

# Ponderosa Community Services District

RESPONSIBLY PROVIDING PURE MOUNTAIN WATER AND EFFECTIVE SNOW REMOVAL

Minutes of meeting

May 13, 2021

Present:

Directors: B. Benton, R. Cope, S. James, L. Gray, T. Stewart

Staff: J. Robertson, T. Harness, T. Griesbach, J. Landers (via telephone)

Guest:

Barbara	Arnold	Dee	Graham	Angelique	Russell
Jeff	Cavagnero	Steve	Kapka	Dave	Sharp
Melanie	Cope	Renee	Martinez	Dana	Stewart
Dale	Doty	Frank	Ohen	Leah	Walton
Helen	Erb	Jim	Parminter	Del	White
Matt	Goldsmith	Patty	Rueger	D. Sheriff	Bailey

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 pm by Ms. Benton, followed by the flag salute.

## President comments

Thank you to the public for coming to the meeting. This meeting is for public input, to set policy, and share information relevant to the district. Public comments are welcome, however no action can be taken on any comments until they appear as an agenda item. You may bring up issues today, but there can be no action by the board until that item is placed on a future agenda. Speakers will have 3 minutes each.

## Comments from the Public *(these comments have been condensed at the discretion of the secretary)*

Doty – Mr. Doty heard of a complaint against the community. Water was being moved from a seasonal creek into the pond at the Snowhouse. The action was stopped. That's a problem. The water in the pond is for fire protection, wild animals use it, and it helps replenish the water table for Lake well. Fish and Wildlife was called by Mr. James, and the water transfer was stopped. It wasn't illegal, it was necessary, and now the creek is dried up. Mr. James has created many problems within the Ponderosa community. Mr. Doty demanded that Mr. James resign from the PCSB board by the end of business today. He has created a mess. Mr. Doty wants him gone and will start a recall campaign if Mr. James does not resign.

Parminter – it seems that district funds are being spent because one person gets an idea to change something, or does not trust district staff or other board members. As a taxpayer, I don't think the district's money should be spent on one person's whim.

\*This item was requested to be put on a future agenda.

D. Stewart – Expressed a vote of 'No Confidence' in director James. Mr. Stewart feels Mr. James does not treat others with respect and he has alienated many long term residents. Mr. James has divided, not united the community.

White – Mr. White is not on Facebook making comments, not circulation an email. He was warned not to make these public comments or there may be retaliation from Mr. James. However, he feels it is his right of free speech to criticize and make known the actions and comments of one board member. Mr. White stated that Mr. James questioned why the community has changed since the fire. Mr. White feels the answer is that Mr. James' attitude is what changed. Mr. White questioned why

Mr. James felt is necessary to call the sheriff, why did he quit the PPOA board, why did he call the health department, why did he bring up the prevailing wage issue? Mr. White's time ran out.

Rueger – Mrs. Rueger continued reading Mr. White's statement. "Why call the building department, why threaten lawsuits? The why does not matter, You (Mr. James) are not serving your constituents. Your behavior is not becoming of an elected official in a public office."

Mrs. Rueger continued with her own comments. We are called to be a good neighbor to all. Please stop calling all these agencies. Mrs. Rueger's time ran out.

M. Cope – conceded her time to allow Mrs. Rueger to continue.

I have seen these issues in other areas as well. It is rural vs. city culture. It is offensive to a community when people from the city move into a rural area and try to "fix" things. We need to understand each other and treat each other with respect.

Sharp – Mr. Sharp conceded his time to Mrs. Cope.

Mrs. Cope told Mr. James that she felt his behavior was reprehensible. She felt stabbed in the back and requested his resignation from the PCSD board.

## **Water System Report**

*Water Manager – K. Klemcke*

Mr. Klemcke reported all is going well. Next round of quarterly Lead/copper tests due next month. If that sample comes back clean, he will request the system be put onto yearly testing.

Routine monthly sample was good.

Return to public comment:

The secretary apologized that she neglected to read the email sent by Angelique Russell as public comment.

Subject	Public Comment - May PCSD Meeting (Angelique Mattin Russell)
From	Angelique Russell <amattinrussell@gmail.com>
To	<secretary@ponderosacsd.com>
Date	2021-04-23 5:39 pm

Recently Governor Newsom issued a drought proclamation related to groundwater recharge that I found ironic. It's a statewide order, but it cites the issues in the Russian River Valley as a reason for swift action. I was born and raised in the Russian River watershed, and during El Nino storms in the 90's I assisted my mom, a volunteer nurse with the Red Cross, with disaster relief during severe floods. The flooding around the Russian River has actually gotten worse, and so too have problems with lack of groundwater. Floods AND drought, floods AND limited groundwater: how can this be? Even when it floods this water quickly leaves the steep valley and flows into the ocean, where an estimated 80% of California's rainfall ends up. The issue in California isn't that we don't have enough water, it's that we're very bad at managing the fresh water God gives us each year: every Californian living anywhere in this state knows this problem all too well.

