

BIG LAGOON COMMUNITY SERVICES

UNAPPROVED MINUTES of the Public Hearing

Saturday July 15, 2023 at 9:30 AM - Big Lagoon Elementary School Gymnasium

1. Chair's Call to Order (Greg)

The Public Hearing of the Big Lagoon Community Services District convened at 9:31 AM.
Board in attendance: Greg Sidoroff, Chair; Louise Minor, Treasurer; Chuck King, Director;
Catherine Munsee, Director
Staff in attendance: Mara Friedman, Secretary; Joey Blaine, Technology Services;
Dick Maier, Accounting
Public in Attendance: J. Donahoe, G. Satein

2. Proposed Rate Increases as documented in the Public Hearing Notice – Greg

This public hearing in regards to a potential BLCSD water rate increase is conducted in accordance with California Code 218. Each customer received the required 45 day notice. A vote will be taken at the Board meeting immediately following the hearing to ratify the rates, unless a 50% +1 written protest is received. Greg noted that the public has until the end of the meeting to submit a protest letter.

3. Review of Public written comments

The board received one written protest letter in regards to the rate increase. It has been printed and is available for public review.

4. Public comment in regards to proposed rates

D. Maier commented that he reviewed the rate survey spreadsheets and feels that we are well past the time for a rate increase. G. Satein supports the rate increase and thinks that 15% (apprx 30 cents/day) is a good first step. J. Blaine commended the board for all the hard work they put towards this issue and added that the 218 process is a challenge to follow.

5. Board discussion

Louise stated that she approves of the rate increase.

Greg noted that he received an unsolicited letter from a Midwest company looking to purchase water districts. He added that the company had terrible Google reviews and was rated at only 1 ½ stars. Some reviews stated that the service was awful, water rates tripled and water quality went down after the company took over their water district. He concluded that we are fortunate to have our volunteer led district.

Dick added that if we had hire personnel to run our district, our rates would likely triple.

Chuck commented that because our aging infrastructure is starting to have problems, in the future our district will struggle. He had previously thought that a private company running our district would be a good solution, but now he is not certain that this is the best path forward. He added that this rate increase will not offset potential future costs due to unforeseen repairs to pipes and infrastructure. Chuck concluded that we need to move forward with grant-writing and suggested that we hire professionals as it is a very competitive process. Greg said this rate increase is a stop-gap effort to counteract the rising cost of our district's bills/expenses. As a potential next phase, the board might consider 'tiered pricing' as a solution for excess water usage. Having to pay more for higher usage might encourage customers to use less water. Chuck agreed with this and added that lots of utilities use a tiered system to encourage conservation.

6. Tabulation of written protests

Mara noted that there was a total of one written protest received.

7. Adjourn

With no other business, the Chair adjourned the hearing at 9:50 AM.

Submitted by Mara Friedman, Board Secretary