SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-B**

FROM: Ed Fortner, General Manager

Meeting Date: May 7, 2020

SUBJECT: Emergency Response Plan; COVID-19 Pandemic Response

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive report related to the Emergency Response Plan and approve updates due to the Covid-19 Disaster.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

DISCUSSION:

A contagious disease emergency section draft will be added to the emergency response plan exampled by the Covid-19 Disaster we are currently under. Many considerationioins related to Covid-19 response including social distancing, eliminating foot traffic at our offices, monitoring staff for symptoms and dealing with each individual related situation, hygiene practices, leave issues, coordination with County EOC, testing, and potential changes to our Policies and Procedures are included in the new ERP section. The draft ERP section is attached for review and approval. Also, the General Manager sent a letter to the County Health Director seeking guidance and support for staff COVID-19 testing. The Director had the Senior Health Nurse get in touch with me and the Health Nurse followed up with an interview of our employee who had displayed symptoms. She praised the measures the District has taken and assured us that any future employee with symptoms will be tested with the County Health Department support. The letter sent is attached for review.

Additional temporary changes have been implemented related to the COVID-19 Disaster. These measure include suspending water shutoffs allowing a payment agreement to avoid late fees, and changes in our notices from “turn off” to “Delinquency” notices. Account billing transfer from tenant to owner will occur if delinquency exceeds 115 days. Past due amounts will not transfer to the owner. We are considering a utility lien on the Owner’s property tax bill if delinquency exceeds 160 days. Also, the GM will be the sole signatory on checks, there will be an approval line added to the monthly check register for all checks signed by the GM. Alternatively, a Director could be the sole signer in the GM’s absence. A statement linked to the EPA is posted on the District website informing our customers that our water is safe during this crisis.

Contagious Disease Disaster/
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Risk Minimization and Outbreak Response Plan

I. Introduction

Background Information

Contagious Disease Disaster recovery in the broad sense will require similar responses as the COVID-19 Disaster of 2020. The specific responses to the COVID-19 Crisis follows:

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that occur in humans and many species of animals, such as camels, cattle, cats, and bats. In fact, the common cold is caused by a coronavirus. A novel form of coronavirus, referred to as "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2" (SARS- CoV-2) first appeared in Wuhan City, China in December 2019, and as of the end of February 2020, has been detected in 60 locations internationally. This name was chosen because the virus is genetically related to the coronavirus responsible for the SARS outbreak of 2003. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced "COVID-19" as the name of the new disease caused by SARS-CoV-2. COVID-19 has spread rapidly in China, and has now spread to many countries world-wide, including the United States. COVID-19 has an estimated incubation period of up to 14 days, but most commonly about 5 days. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that during this incubation period, the person may show little to no symptoms, yet can transmit the virus.

COVID-19 is believed to be spread from person to person by the infected person coughing or sneezing. This produces respiratory droplets from the infected person being put into the air where they can land in the nose or mouth of people in close proximity or be breathed in by people close by. This, coupled with its long incubation period, has led to its rapid spread. This primary mode of transmittance is why infected persons, and those caring for them, are encouraged to wear masks. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, cough, runny nose, and trouble breathing (e.g., pneumonia symptoms). Some patients have reported aches and pains, nasal congestion, sore throat or diarrhea. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. About 1 out of every 6 people that contract COVID-19 become seriously ill, and develop difficulty breathing. Although most cases are not life-threatening, COVID-19 affects older individuals with chronic health conditions (e.g., high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes) most severely, and can be fatal. Thus, people with fever, cough and difficulty breathing should seek medical attention.

People with no respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, do not need to wear a medical mask. The WHO recommends the use of masks for people who have symptoms of COVID-19 and for those

caring for individuals who have symptoms, such as cough and fever. The use of masks is crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone (at home or in a health care facility).

This virus is currently spreading in the United States. It is important to note that the CDC has stated that the current global circumstances suggest it is likely that this virus will cause a pandemic (i.e., an international epidemic). The COVID-19 situation is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk assessment is being updated regularly by the CDC (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html).

Although health officials are working on a vaccine for COVID-19, no vaccine is currently available, and likely will not be available until later this year, or early 2021. Consequently, we all need to work together to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community. The information presented in this document is taken from the websites listed in the references section of this plan, which also serve as sources for additional information for District employees.

All Federal, State, and County orders and guidance will be followed.

Purpose and Intended Use for this Plan

This COVID-19 Risk Minimization and Outbreak Response Plan (Plan) has been developed by the Sweetwater Springs Water District (District) to best protect its employees against the risk (current and future) posed by COVID-19. The specific objectives of this plan are to: 1) identify precautionary measures that District employees can implement to best protect themselves and each other against contracting and spreading of COVID-19, and 2) to maintain critical operations of the District if COVID-19 becomes established in Sonoma County. Following the introduction, this plan has three major sections.

