

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE HILL COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

The regular meeting of the Hill County Water District was held on February 4, 2026, at the Hill County Water District's office in Hingham, Montana.

Board members present: Dan Hybner, Jason Myers, Kevin Springer, Tina Wood, via phone Larry Fossen, and Rob Moog. Absent: Shane Borlaug and Lowell Strissel.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS: None

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Board Member Dan Hybner and declared a quorum present. Also present was Manager Chad Hedges, and Secretary Genevieve Hanson.

Public Comment: No Members were present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: Mr. Hybner asked for corrections or additions to the minutes of January 7, 2026, regular Board meeting previously received by all Board Members. On motion by Kevin Springer, seconded by Tina Wood, the Board approved the minutes of January 7, 2026, regular Board meeting as presented.

OLD BUSINESS:

JOPLIN PUMP - Mr. Hedges ordered a pump for Joplin to remedy the on-going pressure fluctuation issues.

BOARD ELECTIONS – Ms. Hanson informed Dan Hybner, Kevin Springer and Lowell Strissel that their four-year seat is coming to term. As of February 2, 2026, no other candidates are running against them. As such, the election can be cancelled. The Declaration of Acclamation was completed and will be filed with the Elections Clerk at the Hill County Court House on February 5, 2026.

INVERNESS TANK UPDATES – Mr. Hedges provided an update and that he's working on a Plan A and Plan B and those will be provided in the future.

CUSTOMER PAYMENT PORTAL – Mr. Hedges informed the Board that the Payment Portal is up and running and customers can start using it to pay their water bill. There has not been any customers using it as of yet, but the outlook is promising.

NEW BUSINESS:

JOPLIN LEAK – Mr. Hedges informed the Board that this was fixed last week.

SNOWPACK – It is currently at 125%. While this seems unbelievable given the unseasonably warm winter weather, there has been considerable snow received in the mountains.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – Mr. Hedges revisited the Rules and Regulations with the Board. Namely, there are a few Associations that are not charging the Base, or O&M Fees to customers with zero water usage. A lengthy discussion was had regarding the issue, and the billing errors it causes for the Billing Clerk, but more specifically the lost revenue. It was reiterated that the meters are the property of Hill County Water District, thus all members using water metered through a District meter, are also to follow the District's Rules and Regulations. This means they will need to pay Base and O&M Fees regardless of their water usage, or lack thereof. This is to cover the cost of the meter, future maintenance of the meter, as well as staffing. Mr. Hedges informed the Board that the current Rules and Regulations amendments will be proposed in April 2026 with the rate changes and the Base/O&M Fee issues will be addressed at that same time. A Public Hearing will be scheduled at a future date to present the rate increases. Rates are scheduled to increase in June 2026.

BLACK MOUNTAIN ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE – The implementation date remains in April 2026, and a software training schedule has been received.

BILLING CARDS – In an effort to find more cost saving opportunities for the District, Mr. Hedges and Ms. Hanson requested that bills go out in post-card format versus the current paper bill, folded in an envelope with a stamp. It currently costs the district \$1.23/bill, and a post-card would cost \$.92/bill, resulting in \$.31 savings per bill. Over the course of a year, this could add up to \$500.00 savings.

OFFICE PRINTER – The current printer used at the office for billing and daily administrative duties is failing. The current service contract costs approximately \$107.00/month and it was recommended by the service provider that it should be cancelled due to the high cost and ineffectiveness. The Board approved purchasing a new printer outright to replace the failing printer and save on service contract costs. The cost of a new printer is priced at approximately \$600.00-\$900.00.

CHLORAMINES – Mr. Hedges informed the Board that he is working on getting set up to replace chlorine with chloramines. This is a required process to prepare for the future North Central Montana Regional Water Authority line hook up.

CHESTER REQUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY – Chester has requested membership with the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority and requires approval from current members for the addition. On motion was made by Jason Myers, seconded by Tina Wood, the Board unanimously approved Chester's membership and passed the Resolutions Approving the Town of Chester as a Member.

EMPLOYEE REPORT: None.

FINANCIAL REPORT: One CD is coming to term on February 12, 2026, and the Board would like to keep the CD with Independence Bank. On motion made by Kevin Springer, seconded by Jason Myers, the Board unanimously approved renewing the CD with Independence Bank.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

DELINQUENCES: The Board reviewed current delinquencies.

BILLS: The Board reviewed the list of monthly bills; a copy of the list of current bills is appended to these minutes. On motion by Kevin Springer, seconded by Jason Myers, the Board approved all such bills for payment.

ADJOURNMENT: Kevin Springer motioned and Jason Myers seconded for meeting adjournment at 8:13PM.

Next Regular Meeting- Wednesday March 4th, 2026, at 7:30p.m. at the District's office at 104 Second Street, Hingham, Montana.