

Eldorado Springs LID Advisory Committee Minutes

October 17, 2019

Rocky Mountain Fire District Station 6

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:30 pm.

Members Present: Vija Handley, Ken Sheldon, Kevin Tone, Cathy Proenza

Guests: Gabby Begeman, ORC (phone)

Staff: Mark Ruzzin, Pete Salas

Approval of Minutes:

The board considered the minutes of the September 19, 2019 meeting:

ACTION: Cathy moved to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2019 meeting, as presented; the motion was seconded by Vija, and approved unanimously.

Plant Operations:

The group called Gabby Begeman at ORC to walk through the Operator's Report. Gabby confirmed that the submersible pump had been ordered. Ken asked about the sludge haul that had been discussed at the September meeting; Gabby noted that the haul had occurred the previous week, after a delay to trim tree growth on Barber Lane leading up to the access road to the WWTF. Ken mentioned that moving forward it would be helpful to have some standard guidelines to share with the property owners along Barber Lane in respect to dealing with the tree growth on an ongoing basis. Cathy asked whether it would be feasible set up an annual review of the growth to see what might need to be done to proactively address this problem.

Pete noted that there may need to be an additional sludge haul before the end of the year; Gabby and ORC will be monitoring the plant to determine when a haul becomes necessary. Cathy suggested setting up a regular sludge hauling schedule as a strategy for keeping on top of the issue. Gabby said that scheduling a regular sludge haul was certainly an option, but that ORC prefers to have flexibility in scheduling the hauls as there are numerous factors that come into play in respect to determining when a haul is needed. Kevin asked about keeping gallonage records of how much is hauled out each time, which will help with decision-making in respect to hauls as well as operational and infrastructure improvements (such as the addition of a sludge storage tank) to help better manage sludge. Gabby noted that ORC does keep gallonage records to help them determine when a haul is needed, and pointed out that there are other variables in play that influence the need for a haul.

Kevin asked about the September 2019 operating numbers and what had occurred with the loading factors and the flow numbers. Gabby noted what were data entry errors and indicated they would be corrected.

Kevin asked about the issue with the in-house E-One pump at his neighbor's home, and if there is anything that can be done about these units when back-ups occur. Gabby indicated that Jesse from ORC went out and checked on the pump at 49 Artesian, and found that the alarm functions on the panel test fine but the on/off alarm switches failed. This particular unit appears to be a rebuilt pump, and it's likely that its age was a factor in its failure.

While indoor units are not the preferred option, the four individual owners of these pumps can put secondary alarms on the units to help in the case of a failure. Cathy noted that she had a drain drilled into her basement floor to hold a sump pump to help remove water when failures occur.

Gabby suggested that another option would be to pull the pumps periodically and have them evaluated and rebuilt if necessary. It was noted that the LID is responsible for the pumps and needs to take proactive steps to ensure that the issue is mitigated to the degree possible. There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility of digging exterior pits on these four properties, to deal with the situation, in addition to Gabby's suggestion related to proactive maintenance of the pumps.

It was noted that the indoor E-one pumps are different from the exterior pumps and cannot be exchanged. Mark suggested having Jesse inspect the indoor pumps to determine their current operating condition and to evaluate the feasibility of moving the indoor pumps outside of the homes permanently. Cathy indicated that in her case it would be very difficult. It was noted that there is a reason why these pumps were installed inside the homes. Gabby said she would have Jesse go out to the homes and take a look. Gabby asked for contact info for the other homes, besides Cathy, with the indoor pumps.

Ken raised the issue at Peter Spraitz's property with the E-one pump pit and the back-up problem this is causing in one of the units. Ken explained that the pit has cracked and needs to be replaced, as ground water is continually seeping into the pit and causing the alarm to go off and the pump to fail. Mark reminded everyone that there had been some discussion of this issue with Tom Schubert at the September ESLAC meeting; Tom explained that water is infiltrating the pump pit through a crack in the casing and discussed some options for repairing the casing. Ken noted that repair doesn't seem feasible and that the casing needs to be dug up and replaced. Gabby committed to looking into and handling this issue.

Kevin asked about the ammonia levels at the plant. Gabby indicated that sludge and the missing submersible pump were causing the numbers to be higher than allowed under the plant's operating permit. Kevin asked if the state would accept that explanation. Gabby said that equipment failures are a legitimate reason for not meeting permit requirements, as long as there is not a prolonged period of permit violations, which is not expected in this case.

