

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

October 15, 2014

A meeting of the Public Affairs Committee of Vista Irrigation District was held on Wednesday, October 15, 2014, at the offices of the District, 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Franklin called the meeting to order at 9:48 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee members present: Franklin and Vásquez.

Committee members absent: None.

Staff present: Eldon Boone, Assistant General Manager; Brett Hodgkiss, Administrative Services Manager; Brent Reyes, Water Conservation Specialist; and Lisa Soto, Board Secretary.

Other attendees: None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

No public comments were presented on items not appearing on the agenda.

5. WATER BILL FORMAT

See staff report attached hereto.

Administrative Services Manager Brett Hodgkiss stated that the line item on the District's water bill entitled "CWA* Emergency Water Storage Fee" was mentioned in a previous Board meeting and as a result, the Committee was tasked with reviewing the format of the water bill to assess whether the heading for this item could be clarified. Mr. Hodgkiss pointed out that the asterisk following "CWA*" does correspond to an explanation below which reads, "*CWA: San Diego County Water Authority". Chair Franklin suggested that the heading be spelled out to at least include the word "County" if space permits, and to delete the word "water" as a descriptor of the type of storage, stating that one could assume the storage would be for water. An example of Chair Franklin's suggestion would be "County (CWA) Emergency Storage Fee". Chair Franklin requested that staff work with the wording to see what will fit given the space limitations.

Director Vásquez suggested including an enclosure with the water bill annually informing customers about the various water conservation programs and incentives that are available. He commented that the attachment to the staff report entitled "Understanding Your Water Bill" would also be an excellent enclosure to also provide to customers annually. Assistant General Manager Eldon Boone interjected that staff also intends to provide the "Understanding Your Water Bill" document on the District's website.

The Committee reviewed the information included on the reverse side of the water bill. Director Franklin suggested that this information be simplified. He suggested that the paragraph entitled "Mission" be eliminated from the back of the bill. He suggested that unnecessary words also be stricken from the text so that the font size can be made larger to increase readability.

6. DROUGHT AND WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM OUTREACH EFFORTS

See staff report attached hereto.

The Committee discussed whether the District collects email addresses from its customers. Director Franklin commented that this information would be very useful for the District to have. He suggested that staff begin planning how to incorporate the collection of customer email addresses as a standard practice in the future.

The Committee discussed the District's website, and the possibility of making upgrades to the site. Mr. Hodgkiss said that staff did receive bids on this project through a Request for Proposals process, and the Board requested that staff review the bids with the Committee. Chair Franklin requested that this item be placed on the Public Affairs Committee meeting agenda for November 6, along with an item to review grant applications for the San Diego Chapter California Special District's Association Educational Grant Program.

Director Vásquez stated that it was brought to his attention that the Vallecitos Municipal Water District (VMWD) was considering hiring a consultant to assist with conservation outreach. Mr. Boone said that staff would seek to find out more about this. Relative to the subject of conservation outreach, Mr. Hodgkiss commented that the District's customers have been very responsive to calls to conserve and that water consumption is actually down in the District. Mr. Hodgkiss stated that consumption in August 2014 compared to August 2013 was down by 9%, and consumption in September 2014 compared to September 2013 was also down by 9%. Mr. Hodgkiss said that Director Franklin's previous suggestion of targeting business owners to provide education about rebates which could be available for high efficiency devices might be the best area to focus the District's outreach efforts.

7. COMMENTS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

None were presented.


8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, at 10:30 a.m. Chair Franklin adjourned the meeting.



John B. Franklin, Chair

ATTEST:



Lisa R. Soto, Secretary
Board of Directors
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Item: 5

Board Meeting Date: October 15, 2014
Prepared By: Brett Hodgkiss
Reviewed By: Eldon Boone
Approved By: Roy Coox

SUBJECT: WATER BILL FORMAT

RECOMMENDATION: Review the current water bill format.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION: At its September 24, 2014 meeting, the Board requested that the Public Affairs Committee review the current water bill format and present any recommended changes to the Board.

FISCAL IMPACT: The fiscal impact will vary based on the types of changes (e.g., graphics, text, etc.) being proposed.

