



JULY 2018

# DIAMOND A MUTUAL WATER CO. NEWSLETTER

## Revised Newsletter Format

I was able to obtain a newsletter template from a desktop publishing organization. I hope it is more “professional” looking, but that is up to the readers to determine.

## Content of the Newsletter

As many members wanted to know how best to prepare for a fire incident such as the one we had last October, the first article addresses many of the questions we have received since the fires.

The next part of the newsletter covers synopsis of the recent board meetings for those of you who were unable to attend.

## Diamond A Wild-land Fires & the Water Company

Subsequent to last year’s fires, a number of our neighbors have asked for the Water Company’s position on various strategies to help future fire-fighting efforts. In this newsletter article, we will address several of the most common suggestions.

## Storage Tanks - DAM-WCO

As most members know, your Board has been on a program to aggressively replace and upgrade our 4 large water storage tanks. On three sites, new tanks have been constructed within the past 6 years. On the fourth site, repairs have been made to prolong the life of the tank for another 10-15 years. The sum of these efforts has increased our water storage capacity to approximately 400,000 gallons.

This storage reserve is critical in the event of a large

fire incident within Diamond A. The pumps from our 4 wells would not be able to keep pace with the water demand placed on our system during a major fire event. Collectively, our wells could theoretically provide 300 gallons per minute of water. However, this potential volume would be reduced by the normal water usage of the 200 homes in our neighborhood. Further, in the event of a power outage, our pumps would be inoperable (separately, your Board is looking into the feasibility of buying a portable generator to power at least one pump in the event of an outage).

## Roof Sprinklers

Some members have proposed running roof sprinklers in the event of a fire, in order to minimize the risk of losing their homes to fire. The DAMCO Board recognizes the natural desire to protect our property. However, unless you are drawing water from a source not connected to

the system (see below), the DAMWCO Board strongly discourages this practice.

- Our 400,000 gallons of storage capacity would be emptied in just over 3 hours (even faster if there are other demands on the system), leaving NO WATER FOR FIREFIGHTING EFFORTS.

Actually, keeping roof gutters free of debris is probably more effective at preventing roof fires than watering roofs.

## Storage Tanks on Private Property

Members have also inquired about constructing smaller water storage tanks on their property to both assist in firefighting and to also provide a backup water supply in the event of an emergency. Outside of Diamond A, some communities are actively promoting this strategy. The DAMWCO Board has not adopted an official position on these supplemental personal water storage systems, but if you are interested in this alternative for your property, here are some points to consider:

- Any private water storage tanks should NOT be tied directly into the DAMWCO system. The Board's concern is water in the storage tank may sit unused for a long period of time and become non-potable. The Board requires that any connection to the DAMWCO system be fully en-

gineered, including back-flow devices to ensure no cross-contamination. Please contact Bill Angeloni for more information if you are interested in tying in a storage tank to the water system.

- Generally, Sonoma County does not require a permit for storage tanks under 5,000 gallons. However, interested homeowners should consult the County PRMD website for more detailed information. Any water storage tanks should also comply with the guidelines established by the Diamond A Architectural Review Committee (see the Diamond A Ranch web site for details). Earthquake potential should also be factored in to tank location and design.

- If the tank is strictly to be used to assist in firefighting, homeowners are encouraged to consider using a rain water catchment system (i.e. filled via piping from roof gutters) as the water source. (With no connection to the DAMWCO system.)

- Consideration should also be given as to how you plan on getting water out of the tank. Electrical pumps will not be operational in the event of a power outage. Gravity feed systems may be an option, depending on your parcel's topography and the location of the tank. If your intent would be to make the tank available to fire-

fighters for their use, please consult with Sonoma Valley Fire and Rescue personnel for additional information.

- Lastly, many residents already have significant water storage on their property in the form of a swimming pool. Don't forget that your pool may be an excellent water source for yourself or professional firefighters in the event of fire emergency.

## Summary of June 18, 2018 Meeting

### Operations and Administration (Mostly Provided by Bill Angeloni)

Four water meters were found to be not operating properly and needed replacement.

Recent inspection of the well water elevations found them to be normal.

Trees adjacent to the Zone 3S tank (Viewcrest) need to be pruned.

The new Zone 2 tank had a final inspection by the County on June 20. (Note: The tank previously passed inspection.)

A new well pump and motor was installed in Well 4.

The piping for the booster pumps at Well 4 to the Zone 3S Tank has been re-configured to improve efficiency and operation.

A discussion was held on developing and installing an operating system for

water production, treatment and distribution. This system would apply basic electronic measuring and communications technology.

(1) Concern was expressed over the cost of such a system. It was agreed that the money spent would reflect value gained.

(2) Ron Matteson will convene a meeting to identify and prioritize systems controls applications within the system to identify high value investments for possible implementation.

A discussion was held on installing backup power at one or more of the wells for use during a power outage. Dick Bryan will contact the DAMWC water service provider, JDY, to discuss feasibility.

## 2018 Financial Update

Our overall financial condition is very good

Overall Net Income is \$12k better than the Prior Year

1. YTD water sales were \$10k more than the same time period in the prior year

a. However, YTD electricity costs are slightly below the prior year, suggesting that the trend of higher water sales may not continue

2. YTD Repairs and Maintenance are \$10k lower than prior year

Cash Position remains strong with a cash balance of \$158k as of 6/15/18 (this is before the July billings)

1. Special recognition to Dee's collection efforts, including e-billing and e-payment. Our Accounts Receivable balance is \$1,300 (on YTD revenue of \$118k). Excellent work Dee!!!

2. Current projections are that we end 2018 with a significant (i.e. >\$150k) cash balance.

2018 Capital Expenditures are tracking to come in below Budget

1. Zone 2 Tank will come in \$51k lower than Budget

2. Total Cap Ex is expected to be \$58k lower than Budget

3. Our \$30k Budgeted Capital Reserve should adequately cover the unforeseen Capital Projects (Hydrant at Well 4, Pump at Well 4, Earthwork at Tank 2) that we have encountered this year

## Communications

Joe Lieber attended a California Financing Coordinating Committee workshop on grants and loans on June 12th to determine the potential for DAMWC obtaining a grant or loan. Based on the criteria for qualification, at this point, it does not look very optimistic.

The June Diamond A Fire Fair was very successful this year. Attendance was great and there was a lot of information to assist residents in making their places more fire-safe and how best to

deal with a fire emergency such as the one we had last October.

## Governance

A review of the process for the issuance of meeting notes and meeting agendas was reviewed.

## Next Meeting:

September 17, 2018 at 7:00 PM at the Rec Center.