



**COOKE CITY, PARK COUNTY WATER DISTRICT**  
**Monthly Board Meeting Minutes**  
**September 19, 2012**  
**6:30 pm**

Location: Cooke City Community Center  
Conference Room

Board Members in Attendance: Rick Sommers, Kay Whittle, Matt Asplund, Troy Wilson  
Lucas Jack, Water Operator  
Marilyn Hartley, District Clerk  
Parks Frady, CTA Engineering

Public Attendance: None

Rick Sommers called the meeting to order at 6:47pm

August minutes were reviewed and signed by the board. During this time, Marilyn also presented the current A/R Aging report and Balance Sheet for review. She reported that everyone with the exception of 2 or 3 accounts was keeping current. In July, one user had requested that her water be shut off. She was sent a letter explaining the high cost to get it turned back on in the future and her signature was required on the letter before notifying Lucas. The customer apparently decided to continue paying because the letter was never returned and the account is being paid.

There was some discussion as to how tough it is for a small town to cover the cost of constructing public water and/or sewer systems. Rick wondered how much a sewer system would cost residents on top of what they're already paying for water. Marilyn happened to have copy of an article she'd come across about problems encountered with a new sewer system in Wolf Creek, MT. With 53 residents, the town was having trouble getting residents to agree to hook-up to the system with \$100-\$120 per month fees attached. Discussion then ensued about how a new sewer system in Cooke City would need to be paid almost exclusively with grants because the residents couldn't handle much more. Marilyn presented a list of government grants that she'd found on the MACo website which could potentially help when the board starts working on the Skunk Hollow fix.

Rick asked for explanation of a few items on the balance sheet, so Marilyn explained what each item on the report represented.

The board reviewed and signed the September requests for bill payment. The bills Marilyn submitted for payment were all approved as follows:

Chk #2267 U S Treasury - \$330.00 – Withholdings from 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr  
Chk #2268 Bridger Analytical Lab - \$28.00 – Sample testing  
Chk #2269 CenturyLink - \$41.74 – Sept phone bill  
Chk #2270 Flathead Electric - \$1326.06 – Aug power bill  
Chk #2271 Lucas Jack - \$712.27 – Sept Salary (less deductions) + supply reimbursements  
Chk #2272 Marilyn Hartley - \$558.28 – Sept salary (less deductions)  
Chk #2273 Verizon Wireless - \$13.07 – Aug cell phone bill

Out of the Construction Acct: (for Broadway/Huston repairs)

Chk #124 Ferguson Waterworks - \$6944.35 – pipe & other supplies

Chk #125 CTA Engineering - \$6148.10 – Engineering services for repairs

### Old Business:

#### Update and discussion on Skunk Hollow and Broadway

Parks Frady from CTA Engineering gave an update on the results of the bidding for construction services on the Broadway project. There was only one bid submitted from a construction company out of the Hardin area which was more than twice the estimate that CTA had calculated and he indicated that all of the contractors he had personally contacted couldn't meet our October time frame. Parks recommended that the Board reject all bids and look for another solution. Motion was made by Kay to do so and was seconded by Rick. Motion passed.

Mr. Frady then initiated discussion as to what our other options might be. He said it was doubtful that another public bidding process would produce anything more and would take too much precious time. It was estimated by both Rick & Matt that there is a window of about 3 weeks to get something done. No one on the board was comfortable with the viability of a temporary fix, so that left the concept of seeing if it could be done without public bidding for under \$50,000 which is the maximum allowable by law for avoiding the bidding process. Matt indicated that the materials were delivered and ready to go and the question was presented as to whether the board could just have Asplund Enterprises go ahead and get it done given the time constraints. Parks indicated that since the board has met bidding requirements (even though unsuccessful) it was possible, but it was necessary to be exceptionally careful not to violate any 'conflict of interest' laws in the process. He indicated that he would research everything and let the board know how best to proceed as soon as possible. Kay and Rick especially expressed concern over the potential for a full break in the line during the winter if the leak isn't completely fixed before ground freezing occurs.