SUMMARY: Over the years, the District has made various changes to the water bill format to make it easier to read and provide customers with a better understanding of the rates and charges. Most recently, the District divided the water rate between the District and the San Diego County Water Authority to illustrate how much of the rate is attributable to each agency. The reverse side of the water bill provides other important water bill related information, such as an explanation of rates, a list of payment options and instructions on how to read your meter.

DETAILED REPORT: During public comment, a customer mentioned the emergency water storage fee as well as the service charge. The Board briefly discussed the emergency water storage fee and requested that staff investigate a way to identify this fee as a charge from the San Diego County Water Authority (CWA). As seen on the sample water bill attached, "CWA" appears with the emergency water storage fee description. An explanation of this fee as well as the other rates and charges is provided on the reverse side of the bill as well as on the website Customer Assistance page.

Director Franklin suggested adding a graphical representation of a water bill with explanations of key information that could be posted on the District's website. Staff has put together a draft "Understanding Your Water Bill" document that could be posted to the District's website.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Water Bill
2. Customer Assistance Website Page
3. Understanding Your Water Bill

Account:

Meter Size:

Service Address:

3/4

VISTA CA



| | | | |
|-----------------|----------|------|-----------------|
| Current Reading | 08/25/14 | 2915 | Usage: 37 Units |
| Prior Reading | 06/23/14 | 2878 | |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| PREVIOUS BALANCE | 149.05 |
| PAYMENTS RECEIVED | 149.05 CR |
| REMAINING BALANCE | 0.00 |
| CURRENT CHARGES | |
| CWA* EMERGENCY WATER STORAGE FEE | 5.36 |
| SERVICE CHARGE | 67.34 |
| WATER USAGE | |
| Tier 1 | 72.20 |
| Tier 2 | 70.55 |
| ----- | |
| TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES | 215.45 |

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| BALANCE DUE WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR BANK ACCOUNT ON 10/07/14 *CWA: San Diego County Water Authority | BALANCE DUE 215.45 |
|--|---------------------------|

| | <u>Days</u> | <u>Units</u> | <u>Change</u> |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| This Year | 63 | 37 | 50.35 % |
| Last Year | 64 | 25 | |

Billing Inquiries Call: 760-597-3120
 Water Conservation Inquiries Call: 760-597-3160
 VID Website: www.vid-h2o.org

*** LANDSCAPE WATERING DAYS ***

Homes with EVEN addresses - Monday, Wednesday & Saturday
 Homes with ODD addresses - Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday
 Apartments/Condos, Businesses & Public Agencies- Monday, Wednesday, Friday
 For more info regarding mandatory conservation measures - www.vid-h2o.org

VID is offering a free Homeowner Workshop on Saturday, Oct 18, 2014 from 10AM - 1PM. Call (760) 597-3107 or email breyes@vid-h2o.org to register.

** Please pay by due date to avoid a late payment penalty **

See reverse side for important information

Please return this portion with payment.



1391 Engineer St.
Vista, CA 92081-8840

Check here for address change (see back)

BALANCE DUE WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR BANK ACCOUNT ON 10/07/14

Service Address:

| Account Number | Date Mailed | Due Date | Balance Due |
|----------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| | 09/11/14 | AUTO PAY | 215.45 |

VID0910A AUTO SCH 3-DIGIT 920
7000002306 00.0009.0064 2249/1



Make Payment To:
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT
1391 ENGINEER STREET
VISTA, CA 92081-8840

MISSION The mission of Vista Irrigation District (VID) is to manage our available resources to meet the present and future water needs of our service area by providing a reliable supply of high quality water in an environmentally and economically responsible manner in an atmosphere of courtesy, integrity and quality of service.

HOURS Normal business hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. An answering service is available after hours for emergencies. Messages may be left at any time using the voice mail system.

PAYMENT Payments are due, at the VID office, on the due date printed on the bill. Payments in US dollars can be made using one of the payment options listed below. If you have a complaint regarding the total amount due, please contact VID within 5 days of receipt of this bill. Bills not paid by due date are subject to a penalty.

