

MINUTES OF STRATEGIC PLAN SPECIAL MEETING WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE PALMDALE WATER DISTRICT, JULY 28, 2020:

A Strategic Plan Special Meeting Workshop of the Board of Directors of the Palmdale Water District was held Tuesday, July 28, 2020, at 2029 East Avenue Q, Palmdale, California, in the Board Room of the District office. President, Vincent Dino, called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

1) Pledge of Allegiance.

At the request of President Dino, Director Alvarado led the pledge of allegiance.

2) Roll Call.

Attendance:

Vincent Dino, President
Kathy Mac Laren, Vice President
Gloria Dizmang, Treasurer
Don Wilson, Secretary
Robert Alvarado, Asst. Secretary

Others Present:

Dennis LaMoreaux, General Manager
Adam Ly, Assistant General Manager (via teleconf.)
Eric Dunn, General Counsel (via teleconf.)
Alondra Espinosa, Asst. General Counsel (via teleconf.)
Colin Tanner, Employment Law Counsel (via teleconf.)
Mike Williams, Finance Manager (via teleconf.)
Judy Shay, Public Affairs Director (via teleconf.)
Jennifer Emery, Human Resources Director
Chris Bligh, Facilities Manager (via teleconf.)
Scott Rogers, Engineering/Grant Manager (via teleconf.)
Jim Stanton, Information Tech. Mngr. (via teleconf.)
Peter Thompson II, Res. & Analytics Dir. (via teleconf.)
Mynor Masaya, Operations Manager (via teleconf.)
Tara Rosati, Customer Care Supervisor
Dr. Bill Mathis, The Mathis Consulting Group
Dawn Deans, Executive Assistant
0 members of the public

3) Adoption of Agenda.

It was moved by Director Alvarado, seconded by Director Mac Laren, and unanimously carried by all members of the Board of Directors present at the meeting to adopt the agenda, as written.

4) Action Items – Action Calendar: (The Public Shall Have an Opportunity to Comment on Any Action Item as Each Item is Considered by the Board of Directors Prior to Action Being Taken.)

4.1) Workshop, Consideration, and Possible Action on Palmdale Water District's 2020 Strategic Plan. (General Manager LaMoreaux/Dr. Bill Mathis, The Mathis Group)

Dr. Bill Mathis reviewed the effect of COVID-19 on agencies, the importance of goals and accountability for achieving goals, ensuring all staff are aware of the District's goals and how they relate to their job functions, developing projects and obtaining regional political clout and cooperation, and the use of Ad Hoc and Standing Board Committees and recommended that all recommended goals under each of the Strategic Initiatives be reviewed by the appropriate Committee for refinement, assignment, and presentation to the full Board.

Strategic Initiative No. 2 – Organizational Excellence:

Human Resources Director Emery provided a detailed overview of the purpose of staff training, types of training, online learning, conferences, personal and career development through wellness, and the training strategy through 2030 after which Director Dizmang recommended the District's goals be integrated into staff training to ensure staff has a complete understanding of how their role and job functions fit within the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Colin Tanner, Employment Law Counsel, provided an overview of the District's Employee Handbook and several recommended revisions, and after a brief discussion, President Dino appointed the Ad Hoc Committee of Directors Wilson and Dizmang to review the District's Employee Handbook with staff and Employment Law Counsel Tanner.

Recommended goals under Strategic Initiative No. 2 are as follows:

- Offer competitive compensation and benefits package to promote employee retention
- Focus Succession Planning Program on ensuring an overlap of training for key positions
- Continue providing transparency to our ratepayers
- Promote and support leadership training and professional development programs to enhance the District's customers' experience
- Ensure employees are trained on the Strategic Plan and District Values of Diversity, Integrity, Teamwork, and Passion
- Improve safety and training for Directors, employees, and customers

Strategic Initiative No. 1 – Water Resource Reliability:

General Manager LaMoreaux provided an overview of the continuation of the Palmdale Recycled Water Authority after which Director Mac Laren requested a goal to “Strengthen the Palmdale Recycled Water Authority and the partnership with the City of Palmdale,” and Director Alvarado requested a goal to “Increase purple pipe infrastructure and add more recycled water stations throughout the District’s boundaries for both public access and construction water.”

