



A Monthly Newsletter

May 2021

Serving the Community

“Your Independent Local Government Agency Providing Water, Wastewater, Drainage, Security, and Solid Waste Services”

District Meeting Schedule For May 2021

May 11, 2021

Special Personnel @ 7:30 a.m.

Special Improvements @ 8:00 a.m.

May 13, 2021

Special Communication & Technology @ 8:30 a.m.

Special Security @ 1:00 p.m.

May 14, 2021

Special Finance @ 10:00 a.m.

May 19, 2021

District Board Meeting @ 5:00 p.m.

The public is invited to attend.

All meeting dates and times are subject to change. Be sure to check our website, www.rmcsd.com for any changes

BE SURE TO LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

DISTRICT RATE INCREASE

The District recently sent you a Proposition 218 Notice of a Public Hearing. The notice defines the PROPOSED increases in rates for July 2021 to June 2022 fiscal year. By law, CSD provides this notice and sets a maximum amount you may be charged for each service that together, comprise your total utility bill. The primary rates are Water, Sewer, Drainage, Security and Solid Waste (i.e. garbage). CSD, in compliance with the provisions of Proposition 218, will conduct a public hearing on May 19, 2021. The CSD Board will, based on internal review, public input, public protest and a board vote, set the final rates for the coming year. Your bill can go down but (again) by law, rates cannot exceed what you were provided in the original, Proposition 218 notice.

The proposed increase is 17%. It is not the highest increase ever proposed but is severe and has drawn a significant amount of public concern. This has not gone unnoticed. There are several reasons that make this increase necessary.

The best way to compare data is to use the “average residential bill”. In 2012, CSD had 2,512 customers. CSD has added ONLY 100 customers in eleven years. Costs significantly outrun revenue and we must adjust yearly to continue to provide a zero-sum budget. The revenue stream is slowly changing and may bode well for utility costs in future years. For now, however, a lack of development (more houses) radically impacts the “cost per customer”. The budget, in this same time period, has risen from \$5.1 million to nearly \$7.1 million. That is approximately \$200,000 per year. Because we have only added 100 residential customers, almost the entire increase has been the burden of the existing ratepayer base. The average residential CSD bill in 2011 was \$149. Today, that bill is \$187 and the proposed increase will raise this average bill to \$218. Importantly, this is a 31% increase over a 10-year period, or less than 3% per year (less than one percent higher than the annual, average Consumer Price Index). This may sound either reasonable or unreasonable, depending on your point of view. Either way you judge this, it is not the whole story.

CSD Boards, historically, have used reserve funding to control yearly increases. Reserves are both “rainy day funds” and long-term asset replacement funds. If you build a Water Treatment Plant or buy a truck, you will, at some time in the future, need to replace it. CSD presently has \$58 million in assets. For example: in-ground sewer pipes, a Water Treatment Plant, motorized heavy equipment and water storage tanks. Some of these assets are already 40 years old. When something breaks, you pay to repair or replace it and those costs are absorbed through immediate assessments or increases.... OR you pay those costs with RESERVE DOLLARS set aside in anticipation of further asset replacement.

In 2011, CSD had \$8 million in its reserve accounts. Eleven years later, we have nearly the same amount in those accounts and our reserves are significantly underfunded. CSD also borrowed \$2 million in 2014 from its own “non-water” reserve accounts to fund our new water treatment plant. You already pay \$6 each month to repay this inter-fund liability. If your bill, over time had increased incrementally by an additional two percent, CSD could have properly “funded” all of its reserve accounts. The result would be no surprises and no “rate-slams”. The improper balancing of reserve requirements has created two such “slams”....one in 2009 and again twelve years later. These radical increases were followed by minimal yearly increases (and even some decreases) in your rates. Minimal rate increases were accomplished by avoiding an upward adjustment of our underfunded reserves. This board believes it is time to fix that. This action by the Board will demonstrate sound fiscal responsibility. Please understand that while we are raising your rates, we are also raising our own.

We welcome your input. Please participate in the process. There will be both a budget workshop and an actual budget hearing where your voice will be heard. To protest the increase, you may mail a letter to P.O. Box 1050, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683. You may also hand deliver this protest to the District Offices at 15160 Jackson Road. The law requires all Proposition 218 protests to be in writing. We cannot accept electronic (e-mail) letters.

GENERAL MANAGER'S CORNER

2021 Water Supply Trending Down

The Sacramento region is experiencing a second dry year in a row, but water supplies in the Sacramento area will be adequate in 2021. One to two dry years does not create a drought emergency, but they can be a cause for concern.

Much like last year, precipitation in Northern California is below normal. We had a decent rain and snowfall in December, but below normal conditions for January, February and March.