- PAYMENT OPTIONS**
- 1) Sign up for Direct Payment. The District will debit your checking account for the amount of your water bill each billing cycle. The amount of your bill will be deducted from your account on the due date shown on your statements. Call (760) 597-3120 for an application and more information.
 - 2) Enroll in Electronic Billing and Payments to receive your bill and make one-time payments from a bank account electronically. Customers using this service will no longer receive a paper bill and instead receive an email advising them that their bills are available to be viewed and paid online. If you sign-up for this service, you are not required to pay online and may use one of the other payment options listed in this section. Visit www.vid-h2o.org and click on the Electronic Billing and Payments link to sign-up for this service.
 - 3) Mail a check or money order and return stub in the envelope provided to the District office. Allow (5) business days for delivery.
 - 4) Bring your payment and return stub to the District office during normal business hours. You may pay by check, money order or cash and get a receipt. You may also enclose your check or money order and return stub in the envelope provided and deposit it into the payment drop box at the District office.
 - 5) Pay by Phone or Online . Credit card and electronic payments may be made by calling (800) 272-9829. MasterCard, Visa, Discover Card and American Express are accepted. You can also pay with a credit card or electronic check on-line by going to our website, www.vid-h2o.org. A fee is charged by the company providing this service. Please have your VID account number and VID's jurisdiction code, 1564, available when using either one of these payment options.

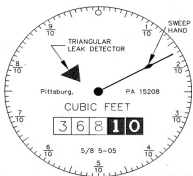
Note: Be sure to write your account number on checks and money orders. Returned checks are subject to penalties.

PHONE NUMBERS
VID Main Line (760) 597-3100, Fax (760) 597-2632
VID Customer Service/Billing (760) 597-3120
To report after hours emergencies, call (760) 597-3100 and press "8" when the message begins.
San Diego County Water Authority: 858-522-6600

RATES Service charges vary with the size of the meter and pay a portion of the fixed costs of operating the system. Large meters pay more because they place greater demand on the system and require larger reservoirs, pumps and pipelines. The Emergency Water Storage fee comes directly from the San Diego County Water Authority to cover their infrastructure costs. The Water usage charge is based on the number of units used. One unit of water is equal to 100 cubic feet (748 gallons).

MOVING/ VACATIONS Customers planning to relocate from their current residences, should contact VID to close accounts at least 48 hours prior to moving. Customers are responsible for their accounts until VID is officially notified. Customers planning extended vacations may pay their water bills before departure to avoid late charges and possible shut-off of services.

HIGH USAGE Leaks in toilets, water heaters, faucets, icemakers, and lawn sprinklers usually cause high water usage. To test for a possible leak in your plumbing system, make sure all faucets and water using appliances, inside and out, are turned off. Check the position of the hands on the water meter dial and record the reading. Note the location of the sweep hand and, if your meter has a triangular leak detector, watch to see whether the triangle is moving. Without using any water, wait for approximately 30 minutes, then recheck the meter. If the hand or triangle has moved, or if the reading has changed, water is leaking (or running) somewhere on your property.



HOW TO READ YOUR WATER METER:

Your water meter is underground in a rectangular box with a plastic, metal or concrete lid, usually found in or near the sidewalk. To get to the meter, you can remove the cover with a large screwdriver. VID water meters measure water used in cubic feet. One cubic foot of water is equal to 7.48 gallons. Our bills are based on how many hundred cubic feet units (748 gallons) each customer used. Most of the water meters read like an odometer. Simply read the number across the counter (see illustration).

ADDRESS CHANGE:

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

(AREA CODE) PHONE

Option 2

Enroll in [Electronic Billing and Payments](#) to receive your bill and make one-time payments from a bank account electronically. Customers using electronic billing will no longer receive a paper bill and instead receive an email advising them that their bills are available to be viewed and paid online. If you sign-up for this service, you are not required to pay online and may use one of the other payment options listed in this section.

Option 3

Mail the payment and return stub, in the envelope provided to the district office. Allow five (5) business days for delivery.

Option 4

Bring your payment and return stub to the district office during normal business hours to get a receipt. You may also enclose your payment and return stub in the envelope provided and deposit it into the payment drop box at the district office during non-business hours.

Option 5

Credit card and electronic check payments may be made by calling (800) 272-9829. MasterCard, Visa, Discover Card and American Express are accepted. You can also pay with a credit card or electronic check on-line. A fee is charged by the company providing this service. Please have your account number and VID's jurisdiction code, 1564, available when using either one of these payment options. [Click here](#) to make a credit card payment on-line. [Click here](#) to make an electronic check payment on-line.

