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P.O. Box 232, Bonita, CA 91908 www.sweetwatervalleyca.org

SWEETWATER VALLEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING August 2, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: President Judy Tieber called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. at the Library Community room. She welcomed everyone to the meeting. We began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Judy asked for a moment of silence to honor the people of our Armed Forces, Law Enforcement, Fire and Safety Professionals; and an appreciation of those currently serving to protect us, including Health Care workers and Teaching Professionals.

Directors Present: Judy Tieber, Sharmane Estolano, Tony Tieber, Stephen Stonehouse, Mike Clowers, and Sharon Coleman.

Members Present: Bill Coleman, Jim Woodford, Harriet Taylor, John Taylor, Mike Parnell, Shlomit Haim, Daryl Hern, Mike & Diana Sampsel, Prudence Prince, John & Harriet Taylor, Donna Hodge, Sharon Clayton, Mark Kukuchek, Karen Henry, Bobbie Minton, Jim Groth, and Mike Seiler.

Guests Present: Fire Chief Mike Sims, Josie Calderon Scott, board member of the Sweetwater Authority, and Genevieve Fong, from Congress member Juan Vargas' Office. Other guests present were Christophor Pierce, Bev Grant-Davidson, John Burke, A Van Numly, Penni Neely, and Chris Pearson.

Introduction: Judy introduced Josie Calderon Scott of the SWA, Karen Henry, and Genevieve Fong of House of Representatives Juan Vargas' office.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Judy asked for a motion to approve the minutes; Stephen Stonehouse moved to approve; Sharmane Estolano provided the second. Minutes approved .

TREASURER'S REPORT: Stephen Stonehouse reported the June 2023 Treasurer's Report.

	<u>August 2023</u>
Checking	\$ 1,593.32
Ending Balance	\$ 1,593.32

The previous Balance was \$1,562.92.

There was one charge from KIG of \$180.00 for Web Service.

Stamps were purchased for \$63.00.

A check written to SD County for \$529.16 for the Grant Refund.

There was a membership deposit of \$802.56..

The report was accepted as written.

Fire Safety: Bonita Fire Chief Mike Sims: Chief Sims notified us that summer is here, and the vegetation is rapidly drying out. Abatement notices have gone out and enforcement is ongoing.

Chief Sims reported on the Sweetwater Dam spillway access signage. Parisa Hill and Mike Clowers are helping the BFD in working with the County Roads to place signage that will direct our neighboring first responders' agencies more efficiently into the open space below the 125 toll road overpasses. A meeting will occur on August 3, 2023, on site, to evaluate the best placement, number, and verbiage of said signs. This action was necessitated by a motorcycle accident in the area where the signs are needed.

Captain Genevicz deployed on July 31, 2023, as a line medic on the Bonny Fire in Riverside County. There are 1600 firefighters on the line at that fire.

Chief Sims reported on the Demolition derby which the BFD participated in at the SD County Fair. The Burn Institute recognized the BFD Demolition Derby team with the Sportsmanship award. The BFD team was knocked out before the finals, but they still helped other teams in the pits and trackside to get other participants' cars ready to smash in the final heat. Robert Macone received the Sportsmanship Award.

Judy asked if chief Sims knew when the space occupied by the Fish and Wildlife would be addressed to mitigate fire concerns.

Law Enforcement Reports:

Sheriff's Department: Crime Specialist Julio Garcia was not available.

Elected Representative Reports:

Andrew Harvey, Supervisor Nora Vargas Representative: Andrew Harvey was not available.

Council Member John McCann's Office representative Amanda Angulo. Amanda Angulo was not available.

U. S. House of Representatives (52nd District) Juan Vargas Office Representative Genevieve Fong. Genevieve Fong, (Genevieve.Fong@mail.house.gov) reported that the local district office of Congressman Juan Vargas is in west Chula Vista (333F Street, Chula Vista 91910) , and his staff can assist on federal issues such as Social Security, IRS (taxes), veterans' issues, Department of State (passport) questions, and Department of Defense (DOD) issues.. The office is open Monday through Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

Genevieve Fong also reported that Representative Juan Vargas introduced the Environmentally Sustainable Growth Act, which requires public companies to disclose environmental, social and governance (ESG) metrics in annual filings. This will help to better inform investors about where they are investing their hard-earned funds. Also, the representative introduced the Credit Union Board Modernization Act, which revises the frequency of meetings required to be held by all credit unions' board of directors, to allow them more time to effectively run their operations.

California State Assembly Representative David Alvarez: David Alvarez represents California's district 80. His representative, Lisa Schmidt, was not in attendance.

State Senator (18th District) Stephen Padilla office representative Thomas Lawton. Thomas Lawton was not available.

U. S. Senator Alex Padilla Office Representative Angel Marquez. Angel Marquez was not in attendance.

New Business.

Sweetwater Authority Rate Payers Association (SARPA) Presentation: Mike Seiler of SARPA presented a brief history of SARPA by saying that SARPA in 2010 determined that low water users were paying too much for water and SARPA proposed that higher water users' rate be increased. Consequently, the SWA went to tiered water rates. At that time, there was no need to conserve water.

In 2014, SARPA felt that the tiered rates were not balanced. Consequently, SARPA filed suit and eventually settled out of court. In the settlement, the SWA adjusted the tiered rates, and any cost increases were audited.. The SWA also started a Citizens Advisory Committee. SARPA believes that several tiered rates are still too high.

SARPA always used Community funding in their endeavors and continued to press the SWA to again review the tiered rates. Consequently, in 2023, the SWA started a review of those rates.