Similarly in Ponderosa, one day the snow is reaching my roof and months later we're running out of water during a wildfire. Where did all that snow go from the last few winters? It's a silly question when your "wells" are on top of a literal mountain; gravity is bringing our water down to the Tule and Kern tributaries on both sides of Ponderosa, and aside from pumping a portion into our water tower we have no means to keep it where we need it. It's like holding up a cup of water with holes poked in the bottom and expecting it to stay full. We may have rights to 4 wells, but that doesn't mean we have the means to keep water \*in\* those wells, even after good snow years.

This is a serious problem, and we need engineers to provide some solutions. I am not \*that\* kind of engineer, but I can do math, and basic math tells me even if we had our cute 3 acre pond it's nowhere near enough to supply our community. It's good for firefighting and ducks, but if it were also good for groundwater recharge our wells would have been full in 2020 when the pond was full and snow had been plentiful for a couple of years, yet we quickly ran out during the fires. Obviously the pond isn't the answer, and the fact that some Board members felt it \*is\* the answer has me seriously concerned that viable solutions are not getting enough attention. How else can we do more to retain our snowmelt and rain? We may not have rights to creek water, but the water that falls as snow and rain

on our properties is OURS until it reaches any creek. How can we keep it, and direct it to where it can recharge our wells? How can we access funding to research this problem with updated hydrology studies and fund the infrastructure to address it effectively, LEGALLY, and in a way that will ensure we have water during future droughts?

Some of the potential solutions may be simple to implement with the contractors we have on the mountain, like ditches. Our local roads lack ditches beside them, but if they had simple ditches more precipitation would percolate in place instead of flowing down our roads, where it is more likely to meet up with underground streams and creeks that take our water out of our community. I live above Crest Drive, which curves above Ponderosa Drive: if the flat section of Crest had a ditch it would catch the snowmelt from Snowflake and Ridge, which otherwise flows down Crest to Ponderosa Drive, near a seasonal creek that I suspect is draining that snowmelt out of Pondo. Smaller roads wouldn't need ditches, but they might have horizontal channel drains or gutters that drain to lower ditches. These ditches might be enhanced over time to direct flow to areas known to percolate into our water wells. We might then implement above ground or underground storage of this runoff using grant funding for groundwater replenishment systems. Alternatively, it might be one big infrastructure project to install ditches, swales, and strategic retention ponds.

Imagine a future Ponderosa where snow ends up plowed into ditches, where it then drains into lined retainment ponds that pipe water \*directly\* into our main wells, guaranteeing the snow and rain gets to where we need it most. No more would the streets carry our water to the above/below-ground streams and out of Ponderosa, and no longer would we fear running out of waters in dry years: this is the future we need to be working toward.

A note on personal water use per cabin: when I switched to low-water fixtures in 2019, I went from over 5 gallons per flush to 1.6, and it uses air so it never needs a second flush. If 100 toilets were switched out in Pondo this change alone could be worth over a million gallons; my cabin came with an antique water fixture and replacing that has surely saved a lot too. Having survived restricted water use for years, I estimate I need only 40,000 gallons of water for my cabin for full time living for my family of 4 including laundry, yet I have an allocation of 75,000, and no meter to penalize me if I misuse that water or allow a burst pipe to go undetected; also no reward for the investments I've made to be a responsible water consumer. Why not move to tiered billing to encourage owners to update fixtures and properly winterize to avoid large water bills? I have never had a burst pipe, why should I be paying the same as neighbors who fail to winterize and waste thousands of gallons due to burst pipes? Full community metering with tiered billing could go a long way to making sure our water system is sustainable. I think it is likely infrastructure upgrades would still be needed, but do we really have time to be delaying action on both fronts?

I am sure you have thought of and discussed many of these ideas, but I think it is worth reminding the Board that you represent ALL current property owners, not just registered voters, and a secure water future is an issue that impacts ALL of us: if voters were opposed to these solutions in the past, that is not a reason not to pursue these solutions *today* now that there are new voters and new owners ready and willing to join the discussion. Many solutions didn't even exist before the last few years when groundwater replenishment became a statewide priority and the technology for hydrological studies has improved. There has never been a better time to pursue grant funding to solve our water issues.

As a registered voter of Ponderosa and as a property owner, it is my expectation that the Board be pursuing all legal remedies and options to supplying our community needs. Board members who would act in violation of state water laws are not fit representation, but so too are board members who are resistant to new ideas to solving our community needs: there just isn't time for squabbling and drama or being stuck in how things have always been done. We haven't \*always\* had so many years of prolonged drought, and we have more cabins than ever, so the solutions of the past aren't likely to cut it in the future. Keep it legal, make it happen, be honest with the community about the challenges we face, and be open to community input. My sincere thanks for your service to our community.