Phone Numbers

General Information: (760) 597-3100

Customer Service: (760) 597-3120

To report after hours emergencies, call (760) 597-3100 and press "8" when the message begins.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Rates

Service charges may vary with the size of the meter and pay a portion of the fixed costs of operating the system. Large meters pay more because they place a greater demand on the system and require larger reservoirs, pumps and pipelines. The Emergency Water Storage fee comes directly from the San Diego County Water Authority to cover their infrastructure costs. The water usage charge is based on 100 cubic feet (748 gallons). [Click here](#) to view the district's Rate and Fee Schedules.

Moving/Vacations

Customers planning to relocate from their current residences should contact the district to close accounts at least 48 hours prior to moving. Customers are responsible for their accounts until the district is officially notified. Customers planning extended vacations may pay their water bills before departure to avoid late charges and possible shut-off of services.

High Usage

Leaks in toilets, water heaters, faucets, icemakers, and lawn sprinklers usually cause high water usage. To test for a possible leak in your plumbing system, make sure all faucets and water using appliances, inside and out, are turned off. Check the position of the hands on the water meter dial and record the reading. Note the location of the sweep hand and, if your meter has a triangular leak detector, watch to see if the triangle is moving. Without using any water, wait for approximately 30

UNDERSTANDING YOUR WATER BILL

These are the readings taken from your meter on specific dates. The difference between the two readings is your water usage expressed in units. One unit is equal to 748 gallons.

The Emergency Water Storage Fee comes directly from the San Diego County Water Authority (CWA) to cover their infrastructure costs.

Service Charges vary with the size of the meter and pay a portion of the fixed cost of operating the system. Large meters pay more because they place greater demand on the system and require larger reservoirs, pumps and pipelines.

The Water Usage Charge (Total Rate) is a combination of the CWA rate and the VID rate.

- 1 CWA's rate pays for water purchased from the San Diego County Water Authority.
- 2 VID's rate covers operating and maintenance costs.

A comparison of current and last year's water use for the same billing period.

Message area for announcements.

Detachable invoice portion of your bill to include with payment.

Account: _____ Meter Size: 3/4 Service Address: VISTA CA

Current Reading 08/25/14 2915 Usage: 37 Units
 Prior Reading 06/23/14 2878

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| PREVIOUS BALANCE | 149.05 |
| PAYMENTS RECEIVED | 149.05 CR |
| REMAINING BALANCE | 0.00 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|--------|
| CURRENT CHARGES | | | | |
| CWA* EMERGENCY WATER STORAGE FEE | 5.36 | | | |
| SERVICE CHARGE | 67.34 | | | |
| WATER USAGE | CWA* Rate | VID Rate | Total Rate | Units |
| Tier 1 | 3.38 | 0.23 | 3.61 | 20 |
| Tier 2 | 3.38 | 0.77 | 4.15 | 17 |
| TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES | | | 215.45 | 215.45 |

| | | | |
|---|-------|--------|---------------------------|
| BALANCE DUE WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR BANK ACCOUNT ON 10/07/14 | | | BALANCE DUE 215.45 |
| Days | Units | Change | |
| This Year | 63 | 37 | 50.35 % |
| Last Year | 64 | 25 | |

*** LANDSCAPE WATERING DAYS ***

Homes with EVEN addresses - Monday, Wednesday & Saturday
 Homes with ODD addresses - Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday
 Apartments/Condos, Businesses & Public Agencies- Monday, Wednesday, Friday
 For more info regarding mandatory conservation measures - www.vid-h2o.org

VID is offering a free Homeowner Workshop on Saturday, Oct 18, 2014 from 10AM - 1PM. Call (760) 597-3107 or email breyes@vid-h2o.org to register.

** Please pay by due date to avoid a late payment penalty **

See reverse side for important information
 Please return this portion with payment.

VID VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT
 1391 Engineer St.
 Vista, CA 92081-8840

Check here for address change (see back)

BALANCE DUE WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM YOUR BANK ACCOUNT ON 10/07/14

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Service Address: | Account Number | Date Mailed | Due Date | Balance Due |
| | | 09/11/14 | AUTO PAY | 215.45 |

VID0910A AUTO SCH 3-DIGIT 920
 7000002306 00.0009.0064 2249/1

Make Payment To:
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT
 1391 ENGINEER STREET
 VISTA, CA 92081-8840

On the reverse side of your bill, you will find important information, such as District business hours, payment options and instructions on how to read your meters.

