

**Chester Public Utility District
PO Box 503
251 Chester Airport Rd.
Chester, Ca. 96020
530-258-2171**

Minutes of Regular Meeting: September 26, 2023, at 5:30pm. Located in the Chester Public Utility District conference room: 251 Chester Airport Road.

Directors Present: Steve Graffweg, Steve Voboril, Art Tharpe Royce Raker and Kim Green.

Directors Absent: none

Guests Present: various

Staff Present: 9

1. **Call to Order:** Director Voboril called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
 - a. Director Voboril led the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - b. Director Voboril acknowledged all board members in attendance confirming quorum.
 - c. Agenda Approval: Director Tharpe made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Director Green seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

2. **Public Comment Agenda Items:** none at this time.

3. **Meeting Minutes**
 - a. August 22, 2023 Regular Minutes
 - b. September 12, 2023, Special Minutes
Director Green made a motion to accept both sets of minutes. Director Tharpe seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

4. **August 2023 Financials: GM Cox presented:**
 - Cash is 1.9 million. Those are sewer funds.
 - Losing 100K per month.
 - Recent study done for PERS UAL. GM Cox to get that study to the board.

5. **General Manager's Report: by Adam Cox**
 - Will present at the next meeting.

6. **Fire Chief Report: by Matthew Balzarini**
 - Will present at the next meeting.

7. **Utility Operations Manager Report: by Allan Homme**

- Cross-connect class was canceled due to lack of enrollment. May be rescheduled for February.
- CCTV is 70% done with evaluating the sewer system.
- Grant monies that are left will go to lift stations and headworks.
- Gate and fencing will be installed at the wetlands soon.
- May have to discharge to the lake if we have a wet winter. This may cause fines.
- Well 3 will be fixed in the fall.
- Staffing is good.

8. Local Union Representatives:

a. Local 5317/Chester Professional Firefighter’s Association (CFD Safety).

Department Rep., Rich Walsh explained the bargaining unit’s disapproval with management and the board decisions over the last 18 months after the members made concessions with the new schedule and the new role for the captain in order to save money. He believed his solution ideas hadn’t been heard.

Director Tharp replied that after employees left CPUD, or were injured, or went on leave, the decision was to hire to keep the ambulance running and keep Nor-Call from taking our Ambulance license.

IAFF Rep. VP Steve Gilman: Shared his concerns regarding management decisions to hire, how the tax assessment does not guarantee the doors staying open and agreed that miss information is happening on both sides.

GM Cox explained that they tried to hire per diem by doubling the pay, and still couldn’t get anyone. Hired out of necessity. The only idea he has heard is that they want to look at the PGE bill.

A public member and retired fire fighter had concerns about safety of the community and that these differences need to get hashed out.

IAFF member stood to say that we need to take a pause and meet and confer, discuss options. IAFF wants to help with Measure D.

GM Cox stated that they used the last town hall meeting to kick off the Measure D information to the public.

b. Local 39/ Stationary Engineers (CPUD Misc.) no comments.

9. **Closed Session:** GM Cox said that Closed Session is not needed.

10. **Reconvene:** N/A

11. **Report on Closed Session:** N/A

12. Authorized GM Cox to prepare for the reducing of Chester Fire Operations effective June 2024, pending the department’s financial Situation.

Director Green asked how long do we have? What is our fiscal responsibility? We need \$1500.00 per parcel to keep operating.

GM Cox stated he looked at LAFCo regarding taxing surrounding areas. Best to try after Measure D passes. He stated that with handling multiple law suits, paying to fix failing equipment, personnel issues, liability insurance going from 10K to 100K, there is no guarantee that the parcel tax will sustain the fire department. There is only about 8 months in operational cash.

Tried to work with Seneca. Researching Ambulance rates.

Chief Balzarini stated he had big plans to make this place reputable again, become a training department to attract and retain employees.

Director Tharpe made a motion to table this item until next board meeting. Director Raker seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

13. Public Comment Non-Agenda Items:

A Firewise committee member stated that without measure D our homeowner insurance will get worse. Write to congress. Bring in forms to keep Chester Firewise qualified.

14. Correspondence: none.

15. Comments:

a. **Directors:** none.

b. **Staff:** Chief Balzarini stated he was here on Dixie fire on a strike team. He came here to help and be a part of a great community. Seneca could have been a viable revenue option to help with operational costs. The aging equipment has recently cost 35K. More apparatus costs coming. The IMT program needed a cleanup and has also cost money to get those employees their safety gear in compliance. Asked for 6 months to get recruits to come in, now staffing under control.

16. Adjournment: 7:02pm, Director Tharpe made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Raker seconded the motion. All ayes, meeting adjourned.

Cheryl E Johnson, Clerk to the Board

Approval of Minutes *Se E Johnson*