

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
61750 CHOLLITA ROAD, JOSHUA TREE, CA 92252
WEDNESDAY, October 7, 2020, 9:30 AM**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER at 9:39AM

(1) In Attendance (Via Zoom):

- 1) Director Tom Floen, V.P. Unger, GM Ban, K. Radnich
- 2) CAC Members: Barbara Delph
- 3) Public: none

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- (1) Approved: Director Floen (1st) / V.P. Unger (2nd)

3. PUBLIC COMMENT —none

4. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES from April 1st, 2020

- (1) V.P. Unger reviewed the minutes requesting a recap (update) on the status of:
 - 1) Item 5.5.2: Regarding ruling on consolidation of Water Districts: Director Floen clarified it only related to those Water Districts requesting a consolidation of services If JBWD keeps our finances solid and we stay in compliance, we'll be left alone. V.P. Unger noted it reminded her of 29 Palms and the Fire Department issue whereby, the County ended up taking over. She felt someone from JBWD needed to be monitoring LAFCO meetings where these decisions are being made.
- (2) Item 5.5.4: "PSPS" was clarified (Public Safety Power Shut-offs)
- (3) Item 6.3: Radnich clarified the BLM Grant was no longer pending, but moving forward.
- (4) Item 6.6.1: V.P. Unger asked if the UWD potential "kitty" was set up. Radnich noted it was an item that would need to go before the Board, that the information had been forwarded to staff, but had not yet been placed on an agenda.
- (5) Item 6.9.1: The AQMD monitor placement at JBWD was still in limbo: GM Ban noted he responded with questions (placement of the unit and our heavy equipment having an impact) and was still waiting for AQMD's response.
- (6) Item 7.2: GM Ban clarified the CIMIS station was the only on in the Morongo Basin and has been under JBWD's maintenance and care (at a significant cost.) He has arranged for a retired State CIMIS inspector to continue the maintenance at \$500/year (or less), and got HDWD and TPWD to agree to share the cost split three ways.
- (7) Item 7.6: GM Ban updated the committee that the project slowed with COVID-19, but believes it will be moving forward again.
- (8) The minutes as presented were approved: Director Floen (1st) / V.P. Unger (2nd).

5. LEGISLATIVE REPORT – Vice President Unger/Director Floen

- (1) V.P. Unger briefly addressed our COVID-19 response: she stated that the burden to safely open was on the District based on current guidelines. Meetings would have to continue as is (virtually) as we do not have the space for social distancing requirements. GM Ban verified there was an attempt to find alternate meeting space for meetings, but none are available under the current restrictions.
- (2) AB606 and AB1668: Landscape Measurement Classification Project

- 1) Aerial Eagle was hired to “canopy map” the entire state of California to lay a working foundation for water conservation mandates state-wide.
 - 2) This was a 2-year project, now completed, with findings reported to the Department of Water Resources.
 - 3) Aerial Eagle held a webinar explaining what will happen next: mandates are being established for Water Agencies and Districts, with most being notified of their water conservation mandate by summer, 2021.
 - 4) This is an unfunded mandate that will impact us directly.
 - 5) Radnich asked (Aerial Eagle) if the canopy mapping distinguished between foliage that was native, vs. tap-water irrigated landscaping. As we promote native and Waterwise gardening and our local canopy offers considerable native brush through the Basin, would that impact our final numbers?
 - 6) Aerial Eagle responded that the study did not distinguish the difference; that they could see how that could impact the conservation numbers, and that we may have to petition DWR for a variance.
- (3) Public misinformation: The committee addressed the current on-going problem with public misinformation, driven by the political election fervor occurring. Additionally, our candidates running for specific “divisions” of our District has caused confusion (some are listed, others not, if uncontested.)
- 1) It was hopeful that the Rotary Candidates Forum being held on October 12th, 6PM for Division 5 would help with this confusion.

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION & OUTREACH REPORT – Kathleen Radnich

(1) Farmers’ Market:

- 1) October’s booth theme is: on properly disposing of RXs and OTCs in respect to protecting our ground water. Radnich noted that while the County’s HHW Disposal program is closed, we still have the Sheriff’s Department’s drug drop-off disposal program available during their business hours.
- 2) Radnich shared we are seeing a huge influx of L.A. and Bay area people, all looking to relocate, or already have relocated from the urban areas.
- 3) We are seeing locals who have need of face-to-face customer service stop by for assistance at our Saturday booth. While Radnich indicates they have no access to their accounts or can take payments, they are assisting in many other ways.
- 4) Due to the closure of our walk-in Customer Service Department, Radnich announced this will be the first year their public outreach will continue through the winter months at the Market.

