

MINUTES OF THE MAY 13, 2026 WORKSHOP

CLIFTON WATER DISTRICT

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mel Diffendaffer, Dan Mcelley, Jeff Cook, and Michael Slauson.

ABSENT: Nick Genova.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennifer Pettingill, Jacob Lenihan, Blair Wade, Ty Jones, and Rene Fick.

GUESTS PRESENT: None.

WORKSHOP – CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Diffendaffer called the May 13th, 2026 Workshop to order at 12:02pm.

- 2026 Rates & Fees – Manager Jones stated that updated Drought/Emergency rates had been approved during the February 12th, 2026 meeting. As implementation of these rates is now becoming reality, staff re-evaluated the numbers and have made some adjustments. These updates included changes to the Non-Residential rate multiplier. Staff had concerns that the jump to five times the current rate was too severe on residential rates. He noted that due to regulations, any change to rates and fees made by a Special District must be advertised for 30 days, and the earliest this decision can be made is on May 27th – hence the Special Meeting scheduled for noon that day. Discussion ensued with Manager Jones stating that even with these reduced rate increases, there will still be a significant impact to customers. The base remains the same for both Residential and Non-Residential/Irrigation customers for usage under 3,000 gallons. For Residential customers, usage between 3,001 – 25,000 gallons will be charged at twice the current rate. Usage exceeding 25,000 gallons will be charged at five times the current rate. The rates approved in February included charging five times the current rate when usage exceeds 10,000 gallons. For Non-Residential customers, usage between 3,001 - 18,000 gallons will be charge twice the current rates, and usage exceeding 18,000 gallons will be charged at three times the current rate. Manager Jones explained that usage of 25,000 gallons or more is *not* the amount of water used by even large families, but for watering landscaping. The Non-Residential rates were discussed with Manager Jones noting that there is concern about putting some customers out of business. The update to three times (from five times) the current rate will mean a lesser impact on the majority of these customers. He stressed that these rates are not meant to be permanent. Brief discussion ensued on business operations, specifically car washes, and how it is everyone’s responsibility to conserve water

however they can. Vice Chairman McElley commented that businesses can charge more to offset their increase in water costs, with Treasurer Slauson adding that businesses could have a water surcharge, similar to those charged during the egg shortage.

The mixed messaging from water providers regarding water supply and drought rates was noted, with Manager Jones explaining that each water utility company has different water sources, and the drought affects each one differently. The City of Grand Junction may not be as affected by low river conditions like the District will be, and as discussed in previous meetings, the District's trigger would be the irrigation companies and their ability to provide water to irrigators.

Manager Jones explained that the District bills in arrears, and the effective date for any Drought/Emergency rates would be for usage starting on June 1st. The July billing statement would be the first statement to reflect the Drought/Emergency rates. This is being proposed as the District needs to anticipate when irrigators will start to lose water, along with the District's meter reading cycles, while still allowing enough time for customer notification. He added that notification postcards have already been designed should the Board decide to enact Drought/Emergency rates. There will be a press release, and notifications on billing statements along with utilizing social media to get the message out to customers. Manager Jones speculated that many customers may not fully realize the impact of Drought/Emergency rates until the arrival of their July billing statements so actual reductions in water usage is only expected around August.

The Drought Response Plan was discussed next, and Manager Jones explained that it is still a work in progress. Since each water provider has different systems, storage, and water sources, a major sticking point was the provision that when one water provider goes to Drought/Emergency rates, it automatically serves as a trigger for the rest of the water providers to do the same. For the District, the trigger would be when irrigators lose access to their water with the goal of discouraging them from using domestic water for landscaping. Front Office Supervisor Simpson commented that approximately 9.6% of District customers do not have access to irrigation water and that even with all the drought messaging out there, no significant drop in usage has been observed so far.

Manager Jones raised the issue of locking off irrigation meters, adding that following different conversations with some HOAs, they may not be watering the grass but would need water for trees and shrubs to keep them alive. The option to lock off irrigation meters is still in the Rules and Regulations, allowing for flexibility in addressing high usage.

The District's leak adjustment policy was noted, with Manager Jones explaining that adjustments are approved under the regular policy for leaks on the service line, and leaks that do not qualify under the regular policy may be considered with an exception leak adjustment request. With the implementation of Drought/Emergency rates, staff are considering temporarily eliminating the exception request option.

A general discussion on drought conditions ensued with Secretary Cook noting that water conservation is a matter of changing people's minds. This is hard to do when there is only one bill per month, vs. for example, filling up at the gas station regularly and seeing those prices every time. Manager Jones stated that some customers will simply pay the higher bill, and some customers will conserve water. He further stated that in 2012 there were voluntary restrictions in place valley-wide, and the result was a spike in usage rather than a reduction.

ADJOURN WORKSHOP:

Workshop Adjourned at 12:53pm by Chairman Diffendaffer.

ATTEST:


Mel Diffendaffer, Chairman


Dan McElley, Vice Chairman


Michael Slauson, Treasurer

Absent, with excuse

Nick Genova, Director


Jeff Cook, Secretary