The committee discussed the reporting data provided by ORC, which as presented compares the two most recent months with the same months from the past two calendar years. The committee and ORC agreed that providing data from the past 12 months will be more helpful to the committee in evaluating operational trends.

The committee briefly revisited the issue of the aerator pump and excessive sludge. Gabby explained that the aerator pump has been ordered. ORC initially diagnosed the problem as a control panel issue, but upon closer inspection, they discovered the problem was with the aerator pump itself. They removed the failing pump with the intention of replacing it with a spare pump that ORC had inherited from the former plant operator. Unfortunately, this pump was non-functional and could not be used. Both pumps were evaluated and determined to be beyond repair.

There was a brief discussion regarding the effluent ammonia situation. Gabby walked through the steps that are being taken in this regard, starting with the aspects of the treatment process that ORC can control. The sludge haul was one step that will help.

Mark provided an update on Wright Water Engineer's project regarding the plant's operating permit. WWE believes that it is worth the time and effort to dig into the flow data that is available for South Boulder Creek as a key strategy for convincing CDPHE to modify the permit. WWE was given direction to do this work, as this analysis will be helpful even if ultimately the LID needs to prepare an Alternatives Analysis. Kevin noted that an Alternatives Analysis is not easy to get approved by CDPHE. He pointed out that a flow dilution approach will provide a stronger technical argument for a permit modification. Mark mentioned that there are discussions underway to consider how to financially augment the project if needed.

Kevin asked Gabby about the flow gauge and the validity of the data the gauge is collecting, in terms of accuracy. Gabby indicated that it was her understanding that flow gauges are subject to calibration checks on a regular basis, though no one can be sure when the gauge in question was last calibrated. Mark asked about those entities diverting water from the creek and where it was occurring. Mark asked if there was a gauge east of the plant outfall, the thinking being that data from a gauge east of the outfall could be used to validate the data from the first bridge gauge.

Mark mentioned that the LID is required to prepare a mixing zone analysis per the operating permit; this study was due this past March. We were not made aware of this requirement until September when we were notified that the study had not been provided to CDPHE. Mark noted that an extension has been filed with the state, and that the LID would look to perform the analysis in the first part of next year. Kevin indicated that it would not be difficult to complete the study, which needs to be done at low flow when there is no water in the creek.

With no further topics to discuss with Gabby, the committee moved to the other items on the meeting agenda.

Old/New Business:

The committee and staff discussed the upcoming contract renewal process that the LID will need to complete by the end of the year, to renew both the ORC and SDMS (quarterly bill collection services) contracts for 2020. In respect to ORC, Mark suggested that this was an opportune time to review and refresh the scope of work for the ORC contract. Kevin expressed concern that ORC was reacting to plant issues rather than exercising proactive management of the plant. Ken suggested that the committee ask for an action plan for next year that would outline goals for the year. The committee discussed at length the types of issues that would be included in the action plan. For example, Cathy suggested increasing oversight regarding sludge, including data to be included on the monthly Operator's Report and development of criteria to determine when a haul is needed; Ken expressed support for this suggestion. Kevin suggested that the action plan will not likely be a set of new requests that are outside the existing ORC scope of work, but rather a level setting of expectations regarding current scope of work responsibilities. There was a brief discussion about other needs that might come up, and the need for a reasonable approach to deal with foreseeable system issues.

Invoices and Budget Update:

Mark informed the committee on where the chemical and other non-line item costs appear on the budget sheets. There was a brief discussion regarding chemical use and costs. Mark referred the committee to the budget sheets and the current status along with anticipated costs. Cathy asked about the plan for purchasing a spare submersible pump at an additional cost of \$11,000; Mark indicated that Tom has put this purchase on the 2020 wish list. Cathy asked if there might be a used one available as government or municipal surplus. Kevin indicated that these pumps are usually run so hard that they don't have much useful life left when they are replaced, but that it may be worth asking ORC to ask around. Kevin brought up the notion of having a tank to digest the sludge and take it out of the system. There was a brief discussion regarding the logistics of this idea.

Committee Updates:

Pete noted that it appears that a supplemental budget request will be needed due to an anticipated overage in 2019 expenses. A question was raised regarding the capital expense budget and where those funds are; Mark referred to the budget sheet and explained the costs incurred relative to capital expenses. There was a brief discussion regarding the LID's account balance. Cathy mentioned a past discussion regarding the maintenance of a minimum amount in the reserve account which would trigger discussion on rates. The committee asked that this item be placed on the November meeting agenda for discussion. It was noted that the committee would like to discuss the LID's reserve account amount in November.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m.