Water supply in Rancho Murieta Reservoirs is normal and other reservoirs around the state are below normal levels of storage, but our region does not have a water shortage and is not asking its customers to take any extraordinary conservation measures. If the coming winter of 2021-22 is dry, we will re-evaluate the actions we will need to take to respond to the situation.

Please continue using water as efficiently as possible, especially outdoor watering. In our region, most household water use occurs outdoors so it's critical to be as efficient as possible with outdoor watering.

Employee Spotlight – Plant Operator I —Ed McMurray

ED McMURRAY started with the District as an Operator in Training in January of 2020. He spends his days at the District insuring the quality of the drinking water for Rancho Murieta, and making sure the facilities are functioning. While working at the District for the past year, the biggest change he has seen has been the switching from Chlorine Gas to Sodium Hypochlorite. When he's not making sure we have clean water, Ed loves to ride his bike, practice indoor rock climbing, and cook, because he loves to see people smile when they eat his amazing tacos!



April 1, 2021 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING (BUDGET) HIGHLIGHTS

- Reviewed FY 2021-22 Budget—which included a 17% increase to most residential customers
- Authorized Staff to mail the Prop 218 Notice to rate payers

April 21, 2021 BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- In Closed Session denied settlement with former employee William McCarver
- Received Utility Department's Annual Report
- Reviewed FAQ's for Prop 218 Notice received in Protest Letters
- Reviewed Security Opinion Poll Timeline
- Received an update on RMA's Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee
- Approved Contract with Redwood Painting Co. for East and West Dissolved Air Flootation Tanks Painting
- Approved changes to Loan Agreement with RMCC for Reclaimed Water Pump repair

March 2020 COMMITTEE MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Personnel Committee

- Discussed recruitment for Controller, Accounting Supervisor, and Security Supervisor
- Discussed Potential Reorganization plans

Communications & Technology Committee

- The Reservoir Information and Education Ad Hoc Committee was discussed
- Reviewed Vandalism to Calero Reservoir

Security Committee

- Reviewed Plans to issue County citations
- Discussed FY 2021-22 IT plans
- Reviewed Status for live Board and Committee meetings
- Discussed Annual Deer Creek Law Enforcement/EMS meeting

Improvements Committee

- Discussed Laguna Joaquin
- Recommended moving contract with Redwood Painting Co. for DAF painting to Board for Approval

Finance Committee

- Introduced Paula O'Keefe, Director of Administration
- Reviewed Annual Audit
- Discussed April Budget Activities
- Received an update on the Security Opinion Poll

Board of Directors

Tim Maybee
President
tmaybee@rmcsd.com

Randy Jenco
Vice President
rjenco@rmcsd.com

Linda Butler
Director
lbutler@rmcsd.com

John Merchant
Director
jmerchant@rmcsd.com

Martin Pohl
Director
mpohl@rmcsd.com



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BUSINESS HOURS

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
& 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Closed for Lunch -
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

DISTRICT STAFF

Tom Hennig

General Manager
thennig@rmcsd.com

Paula O'Keefe

Director of Administration
pokeefe@rmcsd.com

Amelia Wilder

District Secretary
awilder@rmcsd.com

**Controller
Recruiting**

**Accounting Supervisor
Recruiting**

**Security Supervisor
Recruiting**

Tina Talamantes
Security Administration
ttalamantes@rmcsd.com

Rick Tompkins
Patrol Sergeant
rtompkins@rmcsd.com

Paul Siebensohn
Director of Field Operations
psiebensohn@rmcsd.com

Travis Bohannon
Chief Plant Operator
tbohannon@rmcsd.com

Ron Greenfield
Utilities Supervisor
rgreenfield@rmcsd.com

COMMUNITY FORUM

Be Careful This Spring/Summer!

The weather is beautiful, and there are many opportunities to enjoy the fabulous parks and recreational facilities in our Community, but please be mindful of dangers that can ruin your fun!

1. SNAKES—this is the time of year when rattlesnakes are becoming active. Avoid thick brush when hiking. Work outside and hike during the coolest part of the day. Stick to the trail.
2. FIREWORKS—this will be a particularly dry year, and fireworks can be very dangerous! If you have some, please save them for the 4th of July!
3. PREPARE FOR WILDFIRES-
 - A. Create a 100 foot defensible space around home
 - B. Use ember-resistant building materials to protect your home
 - C. Create your own emergency supply kit
 - D. Create your family communication and evacuation plans
4. BE WATER SAFE—
 - A. Always swim in a safe place
 - B. Always have a sober adult with you
 - C. Watch for hidden debris, rapid currents and slippery rocks
 - D. If some else is in trouble, call 911

HAVE A GREAT SEASON!!

WE'RE HIRING!

