

SPRINGFIELD UTILITY BOARD

223 A STREET, SUITE F
SPRINGFIELD, OR 97477

MINUTES

August 8, 2007

The regular session of the Springfield Utility Board was called to order by Chair Adams at 7 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Board: Bobbie Adams, Chair; Virginia Lauritsen, Vice Chair; Ken Boyst; Theodore L. Johnson; Joe Mathieu. Staff: Bob Linahan; Meredith Clark; Jeff Nelson; Bob Fondren; Judy Berra; Matt Cox, Attorney for the Board. Others: Ken Vogeney; Amy Chinitz.

MINUTES: * Joe Mathieu motioned, and Ted Johnson seconded, to accept the Regular Board minutes for July 25, as presented. This motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

ACCOUNTS PAID: * Ted Johnson motioned, and Ken Boyst seconded, to approve the accounts paid listing, as presented. This motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

BUSINESS FROM
THE AUDIENCE: None.

BUSINESS FROM THE
BOARD:

Valerie West, Natural
Resources Director,
Senator Gordon Smith's Office

Joe Mathieu reported that Valerie West's flight from Chicago to Eugene was cancelled due to inclement weather and she had to cancel her Eugene appointments. Mr. Mathieu extended her apologies to the Board and SUB's staff.

Schedule Board Retreat and
Discuss Possible Agenda Items

Chair Adams recommended the Board hold its retreat in October rather than September because September is a busy month for her.

The Board's consensus was to wait until their September Board meeting to decide on a date to hold the Board Retreat in October.

BUSINESS FROM THE
GENERAL MANAGER:

Award from the Groundwater
Foundation

Bob Linahan introduced Amy Chinitz, SUB's water quality protection coordinator. Ms. Chinitz works with hazardous waste and with new and existing customers to make sure that SUB's groundwater is not polluted, he said. She is here tonight to present an award to the Board from the Groundwater Foundation and to give a report on a special groundwater protection project in which SUB participated.

Ms. Chinitz said it was a pleasure to meet the Board members and to be able to share with them the accomplishments of the Groundwater Guardian team, of which SUB is a member. The Springfield Guardian team is a voluntary group made up of private businesses, agency representatives, non-profit organizations, private citizens and educators, she said. Examples of the kinds of projects they do include the Well Water Testing Lab at Thurston High School; Household Hazardous Waste Round-up; distributing educational materials about groundwater around the community as well as the special project she will be reporting about to the Board this evening, she said.

Promoting awareness of groundwater is a special challenge because people can't see it, explained Ms. Chinitz, and they really have to motivate folks to want to protect something that they can't see. So a lot of what they do is about promoting awareness of the groundwater. In November 2006, SUB received a special honor of national recognition from the Groundwater Foundation as a 10-year team member, which means SUB performed 10 years of activity on groundwater protection efforts, she said. In celebration of that accomplishment and also in recognition of the Board's support of the work they do, she presented the Board with the Banner and plaque that SUB received from the Groundwater Foundation.

Ms. Chinitz referred to her overheads (Exhibit A) as she began her report on the Agricultural Chemical Removal project (Exhibit A). This is an example of a very successful

groundwater and surface water protection project that also illustrates how well things can work when different entities work together for source water protection, she said. The goal of this project was to provide agricultural growers with an opportunity to dispose of unwanted, old and obsolete agricultural chemicals. We had found that a lot of growers had no mechanism to safely dispose of their old obsolete chemicals like DDT and other pesticides that had been banned. Either the cost was too expensive or there were too many legal obstacles, she explained. This project provided those growers with a free, no-risk and no-limit-on-quantity opportunity to safely dispose of chemicals. We even received a letter from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) saying that there would be no repercussions, she said. The goal was to gather up the chemicals and dispose of them properly. We even removed old empty chemical drums, she said. This project involved quite an outreach to the growers, explained Ms. Chinitz.

The agencies and organizations involved in this project were: SUB; EWEB; the OSU Extension Service; Oregon DEQ; Oregon Health Division; Lane County; the Governor's Fund for the Environment; and the Eugene and Springfield Fire Departments and Hazmat Team. She noted that EWEB actually led the project. They wrote the grant and did all the grant administration. Then the County did all the hard, manual labor once the chemicals actually came in, she said.