Resource and Analytics Director Thompson II recommended several goals to “Support projects and initiatives that increase the resilience of the State Water Project,” “Increase water storage projects and promote the importance of these projects,” and “Expand access to available water supplies including groundwater, water from Littlerock Dam and Reservoir, and recycled water.”

Engineering/Grant Manager Rogers recommended goals to “Update the 2010 Long-term Strategy to include the 2016 groundwater adjudication” and “Re-evaluate phasing of the Palmdale Regional Groundwater Recharge and Recovery Project for Title 16 funding.”

Operations Manager Masaya recommended a goal to “Study the installation of a 16” by-pass pipeline from the State Water Project to the Leslie O. Carter Water Treatment Plant” in the event of any issues with Palmdale Lake.

Recommended goals under Strategic Initiative No. 1 are as follows:

- Strengthen the Palmdale Recycled Water Authority and the partnership with the City of Palmdale for PRWA and other projects
- Add more recycled water access throughout the District’s boundaries for both public access and construction water
- Investigate and adopt new state-of-the-art water treatment technologies
- Support the Antelope Valley Watermaster operations
- Continue the next phase towards the completion of the Palmdale Regional Groundwater Recharge and Recovery Project including the re-evaluation of phasing for this Project for Title 16 funding
- Increase water storage projects and promote the importance of these projects
- Identify and pursue opportunities to increase the reliability of water supply
- Support projects and initiatives that increase the resilience of the State Water Project

- Expand access to available water supplies and the ability to capture groundwater, water from Littlerock Dam and Reservoir, and recycled water
- Update the 2010 Long-term Strategy to include the 2015 groundwater adjudication
- Study Palmdale Lake by-pass pipeline from the State Water Project to the Leslie O. Carter Water Treatment Plant.

Strategic Initiative No. 3 – Systems Efficiency:

Director Mac Laren requested a goal to “Research new technologies to increase efficiencies and to reuse water.”

Director Dizmang requested a goal to “Revisit the efficiency of the District’s electricity options.”

Assistant General Manager Ly recommended goals to “Incorporate more energy efficient buildings/standards into the District’s various sites,” and “Research advanced treatment techniques to help with systems efficiency and flexibility in terms of the use of recycled water and surface water.”

Facilities Manager Bligh stated that under “Research and test new technologies to increase efficiencies,” he and Information Technology Manager Stanton are increasing the use of GIS collector apps for the full maintenance program, the collection of data, and time-saving and efficient equipment.

Information Technology Manager Stanton recommended a goal to “Continue to build on the aspect of working remotely” followed by discussion of data protection.

Recommended goals under Strategic Initiative No. 3 are as follows:

- Explore energy independence and revisit the efficiency of the District’s electricity options, including wind and solar options
- Incorporate more energy efficient buildings/standards into the District’s various sites
- Continue being the industry’s leader on the use of Granular Activated Carbon (GAC)
- Research and test new technologies to increase efficiencies and reuse water
- Research advanced treatment techniques to help with systems efficiency and flexibility in terms of the use of recycled water and surface water
- Harden computer infrastructure and use it to increase efficiencies in the field, virtual desktops, and support of remote work

Strategic Initiative No. 4 – Financial Health and Stability:

President Dino requested a goal to “Continue pursuing grant funding to provide assistance to specific areas of the District.”

Director Mac Laren requested a goal to “Research revenue sources by leasing District properties for cell phone tower leases and for movie production.”

Finance Manager Williams recommended several revisions to existing goals and goals to “Monitor adjustments to operations and projects due to COVID-19” and “Digital conversions of Finance Department workflow.”

Recommended goals under Strategic Initiative No. 4 are as follows:

- Pursue additional grant funding for all District projects including assistance for District operations
- Maintain a five-year financial plan adopted as part of the 2019 Water Rate Plan and Study, which includes the five-year Capital Improvement Plan
- Maintain adequate reserve levels, high-level bond rating, and financial stability
- Pursue potential revenue sources from vacant District properties including cell phone tower leases and filming
- Monitor adjustments to operations and projects due to COVID-19
- Digital conversions of Finance Department workflow

Strategic Initiative No. 5 – Regional Leadership:

Dr. Mathis recommended District staff or an Ad Hoc Committee host a dinner with area agencies’ elected officials to discuss joint projects that can be presented to state and federal politicians and lobbyists to gain funding followed by discussion of potential topics for discussion and groups to include in these dinners.