(2) Fall Plant Sale:

- 1) Radnich thanked V.P. Unger, CAC member and presumptive Board member Jane Jarlsberg, CAC member Karen Morton and Docents Karen Senzig and Jean McLaughlin for their support during the public portion of the plant sale. Yani, intern and Wildcrafting instructor from the JTNP, was also present and a strong volunteer throughout.
- 2) The plant sale went well, even without the Water Education Day events drawing foot traffic.
- 3) As of this date, #152 plants sold out of 244, a potential additional 16 plants are yet to be purchased/pick-ed up, but promised for; nine plants were used additionally to revegetate our garden prior to the event. So far, \$1,252.00 has been collected, with 50% proceeds going back to JTNP to perpetuate the program.

(3) BLM Grant:

- 1) Grant seminars are being attended by Radnich and finance staff. We learned we navigated a complicated system (prior to the help of these seminars) that others have complained that were nothing less than a daunting system, involving five software systems.
- 2) We are now moving forward, implementing the grant.
- 3) Due to BLM's delays, we are behind schedule, but we found work-arounds (approved) and hope to be back on schedule after our Halloween sign debut event. The program will complete in 12 months, as planned, this way.
- (4) Halloween Event (October 31, 2-4PM)
 - 1) This event is four-fold:
 - i. It publicly utilizes our under-used public garden
 - ii. It is a positive activity for local children during COVID times, reflecting well on JBWD.
 - iii. It allows us to get our grant sign debut back on track with it's timeline.
 - iv. It qualifies as an "outdoor educational classroom"—for public outreach.
 - 2) Radnich then elaborated on all the games and decor that support the four above items.
- (5) Wildcrafting Class
 - 1) Our new JTNP instructor is highly qualified and improving the course content.
 - 2) Our class of 14 diminished to 6, due to last minute cancellations.
 - 3) The wildcrafting signs in the garden are going to be a huge asset to supplement the limited classes we can offer in the future.
- (6) Director Floen offered topics for future newsletters:
 - 1) For (new) people afraid to drink our tap water, do an article on our stringent testing
 - 2) Announce our presence at the market for the winter months
 - 3) Encourage people to take a District Tour (what they'll learn)
- (7) GM Ban suggested we might consider having a presentation given to the Board on our water quality testing process. The committee supported this.

7. STAFF REPORT – GM Ban

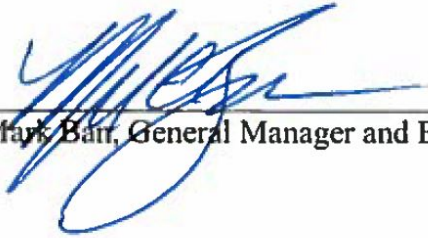
- (1) GM Ban gave an update on the JT Retreat Center's well water. Currently, more unknowns than knowns are in play. Their options are expensive, regardless of which direction they go in, and currently have not figured out finances. GM Ban asserted that their "infrastructure" would need upgrading (at their expense) were we to connect them, which is an additional expense on the table. Nothing has been decided.
- (2) Gm Ban shared that our California Irrigation Management Information Station (CIMIS) station (located at CMC) should be on line and sending data by next month.
- (3) The permits for the Customer Service lobby have been negotiated to be less expensive (simpler) due to our designs.
- (4) The Solar program and Well 14 rehab have moved slower due to the COVID-19 shut downs. GM Ban hopes we'll move forward shortly.
- (5) The CAC will re-review the Waste Water Treatment Plan (again) with Ban adding the historic beginning of the project to help with the understanding of what the District is facing.
- (6) GM Ban shared that the auto filing system (scanned and digital) is moving forward to an all electronic data base. This will include "DocuSign" elements, which will be an added plus for our customers, and allow for submission of documents on line. This also saves space with our remodeling efforts.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – December 2nd, 2020.

10. ADJOURNMENT: 11:04 AM

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mark Barr', written over a horizontal line.

Mark Barr, General Manager and Board Secretary