 28, 2025 @ 9am.

-PUBLIC COMMENTS- Jeff Buszmann stated the District Board could consider having an easement for the storage building on the 6.1-acre site and then selling the property with the easement instead of using entire site for the storage building.

-ADJOURN MEETING- Meeting adjourned at 10:26AM