Mike then notified everyone that SARPA is disbanding due to some of its members moving out of the Community. SARPA has paid all lawyer fees and taken all necessary legal steps to disband the organization. They have excess funds in their treasury and as per their charter that money will be given to the SVCA. At that point Mike Seiler presented a check to the SVCA from SARPA. As president of the SVCA Judy Tieber noted the work of SARPA and thanked them for the check.

Karen Henry, Planned SWA billing/rate Structure and Plans: Karen Henry provided a brief Bio listing her qualifications to talk about the SWA. Then, she provided a brief description of the SWA Governing Board, and the charges listed on water user's bill.

Karen Henry said that the SWA uses a tiered rate system. Water Rates were raised in 2018 and the SWA is currently in the process of revising those rates. Karen believes that there are flaws in the tiered rate system.

Karen Henry gave a summary of an SWA consultant's recommendation for a new tiered rate system. The recommendation did not move forward with the SWA board.

Karen said that she expects the SWA to raise rates by 2024. She indicated public meetings will be held and encouraged people to attend the meetings, especially the August 8, 2023, special meeting. Karen recommended that SWA water users attend meetings and recommend fairness. Karen indicated that since the Consultants recommendations were rejected, that the Top tier will be coming back, and Bonita residents' rates will be the highest in the service area.

Karen Henry also talked about an adopted SWA spending plan that is different than the spending plan used previously. Karen is concerned that the SWA is not using funds for the purposes

identified in the spending plan. Jim Groth asked about the spending charges, to which Karen replied that fixed charges are being assessed as variable.

Judy Tieber asked about the Chula Vista Bayfront development, since the water will be supplied by the SWA for that project. Karen said that the project will be charged exceptionally low rates for water usage.

In closing comments by attendees, Mike Seiler recommended the SWA should mine the Sweetwater Reservoir for sand and thus make the lake deeper. Another attendee asked where the majority of SWA water users were located. Karen answered that most users are west of I805. John Taylor asked about the status of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) that the SWA had set up. Karen said that it still exists. Mike Sampsel postulated that the tiered rate schedule is potentially illegal.

Karen Henry handed out a double-sided printed data sheet with information which is included with these minutes as two separate pages that were scanned.

Josie Calderon Scott and Karen Henry, SWA Planned Solar Panel Installation on the Sweetwater Reservoir: The SWA is considering a proposal to locate solar panels on the Sweetwater Reservoir.

Josie Calderon Scott said she was concerned that the project had not been through a thorough review and discussion. Nonetheless, Josie said that a sole source contract has been awarded and that there was no open bidding process. She was also concerned that there had not been any community input and involvement. Josie said that this would be the first solar project erected over a drinking water source, i.e. The Sweetwater Reservoir.

From a procedural point of view, the SWA will visit a similar project in Northern California. There is an outstanding issue/question, for the SWA solar panels, of whether the construction would require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The SWA project is planning to cover a small area of The Sweetwater Reservoir and be used as a revenue generator.

Bottom Line: Josie Calderon Scott felt that the SWA was acting before having all the facts.

An attendee wanted to know if SDGE had provided information regarding electricity connection to the solar panels. Josie said that SDGE had yet to be contacted.

Harriet Taylor was concerned about the subdivision above the Reservoir and how that would affect their view of the lake.

Karen Henry talked about Carbon Neutrality. And how the SWA may be looking at the Solar Panel project. She further indicated that a SWA consultant projected a marginal rate of return from the panels.

Karen commented further that the SWA has already identified the energy partner and that the SWA believes "time is of the essence" and not details. The selected contractor is not from the San Diego Area.

Election of Officer: Sharon Clayton was nominated to be elected to the position of Member at Large. Sharmane made the nomination which was seconded by Stephen Stonehouse. Sharon Clayton was elected by voice vote. Congratulations Sharon Clayton.

Election of Ambassadors. Teresa Capanis was elected as Neighborhood ambassador to area six.

Community Forum:

Traffic and Roads Mike Clowers: Mike reported that the traffic Advisory Committee met on Last Friday (July 28, 2023) and that there were no issues on the agenda for the Sweetwater Valley.

Mike also mentioned that he and Judy were working on getting signs in the community refurbished. He said if anyone knows of a sign that needs repair, please send the location, including a picture, to him. Sharmane noted that Valley Vista signs need refurbishing.

Sweetwater Community Planning Group Stephen Stonehouse & Harriet Taylor: Stephen Stonehouse talked about the action item on the August Agenda concerning the Highway 94/125 interchange and that the Planning group voted to write a letter to SANDAG and CALTRANS to improve that interchange.

Stephen and Harriet talked about the water run-off problem on San Miguel Road. The issue has been brought to the attention of the County.

Senior Volunteer Patrol Jim Woodford: Jim reported that the Senior Patrol only has six members left in the Senior Patrol, Consequently, they only made seven patrols and can only average two patrols per week. The Senior Patrol does staff the Safety Center on Mondays and Wednesdays. The Senior Patrol continues to look for new volunteers.

Sharmane and Jim discussed the method of applying for membership in the Senior Patrol. Jim said that a person could apply online or come by the Safety Center and fill out the paperwork. Jim continued that first time members must be 50 years of age and go through two weeks of training.

Sharon Clayton indicated that she had supplies that the Senior Patrol should have. Jim told her to take them to the Safety Center.

Membership Sharon Coleman: Sharon noted that there are still fourteen outstanding memberships that have not renewed. A request was made to list all our for-profit organizations.

Trails Report Mark Kukuchek: Mark did not present a report this month.

Other Announcements: None

Meeting adjourned: The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Anthony P. Tieber, Secretary, SVCA

Mission Statement: The Sweetwater Valley Civic Association is the direct conduit to local County elected and appointed officials, law enforcement and emergency first responders to discuss and resolve issues related directly to our quality of life within the Sweetwater Valley communities.

