



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2010

### **ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Safety Director Recruitment**

Staff from CMSA and Sausalito-Marín City Sanitary District are working to recruit the new Safety Director for the collaborative Safety Director Program. A recruitment timeline was developed and a comprehensive effort initiated to hire for this position. A brochure is being used to garner widespread interest, and the job has been posted on several websites and in various publications. Applicants can go to CMSA's website for full information about the position and to download an application. The application period ends April 5.

#### **CMSA Website**

The Agency's website is always evolving. Recent changes to the site include updates to salary and benefits information, and simplified sections with links pointing to current Agency administrative documents and ordinances. The education calendar is easily accessible, and schools can find quick info about fun learning events like juggling shows. Visitors to the website can also find up-to-date Board minutes and agendas. In the near future, look for the website to help visitors find information about sewer laterals and the NBWA Marin Lateral Program.

#### **Monthly Budget Performance**

As of January 31, the Agency received 72% of budgeted operating revenue and incurred 58% of total budgeted operating expenses. Asset Management activities under the Capital Improvement Program was at 46% of budget. The Revenue Bond Program was at 83% of budget (\$68.3 million) and included \$2.1

million in contractual obligations associated with executed WWIP contracts and change orders and \$600,000 in contractual obligations for other Revenue Bond projects.

#### **FY 2010-2011 Budget**

Finance staff began developing the FY 11 Budget by issuing the Budget Development Calendar and distributing worksheet templates to department managers to develop preliminary budgets by department, asset management projects and major categories of revenues and expenses. Staff plan to seek input from the Board Finance Committee on the FY 11 Budget. The draft FY 11 Budget will be presented to the Board in May 2010 with the final FY 11 Budget ready for Board adoption in June.

#### **Implementation of GASB 45**

CMSA will implement GASB 45 by reporting retiree medical obligations in the FY 09/10 Financial Statements. GASB 45 does not mandate that the employer must fund this liability and allows the governing body to make the funding decision on an annual basis. In February 2009, the CMSA Board approved the establishment of an Other Post-Employment Benefit Trust (OPEB) account with CalPERS to allow the Agency to set aside funds to meet its retiree benefit obligations.

In the coming months, the CMSA Board will decide whether to fund the irrevocable trust account established at CalPERS based on the North Bay Pensions Actuarial Valuation Report the Board received in September 2008. Funds for the initial deposit into the CalPERS account are

available due to monies received from the Marin County Employees' Retirement Association (MCERA) for retiree health benefits for employees who transferred from SRSD. The GASB 45 liability on the FY 09/10 financial statements will likely be zero with the transfer of the MCERA funds to OPEB.

#### **Medical After Retirement Account (MARA)**

Staff is working with CalPERS to implement the MARA for unrepresented employees hired after 1/1/10. While CalPERS isn't the MARA plan administrator, it is involved in transitioning the health coverage from employment to retirement. Staff prepared CalPERS documents for Board approval in March, and will develop HR Policies and Procedures detailing the eligibility for and administration of post employment health benefits for Board review and adoption in April.

#### **CalPERS California Retirement Dialogue**

The Finance Manager attended a CalPERS workshop where retirement experts examined the current state of California's public pension plans and emerging ideas for ensuring future retirement security. Panelists represented a wide range of interest groups from organized labor, state and local officials, academics, CalPERS Board and staff, and retirees. The panelists discussed principles and solutions that balance the need for reasonable retirement benefits of employer-sponsored retirement plans with fiscal realities.

The California Secretary of State recently announced that the Office has processed three public section reform initiatives for signature gathering to qualify for the November 2010 ballot. If passed, all three initiatives would exempt current employees and only pertain to new hires after January 1, 2011. These measures would also place limits on retiree health benefits.

### **Training**

Recently, CMSA employees received training on topics affecting the workplace environment:

*What To Do When Conflict Happens* taught employees the impact conflict has on individuals and an entire organization. The **CALM** approach consists of four practical steps to resolve conflict: **C**larify the issue, **A**ddress the problem, **L**isten to the other side, and **M**anage the way to a mutually beneficial resolution.

*The Injury & Illness Prevention Program*, presented by Du-All Safety, emphasized workplace safety policies, rules, and programs to document and fix hazards and to prevent reoccurrence.

*Communication Breakdown* provided guidelines to prevent common causes of communication breakdown and reviewed skills to increase good communication.

Staff continued to receive training on the operations and maintenance of the new WWIP. Training topics included Aeration Diffusers, Sludge Collection Equipment, Polymer Recirculation Pumps, and the new Irrigation System.

### **Safety**

The beginning of the year is a busy time for Safety Training. We have specific safety topics we cover annually and with foul weather upon us, coffee and a dry place to train are very welcome!