SUB focused on the Middle Fork of the Willamette River Watershed and we worked with the growers in that area, she explained. We started by sending out a questionnaire to help them inventory what they had on their properties so we could have an expectation of what chemicals to receive at the Glenwood Transfer Station. In a lot of cases we had to actually go out to the properties and look at what they had, help them identify the chemicals, and then help package them up so they could be safely transported. She reviewed pictures of some of the chemicals they found and helped dispose of.

This project included growers from the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed, the McKenzie Watershed and some

other areas in Lane County once the project expanded to a second phase, she explained. There were a total of 126 farmers and a collection and disposal of 87,340 pounds of pesticide. Just in the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed alone, which was SUB's area of interest, there were 28 farmers with almost 16,000 pounds of chemicals, she reported.

Ms. Chinitz concluded by saying that this was a very successful project and that it was exciting for her personally to be involved in a project of this scope where no single agency could have done it alone. The success of the project depended on the resources of each agency and everyone working together.

The Board thanked Ms. Chinitz for her informative report and for presenting the Board with the Banner and plaque that SUB received from the Groundwater Foundation for being a 10-year member of the Springfield Groundwater Guardian team.

Update on SUB's Tree-Trimming Program

Mr. Linahan said that SUB's tree-trimming program has evolved over the years and today we have a much better understanding of our system. He introduced Ray Meduna to share some up-to-date information on this program.

Ray Meduna said that staff has been documenting information on the tree-trimming program for about the last five years, with a lot of details gathered in just the last three years. He referred to his overhead presentation (Exhibit B).

In 2001 we hired an independent consultant to look at SUB's tree-trimming program and to give us an estimate of the number of trees in our system and some recommendations, said Mr. Meduna. We then instituted some of the consultant's recommendations. He recommended that we divide our system into three sections/cycles of trimming and that we remove 18-20 percent of those trees that need trimming more often than every three years. He estimated that we had a total of 9,000 trees in our system, based on the number of trees per mile, but he did not physically count the

trees, explained Mr. Meduna. He also recommended that we create a tree-trimming inventory database.

Based on his recommendations, we created a 3-cycle grid of tree trimming and based it upon the estimated 9,000 trees in our system. Since that time, SUB has removed over 20 percent of the 9,000 trees.

A couple months ago we completed our tree-trimming inventory database, he said. At that point we found that we don't have 9,000 trees in our system, we actually have over 14,000 trees. So with the removals that we have done so far, we now have about 12,343 trees to trim in a 3-year cycle.

Mr. Meduna reviewed the schedule for trimming and removal of trees, as reflected on a colored grid in his overhead presentation.

Then he explained that they currently have two tree-trimming crews. Together the crews average a total of about 3,500 tree trims per year, including trees removed. So an average of 3,500 trees is the limit that we can handle each year with two crews.

Each year we target 500 problem trees, which include big leaf maples, birch trees, cherry trees, etc., he said. These are trees located in backyards that our tree crews have to climb to trim. We call these kinds of trees "cycle busters." For example, if we trimmed a cycle-buster tree in 2004, we needed to return before 2007 to trim that tree again. Because these trees need to be trimmed more frequently than 3 years, we try to remove them.

Mr. Meduna then reviewed a series of pictures.

He then explained that the tree-trimming crews are behind on their cycle trimming due to a couple factors. The first is due to tree removals. It takes about three times as long to remove a tree as it does to trim it, he said. The other factor is that we have 5,000 more trees than the consultant's original estimate. Our tree-trimmers can average over 10,000 tree-

trims per year, not counting tree removals, and at this time we have 12,000 trees. So we need to remove more trees.

We have targeted to hire a temporary crew for two years to work 6-months each year and their emphasis will be on backyard tree trims and removals. We will continue to emphasize the removals of problem trees to achieve an inventory below 10,000. Once we are below 10,000 trees in our system, then we can manage what we have with two crews. And we are going to have to readjust our grid system and continue to refine our inventory of trees. He noted that when they trim a tree for the first time, that tree goes into their inventory database. Trees that have never been trimmed are not in the database.

The Board thanked Mr. Meduna for his presentation.

Energy Conservation Project
Proposal

Mr. Linahan said he looked more closely at this project and didn't feel the numbers penciled out well enough where he could ask the Board to approve it, so he has removed this item from the agenda. This project will not be brought back to the Board, but we are looking at some other conservation project opportunities and he will probably have some recommendations to bring back to the Board at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 7:30 p.m.

Bobbie Adams, Board Chair

ATTEST:

Robert C. Linahan, Board Secretary