

Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District
828 7th Street, Eureka



Minutes for Special Meeting of the Board of Directors
October 4, 2021

1. ROLLCALL

Vice-President Latt called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. Director Rupp conducted the roll call. Directors Fuller, Latt, Lindberg and Rupp were present. President Woo was not in attendance since she recused herself due to a remote potential conflict. She is employed by SHN Consulting Engineers which performs work at the McNamara and Peepe site. General Manager John Friedenbach, Superintendent Dale Davidsen, Business Manager Chris Harris, Tech Manager Dee Dee Simpson-Glenn and interim Board Secretary Sherrie Sobol were present. DTSC staff in attendance included Nicole Yuen, Jerry Aarons and Jayantha Radeni. Others in attendance included Erin Dunn from the office of Assemblymember Jim Wood, Emily Sinkhorn from the City of Arcata, Brian Gerving from the City of Eureka, Jana Ganion from the Blue Lake Rancheria, Matt Hagemann of SWAPE, Jennifer Kalt of Humboldt Baykeeper and other members of the public.

2. FLAG SALUTE

Vice-President Latt led the flag salute.

3. ACCEPT AGENDA

On motion by Director Rupp, seconded by Director Lindberg, the Board voted 4-0 by roll call vote to accept the agenda.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

5. CONTINUING BUSINESS

McNamara and Peepe discussion with Department of Toxic Substances Control

Mr. Friedenbach provided a summary of the September 3, 2021 District letter to DTSC and the response letter from DTSC dated September 24, 2021. Mr. Friedenbach stated some of the responses from DTSC need clarification, such as timelines. The Board inquired what are the new timelines for the delayed bench study, when will a public outreach meeting be held? DTSC said they are prioritizing the site for clean-up, however no details were provided as to how.

DTSC staff stated they are short-staffed and are still working on contracts with SHN for the Bench Scale study. They cannot commit to a timeline as it depends on when the contracts are signed.

As far as a realistic timeline for remediation, it hard to say since the results of the Bench Study are needed. Also, the public meeting can occur once the Bench Study is completed as well. The District requested specific locations be tested for dioxins, however, DTSC staff stated dioxins occur naturally after fires and it makes more sense to use the scientific data method and start at the source.

Matt Hagemann of SWAPE stated he has been observing the site for four years. It is clear the cap has failed and this has been acknowledged by DTSC. We know that the groundwater has PCP that exceeds public health goals. What we don't know is the extent of migration and contamination. We know from using the scientific method that both the groundwater and surface water are contaminated. In fact, there is a well down gradient that is probably contaminated. DTSC staff stated these are all good points and they do not disagree with the comments.

The Board stated the scientific method sounds reasonable, however, it has taken many years for the remediation to begin. It feels as if there is no sense of urgency on the part of DTSC. They requested DTSC prioritize and expedite the remediation. They also requested more transparency. It would have been nice to be informed of timeline changes. DTSC staff assured the Board no one is sitting on their hands, it is just a slow process to begin with and has been hampered by a labor shortage.

Jennifer Kalt of Baykeeper stated she was astounded at the slow response from DTSC. The cap failed in 2018. The drinking water for approximately 90,000 people should be a much higher priority. She hopes that DTSC will move quicker than they have the past three years.

Brian Gerving and Emily Sinkhorn asked DTSC to please listen and take to heart the concerns of the District, City of Eureka, City of Arcata and others. They submitted letters to DTSC in March 2021 requesting clean up. Everyone is having staffing capacity issues, it's a matter of prioritizing. Please provide an updated timeline as soon as possible.

Jana Ganion stated she is the Director of Sustainability and Government Affairs for the Blue Lake Rancheria. The Tribe supports the DTSC using the PHG (public health goal) for clean up of the site. It is problematic that there has been no response to letters the Tribe has submitted regarding this site. This site is a proven toxic hotspot. Just because PCP/dioxins can be found elsewhere, does not diminish its presence here. She requested a written timeline with best estimates and funding for each of the projects within thirty days. Clean up is needed while it is still possible to contain this. The Tribe will support DTSC in expediting this.

Erin Dunn stated she will be sharing the frustration and concerns expressed with Assemblymember Wood who also hopes for an expedited process.

Additional written public comments were read, expressing similar sentiments as the speakers.

The Board circled back and asked DTSC staff if Ms. Ganion's request for estimated timelines and funding would be provided in writing. DTSC staff indicated they could do so. The Board also reiterated that it is evident that dioxins are coming out of this site. DTSC is responsible for the site and the District should not have to pay for any sampling to be done.


ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:39 pm

Attest:



Neal Latt, Vice-President



J. Bruce Rupp, Secretary/Treasurer