Electrical and Instrumentation staff attended Electrical Safe Work

Practices NFPA 70E and Arc Fault Training in Oakland. NFPA 70E is a standard of the National Fire Protection Association and addresses electrical safety requirements for employee workplaces that are necessary during activities such as the installation, operation, maintenance, and demolition of electric conductors and equipment.

All CMSA staff participated in Hazardous Communications Standard Training (HCS). The safety law says employees should be apprised of all hazards they are exposed to on the job. In the early 80's, OSHA implemented this instruction by enacting the Hazard Communication Standard. A fundamental premise of the HCS is that employees who may be exposed to hazardous chemicals in the workplace have a right to know about the hazards and how to protect themselves. For this reason, the HCS is sometimes referred to as the Worker Right-to-Know Legislation.

### **Upgrade to Financial System**

The Finance Department viewed a demonstration of the latest version of the Open Systems financial system and has begun an assessment to upgrade to the latest 7.6 release. Open Systems is preparing a proposal to include all hardware and software, customized programming, and an assessment of staff time required to support the implementation.

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## **PROJECTS**

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### **Wet Weather Improvement Project**

The project is in its final phases. Agency Staff, Harris and Associates, and Western Water are working on punch list items and overall wrap-up. The Effluent Pump Station is ready for testing, needing only adequate effluent flows for the pumps to operate properly. Electrical testing and

control strategy testing for the new Polymer Facility, Primary Clarifiers, and grit pump and classifier are underway.

The control strategy testing is almost complete for the 22 automated Aeration gates to enable rapid switching to contact stabilization mode. The landscaping has been done, and most of the paving is completed. The painting subcontractor is finishing up the painting work.

The deck area at the top of the new Primary Clarifier ramp is being reconfigured to permit better access for the Agency's maintenance carts. The remaining paving and slurry sealing in the Corporation Yard and parking lots, and minor touchups around the edges of areas that required subgrade repairs are scheduled for March, weather permitting.

We anticipate bringing the project acceptance report and a recommendation to the Board in May.

### **Outfall Crack Investigation**

An alternative inspection method was developed due to unexpectedly large dewatering requirements for the original open excavation inspection method. This method involved setting a 48-inch diameter steel casing down to the top of the outfall pipe, removing the soil inside the casing, and having a diver perform and film the inspection. The good news is that it revealed *no evidence of cracking* of the outer concrete pipe shell.

### **Capital Master Planning**

Staff prepared a detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) for the capital improvement program evaluation and master planning assistance, which included a seismic vulnerability assessment of Agency facilities, and development of conceptual

options for the Agency to comply with future regulatory requirements that limit wastewater blending. The RFP was sent to over a dozen engineering firms that specialize in water and wastewater facility assessment and engineering design.

Staff met with consultant teams from several firms to answer questions about the proposed scope of work and give Agency tours. Proposals are due by Friday, February 26, and we plan to bring the Board a professional services agreement with the most qualified firm in April.

#### **Digester/FOG/F2E**

The project kick-off meeting was held in January between the Agency's project team and the design engineer, Kennedy/Jenks Consultants. Staff has met with K/J engineers to discuss new facility interconnection details and existing facility operational parameters. We have also provided K/J with geotechnical analyses, facility record drawings, and digester operational information.

The Board recently approved modifying the FOG facility design to allow the processing of food waste. Staff and K/J have executed a contract amendment for the additional design work.

#### **Headworks Screen Replacement**

The new screens are operating well and the electrical, mechanical, and control system modifications made since their fall 2009 start-up enabled them to effectively screen and wash material during the 100 MGD flow event on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

The contractor provided the Agency spare parts for the project equipment. Operations developed a standard operating procedure for the new screens to document operating details. Engineering and E/I staff developed an incident management plan for responding

to unpredictable occurrences, such as utility power failures. This will reduce staff time to trouble shoot problems.

#### **Biotower Rotary Distributor Reconditioning**

The Agency shipped the replacement turn table bearing to the manufacturer. They are fabricating a new stationary base and turntable due to interference problems between the original stationary base and the new bearing's bolt pattern. The new base and turntable will be fabricated with galvanized, epoxy coated carbon steel, rather than the original coated cast iron. Staff consulted with JDH Corrosion Consultants regarding the material change, and JDH's opinion is that the new stationary base and turntable will provide a minimum service life of 25 years. This approach allows the entire rotating tower to be built in their factory and shipped as a complete unit.

#### **Administration Building Expansion Project**

This project will allow for more space in the women's locker room and Environmental Services Department staff office. Also, the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning system will be upgraded. The Board awarded the design contract to Kappe+Du Architects of San Rafael after staff reviewed six proposals. An Agency team, women's locker room users, and the Environmental Services staff worked closely with Kappe+Du to develop a design that provides the needed space while keeping structural revisions to a minimum. The design work is progressing well, the final electrical and mechanical (HVAC and plumbing) engineers' reports are due in early March, and the midpoint cost estimate is due by mid-March. Depending on the City's plan check comments, this project is

scheduled to bid in June or July, with construction to begin mid-summer.

