

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MONTE RIO RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Monday, August 12, 2019, at 6:00 pm
Monte Rio Community Center
20488 Hwy 116, Monte Rio, CA 95462**

A. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm by Board Chair Steve Baxman.

B. Roll Call and Approval of Agenda and Minutes from Previous Meeting

Present: Board members Steve Baxman, Jean Sasso, Marina McTaggart; Administrator Sherry Pimsler. Absent: Chuck Ramsey and Paul DuBray.

Jean Sasso moved and Marina McTaggart seconded approval of this evening's agenda and minutes of July 8, 2019.

C. Public Comment –

1. Monte Rio resident Mary Ellen Jackson felt there has been a lack of transparency about the potential lease of the Studio/Teen Center to West County Community Services' (WCCS) Empowerment Center (EC). She has questions: Monte Rio Recreation & Park District is for recreation and parks not for mental health. It should have been publicized and feels like it's been a backdoor process. The community already has drug dealing in what's called "The Office" where many addicts hang out. It's not fair to shuttle more addicts in when there are not enough sheriff's deputies to police what already exists.
2. Dottie Ruppert of Guerneville said her property backs onto the Senior Center where the EC has recently been located. There has been no disturbance, no police. She's not even aware they're there.
3. Peter Andrews of Monte Rio said he's familiar with the EC. They are always improving their location. A great group. The decision to rent to them is not a Board decision; it is up to the Events Director as part of Operations.
4. Linda Burke (Rose) (no address given) came here out of desperation and is the one who put the note up in Bartlett's window. She knows all of the people included in the EC. The homeless don't want it here. She's been accused of lying by a Board member.
5. Monte Rio resident and retired public school teacher Cynthia Strecker spoke in support of the EC. These are adults who don't have to attend, but come because they want to improve their lives. Anyone willing to do so should be supported. Every public school teacher has children who don't perform well, but they are still treated with respect. The WCCS is a public entity with an obligation to treat everyone with respect. Everyone can see the Community Center is in perfect condition, which means that the Board pays attention. They have done an outstanding job in hiring an administrative staff capable of writing a very good contract.
6. Christmas Leubrie is a Monte Rio homeowner. She said she has seen everything around here and is proudest of our community for supporting this kind of thing. Mentally ill people live everywhere. She was a psychiatric nurse in San Francisco. Although we don't have the volume or services they have, at one point, she was saved by a service like this.
7. Debra Johnson, President of the WCCS Board, thanked the MRRPD Board and appreciates its willingness and the passion of the community. She understands the fear something like this can generate in a community. She and her colleagues have brought information on the EC and they

have received lots of letters of support (displayed on back table). There was fear at the church in Guerneville, but as the letter from the school will attest, nothing happened.

8. Tim Miller, Executive Director of the EC, has been there three years. When they were flooded out at the church, they moved into the Bingo Room at the Senior Center. Now, the seniors want it back. He cited MRRPD's Master Plan that speaks to collaboration with other non-profits in the area. 25-30% of their clients are homeless. The E.C. promotes peer recovery, similar to AA. They are there to educate.
9. Resident Wen Belber said she pays taxes here in Monte Rio and is proud to live in a community that takes care of its neighbors and reaches out.
10. Christy Davila is Director of Counseling and Behavioral Health at the EC. She has lived here for seven years, first practicing as a marriage and family therapist. She explained that the EC is member driven, such as AA. People suffering from depression or anxiety are able to support others. In order to offer peer counseling, there is a 3 ½ month long training in subjects such as conflict resolution. The EC hours are 11:30-4:30. They offer classes, workshops and a variety of activities. First-time visitors must fill out a form stating their expectations. No drugs or alcohol are allowed; otherwise they are asked to leave. If that happens, they must show what they've done to correct their behavior before they're let back in.
11. Rena Morabi of Forestville spoke as a peer. She is not homeless. She suffers from insomnia, PTSD and a bipolar disorder. She is stable enough at this time to get back to where she was before. The EC is a place where she can go to talk to others. She doesn't have much money so getting to Santa Rosa is difficult. At one point, she lost her job and housing due to her illness, so this peer support, along with her support of others, is important to her.
12. EC staff answered questions from an anonymous person: They expect 5-15 clients in a day. Some come for one class; others stay 5 hours. A van and free shuttle service are available. (Other questions were inaudible.)

D. Old Business – None

E. New Business – None

F. Reports & Information

1. Board Reports – None

2. Staff Reports – None

3. Budget Committee – No meeting

4. Facilities/Safety Committee –

- CAPRI (insurance) performed a site visit on August 1st.
- A thermostat will be installed on the Redwood Room exhaust fan.
- Staff is exploring possible grants for solar panels at Creekside.
- An extra camera has been ordered from ADT to monitor Fish & Wildlife restrooms. Graffiti has been excessive.
- A specialized hinge pin has been replaced on the Redwood Room Lannai doors. Staff is looking into repair options for cracking of the frames.
- Staff continues to work with insurance and now FEMA to recover costs from last winter's flood.

Safety

- Recent drowning: The District strives to educate visitors about water safety, including signage, personal interaction, free life vests for the day, and most recently water safety classes.

5. Personnel Committee – (Not reported at the meeting.)

- Committee met July 10th to confirm recommendation of a \$1/hr pay increase for seasonal employees, included in the preliminary budget approved by the Board on July 8th.
- Interviewed a candidate for the Events Director position, which was publically noticed.

6. Marketing & Public Outreach Committee – No meeting.

7. CWA (Creekside Wastewater Authority at Creekside Park) - No meeting

G. Correspondence – A binder of letters of support and opposition to the Empowerment Center rental were placed on a table at the meeting for all to review.

H. Action Items – None

I. Review Monthly Accounts Payable – The P&L report for July reflected \$33,329.23 in expenses, the August report reflected \$38,302.40 in expenses.

J. Next Meeting – will be on September 9th at 6 pm.

K. Meeting adjournment – 6:40 pm.