



NEWSLETTER

April 8, 2024

Greetings,

The Executive Board met March 10 to discuss our water system upgrades and other items of business. Here is another update on our progress.

Our Capital Reserve account for new and replacement infrastructure sits at just over \$50,000.

Our Operating account is stable with enough funds for our annual operating expenses. We still have a few water accounts past due - when paid this will add to our operating account balance.

The engineers at Northwest Water Systems (NWS, our Satellite Management Company) are moving forward on designing the infrastructure for an additional well for our water system. They are in the process of submitting our application to drill a new well to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH).

OBCG board members have been very busy working for the community, especially in relation to the application for the additional well. We have attended many meetings with Mason County and the state to discuss challenges we are facing, starting with how OBCG is currently not in compliance with the requirement that the Sanitary Control Area surrounding our well is to span a full 100' radius. This control area is needed to protect the wellhead from contamination. We are working with the state and NWS to request a reduction in the 100' radius to support our project.

Now that we are asking for a permit to drill a new well, all aspects of our water system are subject to examination or auditing by the state and/or county to ensure we are meeting all of the regulatory requirements.

Since my previous report we were advised by our real estate attorney, the two title companies in Mason County, and local surveyors that we needed to file a corrected Quit Claim Deed with Mason County concerning the property on which our wells are located. This has been done.

We recently signed a contract with D.R. Surveying to survey the wellhouse property; this should be completed before the end of April. We have been instructed that the community is NOT to remove any markers around the wellhouse property. They are being used to establish the best location for the new well.

In addition there is a new mandate from the federal Environmental Protection Agency and DOH that we must conduct random sampling of water between this June and September. This is to test for lead and copper from within member households. Once we know who has been selected randomly by our vendor (NWS) we'll reach out to those members with instructions.

The board also has to stay on top of paying monthly bills for the well along with yearly reports and permits required by the state. These include submitting our water permit, our annual report to the secretary of state, the annual Consumer Confidence Report, our yearly contract with NWS, filing our 2023 taxes, and managing the future well expansion.

As mentioned in my previous newsletter, the priorities for our Class A water system are: Ensure Reliability, Establish Redundancy, and Enable Possible Expansion, in that order. We will continue to stand firm to stay in compliance with state mandates, specifically policies and regulations enforced by the state Department of Ecology and DOH.

Also, after NWS began charging OBCG more (a higher rate AND more hours) to read our meters, increasing the annual charge to approximately \$1,800-plus, the Board decided to bring meter reading back in-house. Ingrid Phelps has volunteered to read them for the time being. They are read during the first week of every other month. If anyone else in the community would like to help keep costs down by becoming a volunteer meter reader it would be greatly appreciated. Let the board know.

The April meter reading revealed an unacceptable discrepancy between the amount of water pumped from our well versus the amount of water that has collectively been measured through the individual water meters. A second reading produced the same result. This is concerning because it could mean a leak in our water line. If anyone notices something that could explain this discrepancy, please contact the board. This is just another item that must be addressed for our water district to be in compliance with all regulations.

I will continue to keep everyone updated on the progress of our planned new well and any other issues relevant to our community water system.

You can now put the 2024 annual meeting on your calendar!

Noon on Sunday, June 30th at 340 E Orchard Beach Dr.

An election to fill the position of President will be conducted at this year's meeting.

If you cannot attend in person or virtually, you may assign your vote(s) to another member, who will vote by "proxy" on your behalf. Proxy-vote assignments must be made in writing 7 days prior to June 30, 2024 by sending written notice to the Secretary/Treasurer at orchardwater@yahoo.com. One vote is allowed per metered connection.

An agenda and virtual meeting notice will be provided at a later date for the annual meeting. I am looking forward to seeing you there.

Dennis Frett
OBCG President