

Letter to TID Board of Directors

DATE SUBMITTED: 11 November 2025

SUBMITTED to TID BOARD of DIRECTORS by personally handing this written Grievance to Board Chairman Ron Cochran at the 10:30AM Board Meeting, 11 November 2025

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESENT: Ron Cochran - Chairman
Martin Warbington - Vice Chair
Steve Putnam
Carol Shull
Ed Galazzo

GRIEVANCE:

During the October 14, 2025 Board meeting, the Tumalo Irrigation Board took inappropriate actions.

- 1) Without any discussion, Board Chairman Ron Cochran asked for a motion to "Ratify" the Board's decision to declare the 2022 Chevrolet Tahoe as surplus equipment. The Tahoe was traded in on January 15, 2025, 10 months prior to this motion being made. There is no provision in TID's ByLaws or Policies that allows the TID Board to "Ratify" decisions that were made illegally in the first place.

To "Ratify" means that the decision was made informally outside of an official Board Meeting. This violates TID Bylaws which require that Board decisions must be made in a Public Meeting with a quorum of Directors and with a majority vote prior to any action on such decision. There is no allowance in TID Bylaws for "Ratifying" any Board decision.

The motion was made by Board Member Martin Warbington and seconded by Board Member Steve Putnam. Those two and the two other Board Members present (Chairman Ron Cochran and Board Member Carol Schull) voted unanimously to pass the motion to "Ratify" that the Tahoe (that was disposed of on January 15, 2025) was surplus property.

- 2) The use of the term "Ratify" was to circumvent and to cover up the fact that a motion was never made, nor voted on in a public meeting 10 months ago when it was traded in for a new Dodge R2500 Laramie. Chairman Cochran had solely, and against TID Bylaws, given District Manager (DM) Chris Schull authorization to trade in the Tahoe for a new Dodge Ram 2500 Laramie. Both DM Schull and Vice Chair Martin Warbington knew the requirements of a board vote and yet they both signed the check to trade in the 2022 Tahoe and buy a new Dodge Ram 2500 Laramie.
- 3) Immediately after the "ratification" I asked Chairman Ron Cochran, "What about the new truck?" He responded that "it had been taken care of". That statement was not true. The purchase of the new Dodge Ram had never been voted on in a public meeting. Again, having been authorized by the sole direction of Chairman Cochran. If he had meant that their "ratification" was to include the purchase of the new vehicle, he did not make that clear.
- 4) The above 2 violations were to cover up a 15 January 2025 violation of the Public Meeting Laws that occurred when the Tahoe that District Manager Chris Schull had been driving was traded-in, and a new Dodge Ram 2500 Laramie was purchased. This took place the day after the January 14, 2025 board meeting, where District Manager Schull was directed to "get the numbers and get back to us". No Public Meeting was held nor any vote taken to purchase the new Dodge. The new Dodge Ram was purchased January 15, 2025, without a Regular or Special Session being held to approve the purchase of the truck using Long Term Funds, as required by TID's Bylaws.
- 5) At the TID Board Meeting on 9 September 2025, there was a follow-up discussion about the proper protocol for spending Long Term Funds. I asked the Board whether that process had been followed in regard to the purchase of the new truck. Board Chair Cochran immediately responded, "Yes, but it didn't get into the

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minutes.” He said this in spite of the fact that the entire Board unanimously approved the January minutes. He thus shifted accountability to the Scribe. All other Board members remained silent.

On Friday, October 10, 2025, I called Board Chair Cochran to offer him the opportunity to come clean, prefacing my concern with “I believe you made a mistake at the September Board Meeting”. When I referred to the lack of vote on buying the new Dodge Ram, he got angry and doubled down on “it just didn’t get into the minutes” and said the Board would vote to amend the January minutes at the next Board Meeting (October 14th). I reminded Mr. Cochran that I had been recording the Board Meetings since January and had listened to the tape and there was no motion or vote. Just a directive to DM Schull to “get the numbers and get back to us”, as January’s Unanimously Approved Minutes reflected. Chairman Cochran continued to get angry with me and I politely ended the call, saying that I believed in his honesty and integrity and that he would do the right thing.

I was expecting, or at least hoping, that at Octobers Board Meeting, Mr. Cochran would admit his mistake, that no special session was called to vote on spending long term funds for the purchase of the truck, and for unilaterally, thus illegally, authorizing District Manager Chris Schull to make the purchase. And that he would apologize to the patrons and commit to not making that mistake again. If he had demonstrated that kind of honesty, transparency and accountability for his violation I would have been satisfied, fully aware that good people make mistakes.

Monday, October 13, the day before the Board meeting, I passed the TID office and in addition to an office staff’s vehicle, I also noticed Ron Cochran’s car, TID attorney Mark Reinecke’s car, and Manager Schull’s truck in the parking lot of the TID office giving the appearance of a meeting between them. The next day at the regular Board meeting the Board voted to “ratify” an illegal decision. It appears that was an attempt to bypass their responsibility to the Patrons of TID to “behave in an open, honest, and transparent manner” and hope that Patrons would not notice.

Since Patrons pay for Mark Reinecke’s attorney fees for representing the Tumalo Irrigation District, he represents all the Patrons. Therefore he should not be helping, assisting, aiding or abetting any individual patron or group of Patrons that have violated ethics or laws to cover up or defend them against the Patrons who bring a grievance to them, in this case the TID Board of Directors. Those Patrons who have been called into question either need to address the issue themselves or, if they insist on using an attorney to speak for them they should hire their own private attorney from a firm other than the one Mark Reinecke is from, at their own expense,

REFERENCES

- Attached to letter is **ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCT** from Oregon Government Ethics Commission, May 2022
- TUMALO IRRIGATION DISTRICT
POLICIES & PROCEDURES
Amended April 16, 2024 (K)

F. BOARD DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY

Board Members Authorized By Official Board Action Only

Board members have no individual powers separate from the powers of the board and have no authority to act individually without delegation of authority from a quorum of the board. Likewise, no individual board member may speak for or on behalf of the board or district, except as authorized to do so by official board action as recorded in the official minutes, guidelines, or policies of the district.

Ethical Standards

Board members act as representatives of the citizens of the district. Therefore, board members shall adhere to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of district business.

See also (audio copy or transcription of the following available upon request. A fee may apply)

- January 2025 TID Board Meeting Minutes
- February 2025 TID Board Meeting Minutes
- September 2025 TID Board Meeting Minutes
- October 2025 TID Board Meeting Minutes Draft

Susie Hart, TID Patron