- *Section II: Precautionary Measures to Reduce the Spread of Illness in the Workplace* identifies precautionary measures that both the District and its employees can implement to minimize the risk of workplace exposure to COVID-19.

- *Section Ill: Tiered Plan for Maintaining District Operations* provides a tiered risk-level approach to modifying District operations while minimizing employee risk of workplace exposure to COVID-19 and spread to others within and outside the office, and to maintain critical District operations should an outbreak of COVID-19 occur in Sonoma County.

- *Section IV: References* provides the websites from which much of the information herein was obtained. District employees and management can use these sites to get more information and CDC and WHO updates.

The General Manager reserves the right to modify any element of this Plan at any time based on his discretion, changed circumstances, and/or direction or requests made by health authorities or other agencies.

II. Precautionary Measures to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

The following is a list of actions recommended by the CDC and other State and County health authorities that people should implement to reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19 and to reduce its spread should they, or others they interact with, contract the virus.

Precautionary Actions for Immediate Implementation by District Employees

The recommended precautionary actions listed below are similar to, or the same as, measures we are all familiar with to minimize our annual risk of contracting influenza (i.e., the flu). Other precautionary measures have been added that are specific to COVID-19 at this time, as recommended by the CDC and other health authorities.

- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness (i.e., fever and cough, and possibly trouble breathing) need to notify their supervisor and stay home and not come back to work until they are free of fever (100.4°F) or greater (using an oral thermometer), signs of fever, or other respiratory illness symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines.

- If you have a family member that becomes ill with acute respiratory illness symptoms, notify your supervisor, who may request that you stay home for an appropriate period of time prior to returning to the workplace. Keep your supervisor apprised of your/family member's recovery.

- If you come down with a cough, fever, shortness of breath or other acute respiratory illness symptoms while at work, separate yourself from your co-workers, notify your supervisor, and immediately go home.

- All employees should practice the following respiratory etiquette and related practices to minimize their risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.

    - Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Maintain 6 ft or greater distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
    - Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw the tissue away or do so into your elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available.
    - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
    - If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
    - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
    - Put away any community candy jars.
    - Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in your workspace, such as workstations, mouse, desktop phones, cell phones, countertops, and doorknobs. Use disinfecting wipes to wipe-down common-surface places, where appropriate.

Use cleaning products that contain >60% alcohol, 0.5% hydrogen peroxide, 0.1% sodium hypochlorite (bleach), or other active ingredients known to kill viruses.

- Check the "CDC's Traveler's Health Notices" [https://wwwnc.cdc. gov/travel] for the latest guidance and recommendations before you travel to other countries. Avoid travel to level 3 and 4 countries until the CDC has indicated that it is safe to do so.

- Do not travel by airplane, bus, cruise ship or other means with large numbers of people if you are experiencing symptoms of acute respiratory illness.

Precautionary Actions for Immediate Implementation by District Management

- Stay aware of the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, available on the WHO and CDC websites. State alerts and orders, and County alerts and orders.

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by all employees.

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol at various locations in the workplace, including in trucks and the office space.

- Provide disposable wipes for employee use for wiping down frequently touched surfaces within the workplace.

- Keep Union notified of any changes to policies or procedures

- Keep District IDs available for Emergency/ Essential personnel needs.

III. Tiered Plan for Maintaining District Operations

This section identifies how District operations, including individual employee roles, may need to change if COVID-19 becomes established in Sonoma County. The co-equal objectives for this portion of the plan are to: 1) best protect employees against the spread of COVID-19, and 2) maintain critical District water supply operations for the community. The plan for maintaining District operations is tiered based on the COVID-19 risk level in Sonoma County, as discussed in greater detail below.

Risk Level 1: Continued Increases in the Number of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in the United States and California, and no Confirmed Cases in Sonoma County and Surrounding Counties.

Trigger Points: Risk Level 1 shall be declared by the General Manager when confirmed cases of COVID-19 were announced in the United States and in the state of California.

Under Risk Level 1, the risk to employees of contracting COVID-19 is low and thus the District shall conduct normal business operations, with the addition of implementing the precautionary measures identified in Section II of this Plan.

Risk Level 2: Continued Increases in the Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in the United States, California, and few Confirmed Cases in Sonoma and/or Surrounding Counties.

Trigger Points: Risk Level 2 shall be declared by the General Manager when confirmed cases of COVID-19 are announced in Sonoma County and/or surrounding counties.

Under Risk Level 2, the risk to employees of contracting COVID-19 remains relatively low, but the risk level is increasing due to increasing numbers of confirmed cases in the country, state, Sonoma County and surrounding counties.

