

GREEN DeWITT DRAINAGE DISTRICT

Doug Sethness, President
Joseph Olive, Vice President
John Varela, Secretary
E-mail: info@dcdd1.com



107 N. Gonzales Street
P.O. Box 542
Cuero, TX 77954
Phone: (361) 275-9995

Green DeWitt Drainage District met in **Regular** Session on the 14th day of February 2023, at 11:00 A.M. in the Conference Room of the District's office at 107 N. Gonzales Street, in Cuero, Texas with the following members present:

Doug Sethness, Director
John Varela, Director

Staff: Jennifer Urban, General Manager
Pat Trevino, Office Manager
Ignacio Granado, Crew Foreman

CALL TO ORDER & ANNOUNCE QUORUM:

Mr. Sethness called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public attendance – Larry Coppedge

MINUTES:

A motion was made by John Varela to accept the minutes from January 18, 2023, and Doug Sethness seconded the motion.

FACILITIES – MAINTENANCE, IMPROVEMENTS & PROJECTS:

The field report was made by Ignacio Granado providing an update on the daily operations of maintaining the channels. He went on to add the progress, which included cutting and clearing out tree limbs on Alonzo Street and taking care of some tree stumps. Approximately fifteen loads of tree limbs were hauled off and disposed of accordingly. Trash still needs to be hauled off to complete the cleanup of the channel.

Doug Sethness asked if any of the areas we were cleaning up was the responsibility of private citizens and Mr. Granado reported that it was not. Furthermore, the city channel that runs parallel with the west lateral is overgrown and has lots of trash. We have been maintaining the upper part of the slopes on the city side of the channels. Mr. Sethness asked if our maintenance crew could drive through the low spot that was in the channel at Alonzo St. and Mr. Granado reported that they could not. It was suggested by Mr. Sethness that we might want to consider putting in a culvert in an effort to make it easier to drive in that area.

Mr. Granado also emphasized an increase in graffiti on our channel bridges and walls. He said the district was currently using a product that provided considerably good results. The importance of removing graffiti as soon as the district is made aware of it was stressed.

Afterward, photos of before and after pictures were shown with graffiti-covered walls, and then the photos of the results using the new product.

General Manager informed the board that she had been out on the field discussing the district's need for stump removal with a company called Lopez Tree Service. They will be submitting a quote to the district for this service.

Mr. Granado informed the board that he was preparing for Spring and the additional workload by getting all equipment serviced. Mr. Sethness asked if they would be hiring more help to maintain the channels during the summer months. Currently, it takes about six weeks to mow and maintain approximately twenty-one miles of weeds and overgrown grass and by the time they get to the end of the channel, the weeds are high and overgrown at the starting point.

General Manager notified the board that she posted a position seeking a part-time temporary worker with Indeed (an employment website). And that the district budget is for only one temporary part-time help which is currently being held by staff member Emil Garza. Mrs. Urban said she could amend the budget to include additional help since their current employee can only work approximately fifteen hours.

GM REPORT:

A grant extension request was sent to the Texas Water Development Board moving the project completion date to January 26, 2024. We will try to get to that in the next budget year, our budget runs from October 1, 2023, thru Sept 31, 2024. We also responded to a TDEM audit that was left from 2018 and we should not receive any more audits from them. General Manager attended the LEPC to discuss the creation of a local Emergency Operations Plan. Afterward, she attended FEMA MGT 383 Emergency Operation Plans for Rural Jurisdictions training in Victoria. LEPC will now have quarterly meetings instead of yearly meetings.

We are also looking into another office space at the Cuero Plaza which is the building where Brookshires is located. Our office continues to have water leaks whenever we get heavy rain. It pours in from above the front window between the boards up front. Our concern is that we will get mold again. This is a health concern because of the possible mold that might be growing, and we don't know what the upstairs looks like so it's only a matter of time. The rental space at Cuero Plaza has been available for a while so we aren't in too much of a hurry. General Manager did note that it was convenient for the district to be here at its current location.

For recordkeeping purposes, General Manager noted that graffiti throughout the system was largely removed. TWCA audit and renewal responses were sent. We also need to approve liability for auto and unemployment insurance with TWCA – Texas Water Conservation Association. All landowner responses were received for Civil Corp's right of entry to begin surveying for the GLO grant work. They have started surveying with their drone and they have had people on location. On February 7, we had an environmental meeting with GLO determining that it would require Civil Corp to do about 30 percent of the engineering work before they can decide if we will need an environmental study to begin construction. GLO determined via the National Wetlands inventory map system that the channels reside in declared Wetlands.

Furthermore, once Civil Corp completes the surveying, we will have to return to the Environmental stage to see where we stand. Judging how far we have to disturb depends on how much environmental work we will have to do.

General Manager gave an update on the grant she submitted to Conoco Phillips but received word that it was denied. They offered no other reason only that they had other projects that they were funding

In conclusion, a letter was sent to Senator Kolkhorst from General Manager and Doug Sethness to discuss floodplain strategy and issues. The purpose of the letter written to Senator Kolkhorst has four objectives. The first is that we are hoping to expand the authorized area of the district to include all the places where we work and not just the City limits. Our second objective is to identify drainage districts as a qualified entity to be able to receive grants for the purpose of benefiting those experiencing flooding. The third objective is to investigate to verify the potential and identify the need for an engineering study to determine the probability of significant benefit to the City of Cuero from a levee protecting the city from catastrophic damage. The fourth objective is a request that TWDB – Texas Water Development Board initiate a method to identify the financial cost of damage to homes and businesses caused by flooding. The current data being utilized are from FEMA which uses the number of flood insurance claims filed which is not an accurate indicator since many homeowners do not carry flood insurance.

ENGINEERING:

Civil Core is obtaining all of their surveying but not anything else related to the GLO grant.

APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT DIRECTOR FOR 2023-2025 TERM

The Drainage District needs to appoint a new director because Joe Olive has notified us that he will be resigning.

TWCA 2023-2024 RENEWAL:

General Manager provided the renewal documents for the Texas Water Conservation Association Risk Management Fund. It is our general liability and auto, and unemployment insurance. The TWCA documents have two parts: Part I – Workers' Compensation; and Part II – Liability/Property renewal documents. This is the same insurance the district has had without any changes.

MOTION:

John Varela made a motion to renew the coverage with TWCA 2023-2024. Doug Sethness seconded the motion. The motion carried and the district will renew coverage under Texas Water Conservation Association Risk Management Fund.

GLO GRANT UPDATES:

This was covered under item 4- FACILITIES-MAINTENANCE, IMPROVEMENTS & PROJECTS

PERSONNEL MATTERS:

NONE

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The District has the usual financials available for review as well as certified Credit Card Statements for maintenance and operations. There is also the mileage expense report for Doug that needs to be approved. A request for reimbursement from Union Pacific Railroad for the \$6,259.48 charge paid to Concrete Contractors for the repair of damages to the Railroad Bridge was suggested.

MOTION:

John Varela made a motion to approve the financial matters, and Doug Sethness seconded the motion.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:

The next board meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2023, at 11:00 am in the conference room at 107 N Gonzales St. Cuero, Tx.

MOTION:

John Varela made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Sethness seconded the motion and the motion passed.

ADJOURN:

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:43 am.

Sincerely,

Director

Jennifer Urban, General Manager