#### Water Operator Update (Lucas)

The hard drive on the old Gateway computer has completely failed and is irreparable. Lucas will dispose of the entire computer appropriately and has switched to the smaller laptop previously used by the district clerk. However, issues arose in setting things up due to the fact that the laptop is Windows 7 and the meter-reading software hadn't yet been upgraded to be compatible. He now anticipates having the meters read again by the end of the month. Rick reiterated how important it is for the district to get meters read on a regular basis and that Lucas needs to be diligent about doing so.

Lucas also reported that he will be unable to obtain a contractor's license because of the requirements, so will need to hire out the installation of meters. There was discussion about Elke Edwards having accidentally received 2 meters . . . both an outside and an inside . . . of which one needs to be removed. Troy offered to discuss access to the property with the Edwards for that purpose.

According to Lucas, the situation at the well house has been mostly resolved. Apparently, a power failure caused the controls to go into reset mode which required manual resetting. He is still working on getting the calibration reset, but there are no more overflows. In the event that this happens again, Lucas will put the instructions for resetting and recalibration in writing and post them at the well house. John Weikel from Rural

Water Systems is helping Lucas to figure out how to best meet DEQ's requirements for wire fencing around the base. Matt indicated that he has some finer wire mesh material that would do the trick.

Callie MacIntosh from the Community Development Assistance Program has offered to write a disaster plan for the system and will present it for board adoption when it is completed.

#### Meeting minutes:

Kay had indicated at last month's meeting that it is very difficult to try to take minutes and fully participate in the meeting as a board member at the same time. It was then suggested that the board approach Suzy Hahn about taking minutes (when Marilyn isn't there) for a flat fee.

Matt reported that Suzy is hesitant about doing it because she's not confident that she could do them right. Marilyn expressed her feeling of responsibility and suggested that the board conference call her in when she isn't there. She could then take the minutes remotely. Rick asked how the tape recorder had worked the one time they tried it. Marilyn said that it worked fine, but that it would need to be more centrally located to make it easier to hear everybody. Rick moved that the recorder be tried again before looking at paying someone else to do it. Kay seconded the motion and Rick will try to locate the tape recorder for the next meeting.

Marilyn also indicated that, according to our auditor, it would also be fine to cut back to one meeting per quarter. The board is not inclined to consider doing that until all of the repairs have been attended to and things are flowing more smoothly.

#### New Business:

##### Operator duties

Rick reiterated to Lucas how important his duties are to the flow of operations and that the board expects him keep on top of things now that the computer hardware and software issues are being resolved. The board expressed appreciation that he is keeping a detailed log of time worked because the previous operator(s) hadn't done so. It will help in determining just exactly how much time the regular duties take and what needs to be done if he's not available. Matt has been designated as the board member in oversight of the operator and will fulfill the duties in Lucas's absence. Lucas indicated that he is scheduled to take his water operator test on Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>.

There was also some discussion as to the basic tools that Lucas should have available versus those that the District currently provides. Marilyn indicated that \$750 has been budgeted for supplies and/or tools which could be used to purchase what he needs.

##### Rural Development

Kay reported that she had called Connor O'Keefe at Rural Development to discuss any issues they have with the Water District. Their main complaint appears to be with the meter readings . . . or lack thereof . . . but they acknowledge that the board is working on it. Secondly, they want the Broadway repairs done and, thirdly, is the fix for Skunk Hollow. RD believes that the district accepted funds from them to make the repairs to Skunk Hollow, but the board is sure that the money had been turned down because their time-frame couldn't be met. RD is requiring that the funds be returned if the project isn't completed by the end of the calendar year. Kay said she asked Connor to have RD check their books for proof that the district received additional funds from them for that purpose. He indicated that he would and will let us know what they find.

Likewise, Kay stated that she communicated to Connor the frustration that the district has over all of the issues the board has had to deal with so soon when it was supposed to be a 'turn-key' system.

Skunk Hollow

Aside from fixing Broadway, the next big dilemma will be how to pay for Skunk Hollow. The estimate from CTA for looping the system is exceedingly more than for fixing Broadway & Huston. The district has funds to pay for the Broadway repairs, but will need much help in paying for Skunk Hollow. Mr. Frady will get busy on searching for grant opportunities for that project.

With no further business to discuss, Rick adjourned the meeting at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

BOARD APPROVAL:

Marilyn Hartley  
District Clerk

***Signatures on file.***

Date: \_\_\_\_\_