

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT NO. 28  
HELD AT THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT  
VIA TELECONFERENCE

August 25, 2021  
1:30 o'clock, P.M.

The Board of Directors of County Sanitation District No. 28 of Los Angeles County met in regular session via teleconference.

There were present: Jonathan Curtis, Director from La Cañada Flintridge  
Keith Eich, Director from La Cañada Flintridge  
Michael T. Davitt, Chairperson, Director from La Cañada Flintridge  
Richard B. Gunter III, Director from La Cañada Flintridge

Absent: Teresa "Terry" Walker, Director from La Cañada Flintridge

Also present: Kimberly S. Christensen, Secretary to the Board  
Wes Beverlin, District Counsel

RE: PUBLIC COMMENT  
The Chairperson announced this was the time for any questions or comments by members of the public. There were no public comments or questions to address the Board on any matters.

RE: MINUTES  
Upon motion of Director Eich, duly seconded and unanimously carried by a roll-call vote, the minutes of the regular meeting held July 28, 2021, were approved.

RE: DISTRICT EXPENSES  
The following expenses for the month of June 2021 were presented and upon motion of Director Eich, duly seconded and unanimously carried by a roll-call vote, were approved:

Local District Expenses:	
Operations & Maintenance (O & M)	\$ 7,534.10
Allocated Expenses:	
Joint Administration	8,904.86
Technical Support	7,731.43
Joint Outfall	<u>23,048.19</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$47,218.58</u>

RE: JOINT OUTFALL SYSTEM DIRECTOR AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS - DISCUSS  
The Joint Outfall System (JOS) is comprised of 17 Districts in the Los Angeles basin that share in the ownership and operation of a system of sewers, water reclamation plants, and the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant, which is the final treatment plant for all of the wastewater in the JOS. In September 2020, a recommendation was made to the Personnel Committee that a Director JOS Ad Hoc Committee be formed to explore opportunities to improve how sharing of ownership and costs of the JOS are managed. The Ad Hoc Committee met five times, and the results of the Committee's work are presented in the report that was attached to the agenda. The Chief Engineer and General Manager briefed the Committee.

The Chief Engineer and General Manager stated that over the last few years the Districts has undertaken several initiatives to modernize and streamline various aspects including evaluating the JOS system and infrastructure (Clearwater Program) and policies and procedures (Connection Fee Program and Purchasing Policy). Another area for review is the Districts' process for determining wastewater rates for the JOS Districts.

The Ad Hoc Committee met between December 2020 and June 2021 to evaluate four key components to understanding JOS finances and improving financial administration. The goal was to have a fair, simple, and transparent rate-setting process. The Personnel Committee's concurrence was requested to move forward with the recommendations.

There are 24 separate Sanitation Districts, some of which are part of different systems. District No. 14 (which serves the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale), District No. 20 (which serves only Palmdale), Santa Clarita Valley (SCV) Sanitation District (which serves Santa Clarita and unincorporated Los Angeles County), and the new District, Newhall Ranch (NR) Sanitation District, all function as three different systems. Their water is recycled for use in agriculture, municipal re-use, or discharged to the Santa Clara River. SCV and NR will work as one system until the NR is further developed. Districts Nos. 4, 9, and 27 are contract Districts, which serve the City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation, and portions of the County.

A map of the JOS service area was shown. The JOS serves 73 cities and unincorporated area of the County, which includes approximately five million people. The JOS Districts are governed by 85 Directors and the County Board of Supervisors. The JOS Districts are served by an interconnected system of sewers and pumping plants that convey wastewater to six water reclamation plants (WRPs) using tertiary treatment to produce recycled water. The Joint Water Pollution Control Plant (JWPCP) in the City of Carson handles the remaining and bypass flow before discharge to the ocean outfalls located off the coast of Palos Verdes. The Districts are working with the Metropolitan Water District to reduce the discharge to the ocean and increase recycled water at the JWPCP. The entire system must be considered when planning for changes and growth. Industrial Waste (IW) Facilities such as refineries, metal platers, and other large facilities that produce a lot of wastewater throughout the JOS are managed with one common rate no matter where they are located. The flow is measured for volume and strength of flow, and the IW dischargers pay based on that. Commercial and residential customers pay on their property tax statement, whereas industrial dischargers are directly billed. This principle is used so that an IW facility does not choose a site within the JOS based on surcharge rate. The JOS is administered as one common system.

There are different financial issues that are unique among the Districts. Each District has its own Ad Valorem (AV) taxes, and the amount varies significantly between Districts. The AV revenue is used to offset service charges. Each District has its own reserves of which the amount may vary significantly based on what their service charge and AV has been. Each District sets its own service charge based on its own financial situation, AV revenue, and reserves.