In addition to the actions being implemented under Risk level 1, including the precautionary measures identified in Section II of this Plan, actions to be implemented at Risk Level 2 include, but may not be limited to, the following.

- Disinfect identified surfaces and bathrooms more frequently.
    - Implement employee efforts to sanitize identified administrative office surfaces.
- Those collecting money from the public are to wear disposable latex medical gloves or hand sanitize after each transaction.
    - Remove and dispose of gloves and wash hands prior to eating or touching common-surface places within the office.
- Limit routine in-person meetings in favor of conference calls.
- Ensure all supplies for treating water are fully stocked.
- Temporary flexible workplace and leave policies, and other relevant aspects of this Plan, shall be communicated to all District employees.
- If an employee does not exhibit COVID-19 symptoms but becomes sick (e.g., headache and/or upset stomach), the employee shall stay home until no longer contagious, a minimum of 14 days. The General Manager will direct the employee to go home if the employee is exhibiting sickness symptoms at work. In either case, the employee will not be compensated while absent from work unless they use leave time or leave is granted by the General Manager.

- The General Manager will coordinate with CalWarn and local agencies including water agencies to discuss procedures and mutual aid.

At Risk Level 2, District management will start to hold meetings on Risk Level 3 and 4 scenarios, and through these meeting discussions will determine whether the District is ready to implement the necessary modified operations for those higher risk levels. These scenario exercises are intended to identify short comings in the District's preparedness and to focus near-term efforts on remedying the "holes" in the response planning as quickly as possible. If not already in place, authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating key elements of this Plan will be put in place.

Risk Level 3: Continued Increases in the Number of Confirmed* Cases *of COVID-19 in the United States, California, and Numerous* Cases *in Sonoma County and Surrounding Counties.

Trigger Points: Risk Level 3 will be declared by the General Manager if COVID-19 reaches or approaches epidemic levels in the United States and numerous confirmed cases of COVID-19 are announced for Sonoma County and surrounding counties.

We are currently operating under Risk Level 3, due to numerous confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Sonoma County and surrounding counties.

At Risk Level 3, COVID-19 may be declared an epidemic or pandemic by the CDC and local health authorities in the United States and California and numerous cases have been confirmed in people living in Sonoma County and surrounding counties. As such, the risk of contracting COVID-19 for District employees is no longer low. At the direction of the General Manager, the District will now further modify operations to minimize all contact of employees with the general public and will focus on maintaining essential duties necessary to maintain water service to the public, with the minimal number of employees.

Operational scenarios will now focus on how best to maintain essential services with reduced staff, should one or more District employees contract the virus. Additional operational modifications to be implemented at Risk Level 3 shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following.

- Shut down foot traffic to office, allowing payment online, over the phone, by mail, or through the mail slot.
  - Notify the public by website, media, answering service. Close-down the administrative office to the general public.
    - Notify other local agencies and vendors of the District's office closure to the public.
- Board meetings shall be postponed or conducted by teleconference (if possible) rather than by in-person meetings.
- Implement practices developed, including less interaction with homeowners, methods of leaving door notices, etc. to increase physical distance among employees and between employees and the public, as further directed in **Attachment A.**
  - Separate departments and minimize in-person interactions between District administrative, operations, and distribution employees to the maximum extent possible.
    - Within departments, minimize face-to-face interactions of key personnel as well.
    - Coordinate by email, phone, and text messages whenever possible and effective.

Risk Level 4: Initial Confirmed Case(s) of COVID-19 Among District Employees.

Trigger Point: Risk Level 4 will be declared by the General Manager if one or more District employees, or an immediate family member of an employee, test positive for COVID-19.

Because of the small size of the District, operating out of a single administrative office, one or more District employees (or their immediate family members) being confirmed to have contracted COVID-19 is a situation that poses a relatively high risk to other District employees of contracting the virus.

In addition to the actions and operational procedures already being implemented, additional operational modifications/actions to be implemented at Risk Level 4 shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following.

- All employees will remain home until directed otherwise by the General Manager.
    - Each employee will be compensated by the District up to 14 working days without having to use personal time off or vacation time until the employee is cleared to return to work by a health official or the General Manager.
    - Employees not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be on-call for work activities, at the direction of the General Manager, Field Manager, or their Administrative Manager. All on-call employees must respond and be at work as stated in the MOU if called upon to work.
    - Any employees reporting to work shall wear a face mask and gloves when interacting with other parties.
- Employee(s) that have contracted COVID-19 (or employees who have family members that have confirmed COVID-19) will not be allowed to return to work until they can provide a doctor's note, clearing them of COVID-19.
- If an employee has been confirmed to have COVID-19, the General Manager will inform other employees, using the phone tree, of their possible exposure to COVID-19, but will maintain confidentiality of the infected employee. All District employees will be instructed to stay home.
- Employees should refer to the CDC guidance for "how to conduct a risk assessment" of their potential exposure (CDC Website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summarv.html#risk-assessment).