Director Mac Laren recommended a goal to “Highlight the success of the District’s interns” and “Promote a contractor’s workshop and include local agencies that have intern and apprenticeship programs.”

Director Alvarado recommended a “Century of Service – Working for You” campaign be developed to disseminate information about the District’s programs and services provided to the community to elected officials and area agencies.

General Manager LaMoreaux stated that membership in CFEE is appropriate for this initiative.

Assistant General Manager Ly recommended goals for “Become more involved with agencies involved with recycled water” and “Develop career paths for interns within the Palmdale Water District organization and pursue state and federal funding for intern programs” followed by discussion of representation on the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Public Affairs Director Shay offered various recommendations for current goals and recommended a goal for “Expand the Greater Antelope Valley Water Emergency Coalition by continuing to collaborate with neighboring water agencies and moving to include more agencies outside of the Antelope Valley.”

Director Dizmang requested she be included on more Standing Committees.

Recommended goals under Strategic Initiative No. 5 are as follows:

- Increase involvement with Antelope Valley partnerships, including local water agencies, the Antelope Valley State Water Contractors Association, the Antelope Valley Integrated Regional Management Plan group, the Palmdale Recycled Water Authority, the Antelope Valley Watermaster, the A.V. Edge, and the Chambers of Commerce
- Continue to expand school water education programs
- Engage elected officials to promote the Palmdale Water District’s initiatives and water-related issues through the development of campaigns and programs
- Develop career paths for interns within the Palmdale Water District organization and pursue state and federal funding for intern programs
- Provide opportunities for local businesses to contract with the District
- Membership in CFEE
- Become more involved with organizations that promote the use of recycled water
- Expand the Greater Antelope Valley Water Emergency Coalition by continuing to collaborate with neighboring water agencies and moving to include more agencies outside of the Antelope Valley
- Develop working relationship and mutually beneficial projects with other water agencies in the District’s state and federal representatives’ districts
- Develop events or activities with lessees of District properties
- Removal of sediment from Littlerock Dam and Reservoir and host a 100th anniversary celebration in 2024 with the area fully open to the public

Strategic Initiative No. 6 – Customer Care, Advocacy and Outreach:

Director Mac Laren requested a goal for “Outreach, partnerships, and messages regarding mental health resources.”

Customer Care Supervisor Rosati gave an overview of Customer Care’s operations as a result of COVID-19, new meters, the creation of customer portals, and the benefit of job shadowing.

Public Affairs Director Shay offered various recommendations to the current goals and recommended goals to “Increase public awareness of local, state, federal, and national water issues,” “Involve more employees with community events and implement additional ways to promote staff on professional platforms,” “Expand the District’s social media platforms,” and “Continue with The Pipeline Newsletter for customers and find new avenues to share District information and news.”

Reaching out to assist District customers was then discussed.

Recommended goals under Strategic Initiative No. 6 are as follows:

- Increase Customer Care accessibility through communication and feedback to enhance customers’ experience
- Evaluate, develop, and market additional payment options
- Develop the District’s Public Outreach Plan
- Increase public awareness of the District’s current programs and services available
- Outreach, partnerships, and messages regarding mental health resources
- Increase public awareness of local, state, federal, and national water issues
- Involve more employees with community events and implement additional ways to promote staff on professional platforms
- Expand the District’s social media platforms
- Continue with The Pipeline Newsletter for customers and find new avenues to share District information and news
- Plan and implement the conversion to an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) to increase customers’ knowledge and control of water use

Additional Initiatives:

It was recommended that "Littlerock Dam and Reservoir" be added as a Strategic Initiative goal for removing sediment and hosting a 100th anniversary celebration at the Dam in 2024 with the area fully open to the public.

Dr. Mathis recommended the 2020 Strategic Plan brochure be completed in a timely manner, accomplishments be periodically reviewed by the Board, and topics for regional activities be developed.

General Manager LaMoreaux then stated that several Committee Meetings will be scheduled to finalize recommended initiatives.

Director Mac Laren recommended The Pipeline be sent to the high schools for access after which General Manager LaMoreaux stated that the Resources and Analytics Department is developing videos for teachers to use for their students.

Director Mac Laren then distributed information from the recent WateReuse Conference.

5) Adjournment.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m.


Secretary