The Directors who participated in the JOS Ad Hoc Committee were, as follows:

- Cathy Warner, Districts Nos. 2, 15, and 18
- Pat Furey, South Bay Cities District and District No. 5
- Lori Woods, District No. 29
- Michael Davitt, Districts Nos. 28 and 34
- Rick Barakat, Districts Nos. 15 and 22

The Chief Engineer and General Manager thanked the Ad Hoc Committee Directors for their time and valued input. The goal for the Ad Hoc Committee was to revisit complex assumptions on how service charge rates are determined for the JOS Districts to create a fair, simple, transparent rate-setting process. They reviewed four issues.

#### Issue 1: District-specific vs. JOS Assets

The Chief Engineer and General Manager stated that, currently, there are District-specific assets and JOS assets. Historically, the principles were clearer to implement. District-specific assets include smaller sewers and pumping plants serving individual Districts. Historically, it made sense to have these two classifications. As the Districts implemented water reuse and added WRPs to the system, it became more challenging to classify assets. Another issue is that one-time large repair projects can impact rates significantly in a specific District. Each District pays for its own expenses. With the current configuration and priority on water reuse, all flow and facilities can be considered part of one system.

The Chief Engineer and General Manager reviewed the ownership of sewers. Property owners maintain their own sewer lines that flow into the city sewers. The city sewer, maintained by the city or the county, flows into a District-specific sewer, then finally into a JOS sewer that flows into a treatment plant. Some inconsistencies have developed with classifying assets since the historic classification method required judgments be made. Even though some assets are District-specific, the system works together and is managed together. It is recommended to re-classify all assets in the JOS Districts as JOS assets. Inconsistencies and judgment calls are eliminated, and the accounting system is less complicated. The rates and costs are stabilized.

He stated that District No. 29 is unique because it maintains what would traditionally be the city's sewers under a separate agreement. The agreement will not be affected. The rate is different, and the ratepayers pay

more. Typically, cities maintain their own sewers or contract with the County that provides sewer maintenance of the local city sewers.

#### Issue 2: Industrial Waste (IW) Facilities' Revenue

The Chief Engineer and General Manager stated that IW Facilities are charged the same rate, based on flow and strength, in the JOS Districts. Revenues generated from those facilities go to each District, and the expenses are paid by the JOS. There is some skewing of the District revenue structure and the necessary service charge when the IW rate is significantly different than the service charge rate. It was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee to treat all IW revenue as JOS revenue. This better reflects that it was always intended for IW Facilities to be part of the JOS and eliminates the issue with different IW rates and service charges in a District.

#### Issue 3: AV Taxes

The Chief Engineer and General Manager stated that the Districts receive a portion of the AV taxes that are collected from every parcel in each District. The Districts receive an allocation of one percent of the AV tax. The District has no control over the amount of AV taxes received. There is a significant variation between the amount of revenue received, due to the differences in property value and historical allocation. The net effect is that AV taxes offset the service charge rate in each District to varying degrees. He showed an illustration of four different households and the variations in AV tax revenue. It was recommended that the Directors acknowledge that variations in AV tax revenue between Districts can lead to significant variance in a JOS District's service charge rates even when overall expenses are similar.

#### Issue 4: Reserve Fund Levels

The Chief Engineer and General Manager stated that, over time, some Districts built up reserves well above target levels. In 2018, reserve policies were adopted with targets for the appropriate levels. Excess reserves can be used to offset service charges. With the adopted reserve policies, it is being recommended that principles for rate-setting should include reaching targeted reserve fund levels in 10 years.

The Chief Engineer and General Manager continued his presentation. He stated that summarizing rate projections, each household and commercial business on average pays approximately the same amount on a per sewage unit basis for services, including the total of AV tax, service charge, and use of excess reserves. For most Districts, the recommended changes lead to service charge rate stability and modest increases. For some Districts, including Districts Nos. 23, 28, and South Bay Cities, they will be able to use their high reserves to offset service charge rates.

He showed a graph of the annual average funding projections in the next 10 years. Districts Nos. 23, 28, and South Bay Cities have higher AV taxes, shown in orange, and can use a portion of the reserves to cover their costs, shown in blue. Other Districts, for example Districts Nos. 3, 5, and 8, must collect extra service charge to build up reserve levels. Now, with the principle of eliminating Districts-specific assets, there is a stabilizing effect on rates.

He discussed a table showing the service charge rate with the recommendations. Over the next 10 years, there is a relatively modest change in service charge rates, which follows the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The rate increase in District No. 3 is slightly above the CPI to build up reserves. Assuming the Districts approve the UAL exchange proposal and the Districts settles with the County in the case regarding the Puente Hills Landfill Park funding, the service charge is further reduced one to two percent. He noted that District No. 29's higher service charge rate is due to a special agreement for the District to maintain its city sewers.

He stated that the JOS District Boards will be briefed in August. The revised Joint Outfall Agreement, financial policies, and rate ordinances will be presented for approval in fall 2021. The new policies and rates take effect on July 1, 2022. In February, he will be introducing the new rate packages and will incorporate the new principles.

Upon motion of Director Eich, duly seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned.

MICHAEL T. DAVITT  
Chairperson

ATTEST:

KIMBERLY S. CHRISTENSEN  
Secretary

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