



MINUTES

QLife Regular Board Meeting
Thursday, March 25, 2021
Via Google Hangouts

Call to Order President Hege calls the meeting to order at 12:02 PM.

Roll Call Scott Hege, Rod Runyon, Dale Lepper, Lee Weinstein, John Amery, Tom McGowan, Keith Mobley, Carrie Pipinich, Joseph Franell, Dan McNeely, Kristen Campbell, Tyler Stone, Stephanie Krell, Matthew Klebes, and Mike Middleton.

Changes to the Agenda

There are no changes to the agenda.

[[Mr. Weinstein moves to approve the agenda. Mr. Lepper seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Mr. Runyon asks about the city's response to the Walnut Street repair and Mr. Klebes informs him that the fix was completed but that the city manager was not expecting a bill, however, she is willing to discuss options with Mr. Klebes.

[[Mr. Weinstein moves to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Lepper seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]

Action Items

Order #21-002 Appointment of Scott Randall to QLife Board

Mr. Klebes informs the Board that Darcy Long-Curtiss is stepping down as the city representative and they have recommended City Councilor, Scott Randall for her replacement. There are no questions or concerns from the Board.

[[Mr. Weinstein moves to approve Order #21-002 appointing Scott Randall to the QLife Board. Mr. Runyon seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]

Election of 2021 Officers

Ms. Krell notes that Ms. Long-Curtiss was the previous Vice-Chair and is looking to the Board for a nomination to replace her. This is also an opportunity to change QLife President and Secretary positions.

[[President Hege nominates Mr. Weinstein as QLife Secretary. Mr. Lepper seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]

[[President Hege nominates Mr. Lepper as QLife Vice-Chair. Mr. Weinstein seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]

[[Mr. Runyon nominates President Hege as QLife President. Mr. Weinstein seconds the motion, which passes unanimously.]]

Finance

Financial Report, Analysis and Reconciliation

Mr. Middleton presents the January and February financial report to the Board included in the packet. He notes that revenues are doing well and over budget due to some one-time billings. When you take those out of the equation, the Operations fund is at 71% execution.

Receivables have dropped from the December financial report because of some one off delinquent bills but staff is working through those. Mr. Middleton continues to keep an eye on expenses in the contract services account but he is not concerned because we are making up the difference in other accounts that we are not spending on.

The Maupin fund has no financial concerns to discuss but Mr. Middleton notes that we have not resolved the LS Networks receipt issue mentioned in previous meetings. Mr. Middleton and Mr. Klebes are focusing on resolving it.

President Hege remarks that receivables in November were high, they peaked in December and now they seem to have leveled out to a normal track. He also asks about the status of the \$19,000 120-day delinquent balance and Mr. Middleton says that it will be written off before the end of the year.

President Hege points out a customer who paid for a multi-year billing and asks for additional information. Mr. Middleton explains that the billing crossed over multiple fiscal years but that it has been caught up.

President Hege asks about the \$44,000 delinquent payment and wonders if Mr. Middleton is concerned. Mr. Middleton responds that they are one of our regular customers and they thought it had already been paid. With staff changes also happening, we are double checking that the money is not in the wrong account.

Mr. Middleton mentions to the Board that we should schedule a budget committee meeting so that the FY22 budget can be adopted in May. He asks if the Board would be open to using our regularly scheduled April meeting to also have a budget committee meeting and the Board is in consensus.

Mr. Stone asks if the Board would like to have a meeting prior to the budget committee meeting to discuss budget allocations, projects and other expenses before the May adoption. President Hege wants to move forward with the April budget committee meeting but agrees that Mr. Stone makes a valid point.

Discussion Items

Downtown Wifi

Mr. Klebes informs the Board that the city and county are currently working with Google on strategic investment programs and he noticed a lot of public believes that Google is responsible for the wifi downtown. Google supported the investment with grants but it is a City of The Dalles system.

President Hege remarks that the wifi system is subpar in his opinion and is embarrassed to even have the system because it works so poorly. He feels that the city should get it fixed so that it operates as it should or get rid of it completely. He also adds that the Maupin system has the same setup and it works flawlessly.

Mr. Stone asks the Board if they would like QLife to take over the system given our relationship with Gorge Net. He adds that there will be a cost to moving forward in that direction.

Mr. Franell states that he would like to look into President Hege's concerns and will follow up with Mr. Stone and Mr. Klebes. He wonders if the equipment may need to be upgraded or replaced.

Mr. Runyon asks to be kept up to date on these discussions and offers to bring it back to city council.

