

Hello Neighbor,

**July 3, 2010 PSWID Meeting**

**Next regular PSWID Meeting: Saturday July 24, 2010 at 1:00 PM at the Pine Cultural Center**

1. July 4<sup>th</sup> Weekend Water Levels
  - a. Pine and Strawberry survived the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend with flying colors. Water storage levels went from 100% at the start of the weekend down to 84% on July 5<sup>th</sup>. As of July 6<sup>th</sup> water storage levels had recovered to 94%. The tank level report can be viewed here:  
<http://www.waterforpinestrawberry.com/data%20pages/BudgetDocs.htm> .
  - b. Comment: Thanks to a wet winter and the effort of the PSWID operations staff to improve the operation of the shallow wells it looks like we will be able to get through the summer without the need for additional water sources. The operations staff should take pride in their accomplishments.
2. PSWID Board Election
  - a. Three board seats will be up for election this November. If you are interested in running you need to have collected a minimum of 22 signatures and submit them to Gila County Elections by August 4<sup>th</sup>. There is some paper work to fill out and a signature form to get. We have a couple of the information packets from Gila County to give out. Or you can you can contact:
    - i. Linda Eastlick, [leastlick@co.gila.az.us](mailto:leastlick@co.gila.az.us), (928)402-8708
    - ii. David Rogers, [drogers@co.gila.az.us](mailto:drogers@co.gila.az.us), (928)402-8750
  - b. If you are interested in running and need help with signature collection, let us know.
3. Strawberry Hollow Well
  - a. The board missed another deadline with regard to the Strawberry Hollow well. They were supposed to complete a Letter of Intent to buy the well. The district's new attorney, Mr. David Davis, is trying to come up to speed. Board members said that he needs additional background on what the board expects to accomplish. The agreement is hung up on some issues that Mr. Davis is not comfortable with.
  - b. The board approved a motion that the attorney focus on this and have an executed contract in 30 days.
  - c. Mr. Loren Peterson, owner of the Strawberry Hollow well, said that he has provided three proposals to the board since December, and that none of them have been answered. He said that he has been pumping 300,000 gallons per week since June 15<sup>th</sup>. He said that he wants Strawberry Hollow to retain the first rights to the water. He said that the 72 lots in Strawberry Hollow would eventually use less than 1% of the available water from the well.
  - d. Comment: Buying the well should mean having control of the water. It would be fine for the district to enter into a water sharing agreement with Strawberry Hollow, but Strawberry Hollow should not be allowed to retain control of the water. If that is to be the case, then why buy the well at all? Just work a water sharing agreement the other way.

- e. In an email that we obtained between Mr. Harry Jones and Gila County Commissioner Ms. Tommie Martin, a copy of which can be found here: <http://www.waterforpinestrawberry.com/data%20pages/BudgetDocs.htm> , Mr. Jones provides the following description of the long-term viability of the Strawberry Hollow and Milk Ranch wells: “Exploratory holes in P/S would also help find the water supply for the long term. Within a couple of years, we need far more than what we will ever get out of the Milk Ranch well (expensive to operate and maintain because of filtration of sanding and suspended fines) and the Strawberry Hollow well (apparently not a real long-term well because of its construction technique).”
  - f. Comment: So is this the information that the conspiracy theory faction wanted to keep from being discussed in public? That we will be paying too much for a Milk Ranch well that is expensive to operate? That the Strawberry Hollow well may not last all that long?
4. 2010-2011 Budget
- a. The budget, for \$3,123,080, was approved as published. A summary of the budget can be found here: <http://www.waterforpinestrawberry.com/data%20pages/BudgetDocs.htm> .
5. Water Rates
- a. The water rate increases were approved as published, see <http://www.waterforpinestrawberry.com/data%20pages/BudgetDocs.htm> , with the following amendments:
    - i. The rates for 2”, 3”, and 4” meters did not have the \$18 dollar cost of the 3000 gallons added to them. The rates were increased to \$85, \$110, and \$165 starting 1/1/2011.
    - ii. The start date for the first phase of rate increases was changed to August 1<sup>st</sup> since the approval of the rate changes did not come until after the start of July.
  - b. The first phase of the rate increases brings all users in the system to the Pine summer rates. This represents an increase of 21.4% to 65.7% for 3000 gallons of usage in Strawberry, depending on the rate set that the customer is currently on. Most customers in Strawberry will see a 30.7% increase.
  - c. The second phase will occur on 1/1/2011 when the monthly base rate increases substantially and 3000 gallons of usage are included. People who use 3000 gallons or more will not experience a rate increase. Those that use less than that will. This is targeted at increasing the proportion of revenue provided by weekenders. A weekender that normally uses 1000 gallons per month would experience an increase of 47.2%.
  - d. Concern was expressed that if weekenders are paying for 3000 gallons that they will find ways to use it. The general discussion was that weekenders should be as water conscious as the full-timers, but that if it comes to pass that they do use what they are paying for, that the water system should be able to handle it next summer.
  - e. The cost of getting a new meter rose from \$500 to \$3200. Of that \$3200, \$2000 is an impact fee. It was stated that this was a guess, probably low-end, and future work will be done to identify what is proper.