[Click here](#) to view VID's Rate and Fee Schedule which includes water allotments by tier.



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Item: 6

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Board Meeting Date: | October 15, 2014 |
| Prepared By: | Brett Hodgkiss |
| Reviewed By: | Eldon Boone |
| Approved By: | Roy Coox |

SUBJECT: DROUGHT AND WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM OUTREACH EFFORTS

RECOMMENDATION: Discuss various public outreach efforts/opportunities for the District.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION: At its September 24, 2014 meeting, the Board requested that the Public Affairs Committee review the District's public outreach efforts related to the drought and water conservation programs.

FISCAL IMPACT: The fiscal impact of additional outreach efforts will vary based on the type(s) of activities undertaken. \$41,700 is contained in the fiscal year 2015 budget for public outreach activities (e.g., printing/mailing of newsletters and Consumer Confidence Report, Splash Lab sponsorships, Drink Tap Water Campaign activities, etc.). The Administrative Services Manager and Water Conservation Specialist coordinate the District's water conservation and public outreach efforts.

SUMMARY: The District has used a number of outreach methods to raise awareness about the drought and the implementation of mandatory water conservation measures as well as the availability of water conservation programs, including press releases, direct mail notices, broadcast voice messages, on-hold telephone messages and announcements on the District's website. Staff has also presented information on the drought and water conservation programs to community groups and provided information to interested parties at community events, such as the Vista Chamber of Commerce's Strawberry Festival and City of Vista's Summer Fest event. The District's water wholesalers, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) and the San Diego County Water Authority (Water Authority), have increased their outreach activities (e.g., radio spots, weekly newspaper articles, etc.) to raise awareness of the severity of the drought and the availability of rebates to assist customers in reducing their water use.

After deploying various outreach methods regarding the implementation of mandatory water conservation measures, the District's water use in September was nine percent less than it was for the same month in 2013. In 2014, participation in turf removal programs has increased significantly. During the first nine months of 2014, customers have received rebates for removing over 44,700 square feet of natural grass compared to 2,480 square feet of lawn over the same period in 2013. This significant increase in water conservation and participation in conservation programs is representative of the effectiveness of the outreach efforts of Metropolitan, the Water Authority and the District.

DETAILED REPORT: During the September 24 Board meeting, Director Franklin suggested that the District consider going door-to-door in an effort to increase customer awareness of the drought and water conservation programs available to them. He also mentioned that the staff going door-to-door may be able to assist customers with adjusting their irrigation controllers and sprinklers. Director Franklin suggested performing this outreach activity on Saturdays (as part of a pilot) and conducting follow-up surveys with participants to find out if they felt the visit was helpful and/or informative.

It has been staff's experience that speaking with customers one-on-one is one of the most effective ways to convey a message or resolve a concern. At their request, staff will meet customers at their homes to discuss a variety of issues, including water bills, water quality and water conservation. Staff also meets with customers at the District office to discuss various issues.

Typically, staff will not go to a residence or business unsolicited unless there is a situation that requires it, such as investigating a water waste complaint, changing a meter or notifying customers of a scheduled/emergency shutdown. Due to a rise in scams involving individuals posing as “water” district employees trying to gain entrance to homes, the District has informed customers that its employees will not come to a residence unless requested to do so or under certain circumstances (previously described). Furthermore, when an employee (or employees) does come to a customer’s door, he/she will be wearing a blue District uniform, drive a District vehicle and carry photo identification with the District’s logo on it.

The District’s responsibility for its water system ceases at the water meter connection to the private water line. The customer is responsible for maintaining pipes and fixtures beyond that connection. It is the District’s practice to not work on a customer’s private water system to avoid liability associated with damages (e.g., leaks, high water use, etc.) that may occur associated with the work performed.

All of the above described factors should be considered before undertaking a door-to-door education campaign. Additionally, it is estimated that one employee could speak with 3 customers per hour (on average). Based on this estimate, it would take 40 employees working 8 hours every Saturday (including holidays) to reach approximately 25,000 customers in one year.

The District received a large response after it deployed mandatory watering restrictions using a computerized autodialer to deliver a pre-recorded message on the new restrictions. With the success of this outreach effort, the District may want to consider supplementing its outreach activities by using this method to thank customers for their conservation efforts and make them aware of the conservation programs available to them.