Best Regards,  
Angelique M. Russell  
57721 Ridge Dr.

### **Minutes from April 8, 2021 regular meeting.**

It was moved by T. Stewart to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Communications**

Email: 4/10 new property owner Bonnie Traylor, bought Cohen house asked how to join PPOA and connect water service – sent welcome and reply. Contacted via email again on 4/19 – no water at house, sent her contact information, she found Tim, he helped her. The issue was the shut off on her side of the connection.

Email: 4/20 new property owner Gillis-Smith requesting a will serve letter for RMA, letter provided to him via email and hard copy to RMA

Email: 4/23 Public comment from Angelique Russell – responded and read at meeting

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Email: 4/24 the GM forward message from Fish & Wildlife regarding pumping activity – sent to all directors

Email: 4/25 M. Goldsmith waiting for response from board regarding his letter of complaint

Email: 5/6 retirement letter from High Sierra Snow Removal/William Dolmovic request to be read to the board.

### **Return to water system report:**

*Water Technician – T. Harness*

Working on the well houses; sheetrock, paint, roofing. Everything is up to code.

*Water Coordinator – R. Cope*

Holby 2 well has a new pump, pipe and wellhead

Holby 1 well was pulled Wed 5/12, it should be back online Tues 5/18.

Replaced electrical panel

Sent a camera down the well on Sequoia to see if it is viable; 29 feet down, it is full of wood.

It would cost too much to clean it out with no guarantee of water. The well will be officially abandoned and closed up.

The Snowhouse has a well on the property. It has too much iron to connect to our system.

Mr. Cope will have T. Harness start implementing plan of shutting down parts of the system to try and find the area of water loss.

### **Staff Reports:**

#### **Secretary**

Update website

Sending and responding to email from directors

Speak with GM

Email and speak with attorney

Email and speak with treasurer

#### **General Manager**

Mr. Griesbach has been on many phone calls trying to get funds from the Forest Service. Working with 2 more people. He is waiting for a copy of a land use agreement that the FS wanted our water during the fire.

Mr. Griesbach is also working on a business plan for the possibility of the district resuming snow removal operations in-house.

#### **Financial Coordinator**

Please note water has used 26% of the budget to-date.

2 snow removal invoices were received. January \$13,933, February \$3,141.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

The treasurer requested a resolution to move funds with-in budget from one line item to another in anticipation of non budgeted expenses. After a brief discussion, the board decided to wait until invoices were received before authorizing reapportioning of funds.

Ms. Lander reported that all paperwork has been provided to the auditor. She wants to meet with Mr. Gray and Ms. Landers to clarify accountings.

It was moved by B. Benton to accept the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded and carried with none opposed.

**Snow Coordinator/Monitor:**

Snow fall amounts to-date.

Jan 22 3 inches	Jan 23 4 inches	Jan 25 17 inches
Jan 26 4.5 inches	Jan 27 7.5 inches	Jan 29 18 inches

More snow due tonight

Ms. Benton has monitored the clearing of fire hydrants – it seems to be good. She asked if anyone had any issues or noticed anything they'd like to report. No comments.

**PPOA Liaison** – no in-person meetings. There was a zoom meeting on Valentine's Day.

There are new PPOA board members. Yves DeClerk is the new president, Rich Thomas is vice pres, and Shawn Alexander is a member-at-large.

**Forest Service** – Mr. James reported that the trail of 100 giants fuel reduction burning has begun. Law enforcement has been up, ticketing people for recreating in the national forest/monument which is still closed. There was discussion about the status of felling hazard trees. It was noted that some companies chip downed trees/debris, while others leave piles. Several residents feel these piles are additional fire hazards and would prefer chipping. Mr. James will email forest service to request chipping be done around the Ponderosa community rather than debris piles.

**Director's Comments:**

LG – question – who has responsibility to remove snow from the Ponderosa Lodge to the gate across Divide Hwy?

In light of closed session with attorney, it was moved by S. James to postpone any further discussion around this issue until a future agenda.

It was brought up there is a parking ordinance that requires all vehicles to park off the roadway during snow conditions. Violators are subject to being towed, at their expense. There is a local resident that currently pays for private snow removal for a cut out on the side of the street as well as the private driveway. The vehicle still has tires on the roadway when parked in the cut out. The secretary will draft a letter requesting that the vehicle be parked in the driveway and not partially on the roadway.

**Unfinished Business**

The General Manager responded to a previous property owner complaint about snow removal and it went very well.

**Policy Review** - subject to review by request from a board member or at the discretion of the board secretary. Any further review of this policy is carried forward to future agenda.

**New Business**

None

Future meetings will be held indoors due to weather. Masks will be required for entry to the meetings and social distancing will be practiced to the extent possible.

The next regular meeting will be on March 11, 2021 at 12:30 pm in the district building.

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Hearing none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37 pm  
Minutes prepared by Jennifer Robertson/Board Secretary