

**STERLING COUNTY UNDERGROUND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

September 11, 2023

Members present: Jack Clark, Chairman of Board, Kade Hodges, and Cliff Caldwell, General Manager; Diana Thomas and Technician; Ashley Masters.

Visitors present: Karen Hodges, accountant.

The Public Meeting on the FY 2023-2024 Budget and 2023 Tax Rate was called to order by Jack Clark, Chairman of the Board, at 1:00 pm. No public was in attendance. The public meeting was closed at 1:10 pm.

The regular meeting was called to order by Jack Clark, Chairman of the Board.

Cliff Caldwell moved to accept the minutes of the previous meeting. Kade Hodges seconded the motion and it carried.

Accountant, Karen Hodges presented the regular bills to the Board. After reviewing the bills as presented, Kade Hodge moved to transfer \$5,100 from the MMDA to the checking account and to pay all bills. Cliff Caldwell seconded, and the motion passed.

The Manager's report included: TAGD Business Meeting and TAGD Summit in San Antonio, and RMBJ Geo in Mertzon. The TAGD Business meeting included the bi-annual election of officers resulting in Manager Diana Thomas being elected as the Upper Edwards Trinity Aquifer Representative again. A deficit budget was also adopted for the upcoming fiscal year despite objection of many GCDs from our West Texas area. The TAGD Summit covered a variety of topics and speakers from managing groundwater in drought with a highlight of rainwater harvesting, multiple discussions on the DFC process, and current legal issues resultant from recent court rulings. RMBJ Geo spent an afternoon at the Irion office managing mapping issues.

Well surveillance for August throughout Sterling was completed and presented to the Board with a majority of wells in Sterling County measuring with static water levels.

A Notice of Intent to Drill was received from the following: L. Horwood for a re-work of a well, T. Wright for two livestock wells with one being plugged, J. Copeland for a domestic well, S. Katsaros for a domestic well, and C. McEntire for an irrigation well after the attempt last month was plugged. A water analysis was completed for the Range Office and T. Wright.


Cliff Caldwell moved to amend the FY 2022-2023 Budget. Major amendments included increasing Vehicle Maintenance for the purchase of new tires, increasing Tax Appraisal Fees based on received Appraisal District invoices, placing funds in Hydrologist for consulting work, and increasing the Audit Expense to account for two financial audits being performed this fiscal year. Total operating expenses were amended to equal \$162,550 with additional funds being allocated from cash reserves. Kade Hodges seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Cliff Caldwell moved to adopt the FY 2023-2024 Budget of \$163,000 of total operating costs. Compared to the previous fiscal year Purchase/Reserve costs increased, Dues and Fees increased, Insurance expenses increased, and Payroll increased. Kade Hodges seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Kade Hodges moved to adopt a 2023 Tax Rate of \$0.01384 which is 2% above the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate. The tax rate is estimated to raise \$151,359 in funds for the District at a 99% collection rate. Cliff Caldwell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The rules workshop overviewed changes to the Sterling County Underground Water Conservation District Rules as required from the 2023 legislative session. The two major changes included adding a section on how to petition the district for a rule change and amending the appeals and SOAH hearing process. A few recommended minor changes were also presented that resulted in uniformity across definitions and the removal of unenforceable regulation of strictly injection wells.

There being no further business Cliff Caldwell moved and Kade Hodges seconded to adjourn at 1:59 P.M.



Attesting Signature



Presiding Officer

Date: 10/9/2023