The District currently has openings for Security Supervisor, Gate and Patrol Officer, Controller and Accounting Supervisor! Please visit our website at <https://www.ranomurietacsd.com/employment-opportunities> for more information! We are a great place to work, with great benefits, a positive team work environment and flexible schedules, and right around the corner from where you live!

Development Update

MG—Lot 9 (Taco Bell) - The Developer reports this project has been approved by CPAC. The owner intends to sell the property, at which point the new owner will submit a project application packet. They are seeking final county zoning approval at a 2/17/21 meeting.

MG- Lot 10 (PDF Office)—Civil plans have been approved and are waiting for signatures.

MG – Lot 11 (Circle K Gas Station/carwash) - The project anticipates beginning on April 1, weather dependent.

Riverview— The development has a 3 phased plan packages currently being processed.

Retreats East and North - The project reports that K Hovnanian will be purchasing the property, they submitted improvement plans and the District is waiting on updated plans and deposits.

Rancho Murieta North— The Project met with Domenichelli and Associates and CSD Staff to review plans. They would like comments and need to submit deposits. The traffic study is complete, and the greenhouse gas study will be complete soon.

Residences Of Murieta Hills East — CSD met with the Developer who is interested in proceeding soon.

*Detailed Updates can be found on our website:
<https://www.ranomurietacsd.com/development-projects>*

Why Your Timely Payment May Still be Leading to Delinquency Penalties

Everyone here at Rancho Murieta knows that payments for each month are due upon receipt and no later than the 25th of the following month. What you may not know, however, is why a payment that you made on the 15th may still be delinquent on the 25th. This has to do with how your payments are being made, and is specifically an issue for those choosing to make their payments via ONLINE BANKING. Although in most cases online banking is an instantaneous transaction, when it comes to paying the District that transaction must often pass through several clearing houses before we receive it, and those steps can take as long as two weeks to process. This has to do with a number of factors, but they all combine to make it so that your payment that was on time when you sent it, is now late when we receive it.

We do not have the ability to waive delinquency fees, but we also do not want any of our residents to have to pay fees for which they are not at fault. As such, we at the District would like to advise everyone of several alternative payment methods that we believe will alleviate the issue:

1. Payment Drop Boxes

There are several designated payment boxes located around Rancho Murieta. You can find them at the Association parking lot, the Village Club House, and the District Administration Building. If you deposit a physical check in any one of these boxes it will be received WITHIN 24 HOURS, because we check each one daily.

2. Online Bill Payment Service

The District has partnered with a specific service, Paymentus, an online payment service provider, who will process your payment on behalf of the District, ensuring that it is handled on time. Please be aware that there is a service fee of \$4.50 for any payment up to and including \$300.00. For more information you can visit www.rmcsd.com.

3. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

If you choose to enroll in the EFT program, then your payment will be automatically withdrawn from your bank account on the 15th of each month (or the following business day), ensuring that it is received on time. There is no fee for payments in the EFT program. For more information you can visit www.rmcsd.com, or just check the back of your statement.

4. Pay by Phone

You may also dial 1-855-288-7460 at any time to pay via our automated phone service. Simply follow the instructions and your payment will be received WITHIN 24 HOURS. Please be aware that there is also a service fee for all payments made over the phone.

SWIMMING POOL COVERS

Did you know solar swimming pool covers are a practical and economical way to save money on your pool expenses? A cover can lower your overall pool maintenance costs, including heating and chemical use. Pool covers help reduce evaporation, which means less water is needed to refill the pool. Pool covers can also lessen the time spent cleaning the pool by helping to keep debris out.

FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 BUDGET HEARING SCHEDULED

The 2021-2022 fiscal year for the District begins July 1, 2021. The budget, including Capital Projects and the proposed service charge increases and special tax adjustments is scheduled for the District's May 19, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Directors.

Directors and staff have been reviewing data and have capped the projected increase for residential customers to 17 percent. The rate could be reduced during these hearings, but not increased. Notices to customers regarding the rate increase were mailed on April 2, 2021 in compliance with Proposition 218. The proposed rate hike would increase the average residential bill \$28.58 per month.

You can protest the rate increase. Protests must be submitted in writing. Written letters of protest must be received at the District prior to the beginning of the May 19, 2021 public hearing. Email protest letters will not be accepted. Protests must contain your name and a description of the property in which you have an ownership interest. A street address and/or the assessor's parcel number are sufficient descriptions. Send your comments to Rancho Murieta Community Services District, C/O Director of Administration, P.O. Box 1050, Rancho Murieta, California 95683 or call (916) 354-3700.

HOW TO CONTACT THE DISTRICT

Visit us on the web at www.rmcsd.com!

*The District's Administration Office is located at: 15160 Jackson Road, Rancho Murieta

*Our mailing address is: P.O. Box 1050, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683; Main Office: 916-354-3700

*South Gate: 916-354-3743 *Contact the South Gate for after-hours water problems.*