- f. Board member Mr. Ron Calderon in answering criticism about the rate increases said “Not talking more than \$200 per household and if we can’t afford that then maybe we should go on welfare.”
  - g. Comment: Mr. Calderon is consistently the least effective board member. His statement was an insult to those that live on fixed or limited incomes. There are a lot of people in this community who find themselves in that situation. In going to a base rate with 3000 gallons, it removes the ability of those folks to lower their water usage in order to conserve financial resources. For them, that \$200 a year is money that they need for other basics in life. At the very least Mr. Calderon could be sensitive to the financial impact on all members of the community.
6. Comment: In the course of the hearings on the budget and water rates, the board was able to only answer a small percentage of the questions asked. The inability to answer questions was deflected by saying that the Economists.com report by Dan Jackson covered it, or that the staff member who prepared that part was on vacation or no longer with the district. When this board is approving a budget of over \$3,000,000 and very large rate increases, they owe it to the community to understand those items well enough that they can answer basic questions about them. It wasn’t even clear that they had looked at any of it before the meeting. Audience members seemed much more informed of the details than they did.
7. Hiring of Interim District Manager
  - a. The district has entered into a contract with CH2MHill for an interim General Manager, Mr. Dennis Burrell (sp?), at a cost of \$6000 per month. He lives out of state but will spend 24 hours a week on-site and perform whatever additional hours are required remotely. He is very experience in operating water systems.
8. Miscellaneous
  - a. A copy of the PSWID attorney’s contract can be found here: <http://www.waterforpinestrawberry.com/data%20pages/BudgetDocs.htm> . Mr. Davis is being paid \$190 per hour and his paralegal at \$125 per hour. Other costs are separate.
  - b. The district has placed chlorinators on all of the wells to ensure that bacteria issues are not encountered with the water.

This email is from the group Water For Pine Strawberry. We will be sending out an email after each of the PSWID meetings with a summary of what the board did, additional facts that are relevant to what went on, and some commentary. Please forward this email to friends and neighbors that are interested in the local water issues. If you would like to be added to or removed from the list for these emails, please reply to [WaterForPineStrawberry@hotmail.com](mailto:WaterForPineStrawberry@hotmail.com). Emails on earlier meetings are available on our website: [www.WaterForPineStrawberry.com](http://www.WaterForPineStrawberry.com) .

Water For Pine Strawberry is a group of residents who are concerned about the communities water issues and how they can best be resolved. Visit our web site, [www.WaterForPineStrawberry.com](http://www.WaterForPineStrawberry.com), for more information. The website for PSWID is [www.pswid.org](http://www.pswid.org) .

Clarifications can be submitted by anyone who is explicitly named, implicitly identifiable, or a board member to items in this email. Clarifications will be posted on our website. We reserve the right to post a response. Clarifications must deal with the topics discussed in the email that relate

to the individual or the board. They must be in family friendly language and be non-abusive. When the clarification is accepted, it will be posted to the website and notice of that posting will be added to the next email.