

May 2026 Patron Newsletter

Dear Fellow Patrons,

There were 3 Board Meetings in May.

29 April: Special Session to appoint 2 Board Members to replace the vacancies left by the resignations of Ron Cochran, (as a result of a successful recall effort) Division 4 and Ed Gallazzo, Div 2.) The appointees were Jeff Stuermer for Division 4 and David Hampton for Division 2.

I am fully supportive of both appointees as they both have excellent qualifications and skills to bring to the Board. With 4 new highly skilled Board members since January 1st I expect that positive changes will start happening quickly now. This is a huge win for the patrons.

11 May: Regular Board Meeting: The Board voted to contract with HR Answers to write a new Employee Handbook with up to date Best Practices as well as appropriate employee job descriptions and compensation rates. (Please be forewarned that if we are overpaying current employees - we cannot walk that back, only pay new employees at what is set as the appropriate compensation rate.) The HR Answers guru, Laurie, attended by Zoom and outlined the process. The board voted to appoint a subcommittee of 2 board members, Martin Warbington and Yves Teirlynck as well as 2 staff members, Chris Schull, District Manager and April Spath, Office Manager to meet with and provide HR Answers the information needed. PATRON CONCERNS: A Patron from Division 5 reported that in spite of repeated requests for water he was left 2 weeks without water thus losing his new seeding. After the meeting he told me District Manager Schull's response was inadequate.

OTHER: Other important info about this Board Meeting can be found in the May Minutes that are in the Board Packet for the June Meeting (the Board Packet is available upon request from april@tumalo.org. or on the tumalo.org website after the June Board meeting on 9 June.)

15 May: DM Chris Schull called this Special Board meeting to make a large funding request from the Board. (This could have been done at the regular Board meeting 4 days earlier on the 11th) CONCERN: per TID ByLaws/Policies only the Board has the right to call Board Meetings.

At this meeting DM Schull requested that the Board fund an additional position (that DM Schull eliminated and reallocated the funds for 1 year ago which he did not have board authorization to do and violates our ByLaws/Policies which say only the Board can restructure the organization.) Funding this position will cost Patrons approximately \$80,000 per year including benefits. This is approximately the amount we finally are earning in interest from our cash reserves that a year ago a Patron rescued from the only 1/4% interest we were receiving over the last several years, thus having lost (by the previous board) a total of \$426,000 over the previous 4 years. This interest should have been directed to our emergency fund, if needed, and/or to reducing Patron fees. However, the new current board decided that patrons needs should come first and that restoring the ditch rider position would be best for water delivery for patrons. So in spite of what happened before they became board members Kudos to the board. They will be looking for other ways to save money elsewhere in the budget.

At this board meeting I asked DM Schull why he eliminated and diverted funds from this position a year ago. His answer: "I thought the drought was over." That is surprising since the meteorological forecasts to which a link is posted on the OWRD website that the DM gets the water report from clearly forecasts drought conditions for a year in advance.

June will be the second regular board meeting of the four new board members, which means they will probably be focusing on working toward making considerable changes to the workings of the district in order to set this ship sailing in the right direction.

Patrons are the owners of TID. The Board and thus District Manager answer to the Patrons. This won't happen unless Patrons stay engaged. So Please share your thoughts. Let me know where the Board & District Manager are doing well so we can give credit where credit is due. Also let me know your concerns about any of their failings or weakness so we can let them know where we would like to see improvement.

Susie Hart, Patron ECCL520@earthlink.net.