QLife Vision for Future/Strategic Direction

President Hege notes that the Board packet included a lot of old documents which he had not seen in some time. They served as a good refresher. He adds that Mr. Franell was a QLife consultant during the last strategic plan but they never quite finished.

Mr. Weinstein sees this opportunity as a preliminary discussion into QLife's future. Given that a lot has changed in regards to public need and broadband, he believes we should review these documents and do some benchmarking for what other entities are doing in this field. He urges the Board to think about the long-term goals of QLife; do we sell it,

do we merge it with another entity, does it live on as it is. He also wants to focus on our vision and wonders if it may include building broadband to the far reaches of Wasco County and who would drive that advocacy. Should our regional school system be involved?

President Hege remarks that many resources are being prepped to become available at the federal and state level.

Mr. Klebes is curious about the process the Board went through last time and how it was funded. Mr. Stone explains that we have many avenues to choose from but remarks that there is no one person that works on QLife full time so it can be difficult to run it like a business. When Mr. Franell was brought in, it was to discuss the future of broadband rather than a strategic plan. He adds that the marketplace has rapidly changed and continues to do so. At the time, the Board's vision was to bring broadband to the people of The Dalles. The city has availability but it is not widely available to all. It is possible to build out with partners like Gorge Net but the problem lies in our more rural areas and the challenge of getting broadband out there. Mr. Stone believes that this is where QLife has a role to play but needs direction from the Board on where to go.

Mr. Weinstein would like to look at the industry trends and possibly bring in more expertise. President Hege agrees that we need facilitation as to what is available to us so that we can get to a place to give direction to the staff. He would like to have a separate meeting to discuss how we move forward and does not want the discussion to be stifled again.

Mr. Runyon remarks that Umatilla County has done some great work so it might make sense to find out what they did. Mr. Franell adds that he has some thoughts on the topic that he would like to discuss with Mr. Stone, Mr. Klebes and Ms. Pipinich at a later time.

Mr. Lepper says that the budget for this can be an estimate but not a detailed plan and as long as we allocate some funds, it will allow us to move forward with this discussion.

Aristo Management Report

Mr. Amery presents his report to the Board included in the packet. A tree fell on a fiber line in Sorosis Park which created a safety hazard but did not cause a disruption in service.

North Sky repaired the damage on Walnut Street while they were in town working on another project which kept the cost down but Mr. Amery does not have a total cost associated with the repair quite yet. Mr. Klebes adds that he has spoken with the city manager about the damage and will follow up with her again. President Hege asks if Mr. Amery has an estimate on the cost and Mr. Amery responds that it will likely be about \$5,000.

Mr. Amery remarks that the Curtis Homes path is completed. There are still items on the checklist left to complete but estimates that those should also be wrapped up this week. President Hege asks if we have any customers associated with this connection yet and Mr. Amery explains that the path is available for use but has not been activated.

Mr. Amery notes that a switch went out at the St. Mary's connection and a cooling fan stopped working. It was cleaned and repaired. He adds that there is a backup fan available but urges the Board to consider replacing the equipment in the future because it has reached its expected end of life. Mr. Stone adds that we should put a maintenance rotation plan in place to upgrade equipment which could potentially cause a major disruption.

Mr. Runyon asks if Mr. Amery has a list of current equipment pricing for when they reach end of life and Mr. Amery explains that the real cost is just the cost of the equipment because it does not consider new features that were not available seven years ago when the equipment was installed.

Mr. Lepper asks if we have a list of the items that have reached end of life and Mr. Amery responds that all of our equipment is at end of life. He adds that we have spare equipment to accommodate a failure but if we want to update technology, that is something we would need to address. Mr. Stone reminds the Board that QLife was included in a system-wide audit which is almost done and should give us valuable data to make these decisions.

President Hege asks Mr. Amery to bring pictures back to the Board of the equipment he is referring to so that it gives them a better understanding of the situation.

Administrative Updates

Mr. McNeely updates the Board on the Downtown Overbuild project. We still need to iron out a couple of make-ready's with Charter before Blue Mountain can string their cable. The building effort has been completed, the pole load analysis has been secured and the permit request has been submitted. Mr. Stone asks for the cost of pole loading and Mr. McNeely responds that it was \$555.

Mr. Klebes informs the Board that we are working on the BRIC application and potential hazard mitigation funds that have become available. Mr. Franell mentions that he spoke to the state treasurer about the Cascadia study and his staff are excited about the concept. \$100M has been allocated in the state budget for broadband and there is potential to rally around the topic of resiliency.

The meeting is adjourned at 1:23 PM

The next regularly scheduled board meeting is set for April 22, 2021.

These minutes were approved by the QLife Board on April 22, 2021.



Lee Weinstein, Secretary