#### **Maintenance Projects**

The E/I shop, as part of efforts to maximize energy efficiency, is replacing traditional drive unit motors with Variable Frequency Drives (VFD). When the drive unit for a RAS (return activated sludge) pump failed, it was replaced with a much more efficient control system. VFD's allow machinery to start at low frequencies thus avoiding the high inrush current that occurs when a motor is started by simply applying the utility (mains) voltage by turning on a switch. After the start of the VFD, the applied frequency and voltage are increased at a controlled rate. You save energy by turning energy-gobbling equipment on slowly! We have one last RAS drive unit to replace in this area of the plant.

Other projects in February were:

Rebuilding the hydraulic cylinders for the primary clarifier #4 influent sluice gates. These cylinders are under extremely high pressures and their internal seals and gaskets are replaced periodically.

Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) tank #2 had a broken bottom chain repaired, and the top guide rail had some heavy wear which required fabrication work. The DAF's are used to thicken up or "concentrate bio-mass" prior to its introduction to the anaerobic digesters.

Two Return Activated Sludge pumps were totally rebuilt. The pumps return to the Aeration Basins "live microorganisms" to consume food from the wastewater as an integral part of the Activated Sludge process.

**Preventative Maintenance**

In wetter months, we are able to take some of our odor control systems down for their annual maintenance. Hydrogen Peroxide metering pumps (Hydrogen Peroxide is used to treat easy-to-oxidize pollutants such as sulfides) are outside and exposed to the elements which necessitate frequent monitoring to ensure they are operating properly, especially in the warmer months when sulfides form in the sewer mains.

In wet weather, rocks and sand enter the treatment works. To prevent these materials from plugging our piping and damaging pumps, we clean these systems to ensure they are ready for usage.

This month we had our natural gas powered vehicles inspected. The State of California requires fuel tanks be inspected by a licensed professional as they are considered pressure vessels.

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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**NPDES Testing**

The CMSA lab testing was in compliance with permit requirements, with 100% survival in our February bioassay.

**Public Outreach Activities**

Staff had a booth at the Bay Area Environmental Education and Resources Fair at the Civic Center. We gave away 126 environmental quizzes. Due to the economy, attendance and participation were at an all time low. Our booth was still very popular, and many were interested in our public outreach program. We already had one tour request from Marin Waldorf School, and 12 students and three teachers toured our treatment plant.

March is Poison Control Month. The wastewater treatment agencies in Marin will be working

together with local pharmacies to exchange mercury thermometers with digital ones.

**Laboratory**

The Regional Water Board (RWB) intends to perform an NPDES permit and lab inspection on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. In the past, these RWB inspections have gone very well.

**Environmental Compliance**

Annual report season has come to an end. All of our monitoring, environmental programs, and events are summarized into annual reports and submitted to the Regional Water Board or EPA. No details are left out!

**Mercury Reduction Program**

Staff gave a Mercury Reduction Ordinance presentation at the February Marin County Dental Society meeting. Dentists provided feedback and many questions were answered after the meeting. We've received phone calls about the program, and those we have spoken with have been supportive of removing mercury from the environment.

**Manometer Spill**

An old mercury-containing device used for maintenance on our previous generator had been stored for many years in the back of a cabinet. While staff was searching through the cabinet, the device tipped over and a small amount of mercury leaked. The area was isolated and staff cleaned the spill. A very sensitive mercury vapor meter was rented and measurements were taken. No mercury vapors were detected.

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## **CONTRACT/OUTSIDE SERVICES**

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**SRSD**

Another round of self-clean permit inspections were completed in San Rafael. These restaurants maintain their traps by performing cleaning at least every 15 days. Overall compliance was excellent.

**LGVSD**

Staff completed the LGVSD Annual Pollution Prevention Report and submitted it for review. Once comments from Las Gallinas have been added, we will submit their report to the Regional Water Board.

We are performing the self-clean permit inspections at restaurants that clean their own traps. There are four restaurants that have been required to install traps or replace traps that have deteriorated.

**RVSD**

The RVSD self-clean inspections will begin next month, and staff continues to work with the last five restaurants that have not installed their traps.

**Tamalpais Community****Services District**

Development work for the TCSD FOG program began. Draft installation letters were developed by CMSA, reviewed by TCSD, and will be mailed out in March. They will have three months for plan approval and an additional three months to install their traps.

**SD#2**

Maintenance completed regular checks and routine preventive maintenance for the district's 19 pump stations in February. A pump at Paradise was deragged and a flapper spool assembly was replaced at Trinidad 2.

At Boardwalk pump station, Roy's sewer service smoke tested the sewer line and found a few leaks. Homeowners were notified and repairs made.

Maintenance completed 50 USA (underground services dig requests) mark-ups of force mains in February.