- Board meetings shall continue to be postponed or conducted by teleconference (if possible) rather than by in-person meetings.
- Implement any potential remaining actions identified to minimize in-person contact among employees and between employees and the public.
- Implement all identified minimum essential functions necessary to maintain only essential District services, with essential personnel, as further defined in **Attachment B.**
- CIP work is temporarily suspended. Other actions may be implemented at the direction of the General Manager or Assistant General Manager, the CDC, or local health authorities.

VI. References

Websites that contributed information to this plan are listed below. They also serve as reference sites for employees to obtain further information about COVID-19.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-business-response.html

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/

https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/16/health/coronavirus-how-to-protect-yourself-trnd/index.html

https://q13fox.com/2020/02/26/how-you-and-your-workplace-can-protect-yourselves-from-the-novel-coronavirus/

https://www.livescience.com/how-long-coronavirus-last-surfaces.html https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses

https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/address-workplace-coronavirus-concerns.Aspx

https://socoemergency.org/

https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html.html

https://hrexecutive.com/coronavirus-hrs-role/

Approved and implemented

Ed Fortner
General Manager
Sweetwater Springs Water District
efortner@sweetwatersprings.com
http://www.sweetwatersprings.com/
707-869-4000

Attachment A
Action Plan for Risk Level 3

Attachment A
Action Plan for Risk Level 3

Operations:

Operations personnel will isolate themselves into the following groups. There shall be no person-to-person interactions between these two groups.

Group 1: Treatment and Distribution staff

- The Distribution/ Field Department will generally remain back in the Field with minimal use of District Offices. The Department will respond in person to service calls only for the most serious situations such as no water service and/or water line breaks. Customers who have water quality complaints or pressure problems will be responded to with telephone calls in a concerted effort to resolve the problems. Meter reading and basic water distribution maintenance activities will continue to the extent that employees can maintain safe distances from the general public. The Utility Department will continue to conduct CIP work with the understanding that employees need to maintain safe distances from the general public.

Administration:

Administrative personnel will continue to conduct business as normal, except that the Administration Building will be closed to the public. All interaction with the public will be by telephone or email.

Administrative personnel will isolate themselves from Operations personnel as much as possible and all possible contact will be conducted through telephone or email.

Attachment B
Action Plan for Risk Level 4

Attachment B
Action Plan for Risk Level 4

Operations:

Operations will be suspended for the duration of the quarantine period. The length of the quarantine period will be determined by the General Manager based on the circumstances at the time (including prevalence of COVID-19 in the community), and input from health authorities. (estimated to be approximately 14-28 days). During this time:

- Two Distribution Operators will conduct patrols throughout Service Area during normal business hours.
- All Distribution Operators not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be on call.

After the quarantine period, as declared by the General Manager, Operations staff cleared to return to work will resume duties commensurate to the declared Risk Level.

Administration:

Administration operations will be suspended for the duration of the quarantine period (estimated to be approximately 14-28 days). During this time:

- The Administrative Manager will only perform essential duties such as payroll, necessary AP vendor payments, and procurement through remote access from home.

After the quarantine period, Administrative staff cleared to return to work will resume duties commensurate to the declared Risk Level.

Sweetwater Springs WATER DISTRICT

Ed Fortner, General Manager

DATE: April 6, 2020

To: Dr. Sundari R. Mase MD MPH, Health Officer of Sonoma County

CC: County Supervisor Linda Hopkins, Chris Godley, Emergency Management Director

RE: Immediate COVID-19 Testing for Sweetwater Springs Water District Personnel

Dear Dr. Mase,

Sweetwater Springs Water District provides water to residential communities and businesses along the lower Russian River in West Sonoma County. We recently had an employee attempt to get tested for COVID-19 after displaying high fever and respiratory issues. Kaiser, his Medical provider, denied him the test. We are a small staff of eleven, and we supply water essential for public health and safety, especially during the Coronavirus emergency when a primary method of public protection is frequent, thorough handwashing. If this small workgroup has a member contract the virus, we could lose the ability to serve our customers. We respectfully request to have our staff tested as other essential personnel have. We understand and respect that health care workers and first responders should be first tested, but we need to be tested now too. We appreciate all the hard work you are doing and wish you the best. Please advise as to the priority of testing for our personnel and how we can get tested.

Sincerely,

Ed Fortner
General Manager
Sweetwater Springs Water District
efortner@sweetwatersprings.com
707-869-4000