

PROVOST&PRITCHARD CONSULTING GROUP

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MEETING NOTES

Date: 4/16/2024	Time: 6:00PM – 7:15 PM
Called by: Keeler CSD	Location: Keeler, CA
Subject: Q2 Keeler CSD Public Meeting	
Attendees: Tonia Holmes, Hamish Kellam, Karen Riggs, Online: Stephania Ramirez, Chris Ormonde, Sharon Cummings, Stephen Spencer, Amanda De Anda, Carole Puryear, Andrew Forbes, Dawn White	

- **Community Accountability and Engagement Plan (CAEP)**
 - The CAEP is proceeding as planned, with the continuation of quarterly meetings as required.
- **Emergency Response**
 - We are in the process of updating the emergency contact list.
 - Additional notification sign-up forms are available at the Keeler Fire Station.
- **Water System Performance**
 - McMor Water Services is the new operator under contract. P&P terminated the contract with the previous operator due to poor maintenance quality. McMor is located in Bakersfield, CA and already has operators that travel near Keeler, resulting in a lower cost for operations.
 - In late February, Keeler experienced a suspected leak issue. McMor responded and excavated the area and discovered that the leak was a natural spring. They will continue to monitor this area with caution and backfill the area as soon as weather conditions allow the area to dry.
 - Residents expressed concerns with a blocked roadway intruding on a water system right away for main lines. Hamish Kellam and Tonia Holmes inspected the site and found only one meter box was blocked by a cement block. The water system does not have any lines down the roadway in complaint, so the blockage issue would be Inyo County's jurisdiction.
 - Chlorination continued in December. Quarterly samples were conducted in February and found that Arsenic and Manganese were still detected to be over the maximum contaminant limit. The P&P team reiterated that these samples are available online.
 - **P&P signed a tank inspection contract and is in the process of scheduling a date for inspection.**
 - Hamish clarified with residents that the Keeler Fire Department is permitted to test/exercise hydrants or stand in for operational checks. However, the maintenance of valves and the overall water system is the responsibility of Keeler CSD. Keeler Fire Department is permitted increased access to the water system as necessary in times of emergency.
- **Project & Planning Updates**
 - RCAC continues to manage water bottle deliveries. P&P relayed to residents that deliveries will be scaled back to once-a-month distribution, with the full amount of water bottles delivered in one distribution cut back on costs. The budget was approved to expand the water bottle program until September 30, 2024. The P&P team is working on a contract to extend the program through late 2025.
 - Hamish provided an update on the addition of pump control wiring between the well site and tank. He relayed that P&P submitted the budget to the State Board for increased funding to conduct a radio study, and, if needed, wiring replacement.

- The second round of the State Waterboard's emergency generator program is not accepting any more applications. Keeler CSD was not deemed high priority for the project due to not being located in a high-risk fire zone. The emergency generator will still be included in long-term improvements for the water system.
- Tonia provided an update on the Technical Assistance (TA) program and reviewed two treatment alternatives that are being considered for Keeler, which include separate lines for untreated and treated water. The costs of these are included in the rate study and are being considered by the State Board. Monthly calls with GHD Engineers to discuss the TA program are continuing.
- **Water Rates & Billing**
 - P&P discussed delinquent accounts and attempts to mail notices to residents with delinquent accounts. Before the meeting, the P&P team dropped letters off for delinquent accounts that could not be mailed. P&P confirmed that delinquent accounts are now eligible for tax roll filing.
 - Initial rates for the true cost of the system have been estimated, and P&P is updating the O&M costs. P&P relayed to residents that rates would need to increase to approximately \$130 per month to pay for system and reserves as is, without treatment. Treatment installation would increase base rates beyond \$240 per month, based on the current number of customers. A standard 5% increase per year is necessary to maintain a sustainable rate. Hamish explained that the costs being evaluated in the rate study are the true costs for operation of the water system without treatment and are not the rates being proposed or implemented without following the Proposition 218 process.
 - One resident asked if a water kiosk was an option to save on costs. Andrew Forbes from DDW explained that it is not an option. The possibility of assistance for increased rates in low-income communities was discussed. Dawn White from Golden State Water Company mentioned she would investigate and provide information on available assistance after reviewing the median household income for Keeler.
 - The draft Rate Study has been completed by Provost & Pritchard and given to the Keeler CSD Board for review. The Board will provide comments by the next community meeting. Once finalized, the Rate Study will be made public.
- **Financial Health**
 - The cash balance is currently at \$63,298, with almost no change from January. Revenue trends show the community is slightly above the projected schedule, spending about 76% of the budgeted amount. An application has been submitted for an increased O&M budget to align with the budgeted schedule and to address minor system improvements. Current expenditure is at roughly 53% of the budgeted amount.
- **Community Engagement**
 - The next meeting is scheduled for July 2024.
- **Public Comment Period**
 - Elaine raised the issue of a road blockage behind her house intruding on a water system right of way for main water lines. After the meeting concluded, the P&P team verified the location and issue.
 - There was discussion among residents and P&P about the suspected leak issue and founding of the natural spring.