Olivehurst Public Utility District

Agenda Item Staff Report



Meeting Date: December 16, 2021

John Tillotson, P.E., General Manager

Item description/summary:
Rate Study for Prop 218 rate Increase. This item was discussed in committee. Our last rate increase was spread over 3 years to lessen the burden to rate-payers as much as possible. The rate increase only covered water as a sewer rate increase was not needed at the time. Increased labor costs, inflation and requirements for additional staff are driving the need for a rate increase to keep up. Bartle Wells has provided a proposal (attached) to perform the rate study and associated Prop 218 compliance. They have performed the last few rate studies for the District.
Fiscal Analysis:
Not to exceed \$19,500 per attached proposal
Employee Feedback
None
Sample Motion:
Move to approve the water/wastewater rate study and prop 218 compliance proposal from Bartle Wells.
Prepared by:



Olivehurst Public Utility District



Proposal for a Water & Sewer Rate Study Update





2625 Alcatraz Avenue #602 Berkeley, CA 94705 Tel 510 653 3399 www.bartlewells.com

December 7, 2021

Olivehurst Public Utility District 1970 9th Avenue Olivehurst, CA 95961

Attn: John Tillotson, General Manager

Re: Proposal for a Water and Sewer Rate Study Update

Bartle Wells Associates is pleased to submit this proposal to assist the Olivehurst Public Utility District with updated water and sewer rate studies. BWA specializes in providing independent financial advisory and utility rate consulting services to California water and wastewater agencies. Our firm was founded in 1964 and has served over 500 public agencies throughout California and western United States. We have extensive experience developing long-term financial plans and utility rate studies for a wide range of public agencies. Key elements of our proposal include:

- **Develop Long-Term Financial Plans:** Develop updated 10-year financial plans for the District's water and sewer enterprises. The plans will serve as financial roadmaps for funding each utility's operating and capital improvement programs while maintaining prudent levels of fund reserves. We often recommend agencies phase in rate increases over time, to the extent possible, to minimize the annual impact on ratepayers.
- Evaluate Water & Sewer Rate Alternatives: Evaluate rate increase options and, if warranted, potential modifications to water and sewer rate structures. Final rate recommendations will be designed to a) fund each utility's costs of providing service, b) be fair and equitable to all customers, and c) comply with the substantive requirements of Proposition 218.
- Incorporate District Input & Build Consensus for Recommendations: Throughout the project, we will work closely with OPUD to evaluate alternatives, gain input, and build consensus for final recommendations. BWA will also assist with implementation of proposed rates including drafting the required Proposition 218 Notice and participating in the Public Hearing.

I have enjoyed working with OPUD on our prior assignments and appreciate the opportunity to assist the District with development of updated water and sewer rate studies. Please contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

BARTLE WELLS ASSOCIATES

alex Hamdlers

Alex Handlers

Principal/Vice-President

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Bartle Wells Associates (BWA) is an independent financial advisory firm with expertise in the areas of water and wastewater rates and finance. Our firm was established in 1964 and is owned and managed by its principal consultants. We have over 50 years of experience advising cities, special districts, and other agencies on the complexities and challenges in public finance. We have advised over 500 public agency clients throughout California and the western United States. We have a diversity of abilities and experience to evaluate all types of financial issues faced by local governments and to recommend the best and most-practical solutions.

Bartle Wells Associates has a stable, well-qualified professional team. Our education and backgrounds include finance, civil engineering, business, public administration, public policy, and economics. The firm is owned and managed by its principal consultants who have been with the firm for many years.

BWA specializes in three professional services: utility rate and fee studies, financial plans, and project financing. We are the only independent financial advisor providing *all three* of these interrelated services to public agencies.

BWA Key Services

- Financial Plans
- Rate & Fee Studies
- Project Financing

RATE AND FEE STUDIES Our *rate studies* employ a cost-of-service approach and are designed to maintain the long-term financial health of a utility enterprise while being fair to all customers. We develop practical recommendations that are easy to implement and often phase in rate adjustments over time to minimize the impact on ratepayers. We also have extensive experience developing impact fees that equitably recover the costs of infrastructure required to serve new development. BWA has completed hundreds of water and wastewater rate and fee studies. We have helped communities implement a wide range of water and sewer rate structures and are knowledgeable about the legal requirements governing rates and impact fees including Proposition 218 and Government Code 66000. We develop clear, effective presentations and have represented public agencies at hundreds of public hearings to build consensus for our recommendations.



FINANCIAL PLANS Our *financial plans* provide agencies with a flexible roadmap for funding long-term operating and capital needs. We evaluate the wide range of financing options available, develop a plan that recommends the best financing approach, and clearly identify the sources of revenue for funding projects and repaying any debt. We also help agencies develop prudent financial policies, such as fund reserve targets, to support sound financial management. BWA has developed over 2,000 water and wastewater enterprise financial plans to help public agencies fund their operating and capital programs, meet debt service requirements, and maintain long-term financial health.

PROJECT FINANCING Our *project financing* experience includes over 300 bond sales and numerous bank loans, lines of credit, and various state and federal grant and loan programs. We generally recommend issuing debt via a competitive sale process to achieve the lowest cost financing possible. To date, we have helped California agencies obtain over \$5 billion of financing via bonds, bank loans/private placements, lines of credit, low-rate State Revolving Fund Loans, and other funding programs. We work only for public agencies; we are independent financial advisors and do not buy, trade, or resell bonds. Our work is concentrated on providing independent advice that enables our clients to finance their projects on the most favorable terms—lowest interest rates, smallest issue size, and greatest flexibility.

Bartle Wells Associates is a charter member of the **National Association of Municipal Advisors** (NAMA), which establishes strict criteria for independent advisory firms. All of our lead consultants are *MSRB-Registered Municipal Advisors* and *Certified Independent Professional Municipal Advisors*.



Bartle Wells Associates is committed to providing value and the best advice to our clients. Our strength is *quality*—the quality of advice, service, and work we do for all our clients.

PROJECT STAFFING

BWA proposes to assign Alex Handers, a principal and vice-president of the firm, as project manager and principal-in-charge for this engagement. Alex has consulted for over 150 California water and wastewater agencies and has extensive experience developing financial plans and utility rate and fee studies for numerous California agencies. He also is experienced evaluating financing alternatives for capital improvement programs and has helped California agencies obtain over \$2 billion of project funding. He is a Certified Independent Professional Municipal Advisor and Board Member of the National Association of Municipal Advisors. Alex also has experience presenting technical information to non-technical audiences in order to foster understanding of key issues and recommendations. He has made hundreds of public presentations to City Councils, District Boards, and a range of community and customer groups to build support for final recommendations. Other BWA consultants are available to assist as needed.



ALEX T. HANDLERS, MPA, CIPMA



Experience

Alex Handlers is a principal and vice president of Bartle Wells Associates with expertise in the areas of utility rates and finance. He has extensive experience developing long-term financial plans, utility rates, and development impact fees for utility enterprises. Alex has helped agencies implement a wide variety of water and sewer rate and fee structures and is knowledgeable about the legal requirements governing rates and fees. He has substantial experience working with governing boards and community advisory groups to build consensus for recommendations and has helped many agencies implement rate increases in challenging political environments. He has managed projects for over 150 cities, counties, and special districts.

Alex is also an independent financial advisor who helps public agencies secure low-cost financing for capital projects. He is an MSRB-Registered Municipal Advisor and a current Board Member of the National Association of Municipal Advisors. He has expertise helping public agencies evaluate financing alternatives for capital improvement programs and has helped agencies obtain over \$2 billion in financing via bonds, COPs, bank loans/private placements, lines of credit, and various state and federal funding programs.

Education

M.P.A. - University of Washington B.A. - Lehigh University

Certifications

Board Member – National Association of Municipal Advisors Certified Independent Public Municipal Advisor (CIPMA) MSRB-Registered Municipal Advisor (Series 50)

Representative Projects

- City of Benicia: Developed comprehensive water and wastewater financial plans and rate studies leading to adoption of a 5-year phase-in of rate increases and revisions to the water and sewer rate structures designed to reflect the cost of providing service. Evaluated rate impacts under a range of capital improvement funding scenarios.
- City of San Mateo: Developed a sewer enterprise financial plan and rate recommendations supporting funding for a roughly \$900 million wastewater capital improvement program needed to improve wet weather capacity and rebuild the City's aging wastewater treatment plant. Transitioned residential sewer rates from 100% volumetric rates (subject to a minimum charge) to a hybrid 50% fixed & 50% volumetric rate structure.
- South San Luis Obispo County Sanitation District: Developed 10-year financial plan and wastewater treatment rate recommendations. Recommended a multi-year phase-in of rate increases to support financial stability and construction of \$37 million project to address permit requirements and improve reliability. Served as financial advisor on issuance of \$27 million of wastewater revenue bonds and \$4.5 million low-interest rate USDA Loan.
- Olivehurst Public Utility District: Developed water and sewer utility financial projections and rate studies designed to gradually increase annual funding for capital improvement projects. Assisted District with periodic rate updates.
- **City of Paso Robles**: Developed a comprehensive sewer rate study. Evaluated a range of fixed and usage-based residential rate alternatives. Final recommendations included multi-year sewer rate increases and phase-in of fixed service charges to supplement the City's usage-based rates.

Alex T. Handlers, continued

- **City of San Carlos:** Developed a sewer enterprise financial plan and rate study designed to support sewer collection system capacity improvements, long-term pipeline replacements, and over \$120 million for the City's share of costs for rebuilding the regional wastewater treatment plant. Evaluated residential rate alternatives. Updated the City's sewer capacity charges levied on new development. Developed solid waste rate recommendations to support future funding requirements and improve rate equity between customer classes and cart sizes.
- **San Francisco Public Utilities Commission:** Developed financial projections supporting issuance of over \$2 billion of bonds used to fund a \$4.3 billion upgrade to the Hetch-Hetchy regional water system and improvements to the City's wastewater system and Hetch-Hetchy power facilities.
- City of Redwood City: Developed water and sewer financial plans and utility rate studies supporting a) construction of a \$72 million recycled water project, b) funding the City's roughly \$400 million share of improvements to the regional wastewater treatment plant, c) funding major increases in wholesale water rates, and d) increasing funding for ongoing investment in the City's aging infrastructure.
- City of North Miami Beach: Developed water and sewer financial plans and rate studies designed to support each utility's updated capital improvement programs and a substantial increase in costs for wastewater treatment provided by Miami-Dade County.
- **South Tahoe Public Utility District:** Serves as independent financial advisor on competitive and negotiated bonds sales and 5 competitively bid private placements generating over \$50 million to fund water and sewer capital improvements and refinance outstanding debt to achieve savings.
- **City of Burlingame:** Developed 10-year water and sewer enterprise financial projections and rate studies. Developed new water and sewer capacity charges levied on new development.
- **Joshua Basin Water District:** Long-term financial plan and water rate study recommending a gradual increase in water rates coupled with rate structure modifications to provide additional conservation incentive. Updated District's connection fees. Worked closely with a community advisory committee to evaluate rate options and develop final recommendations.
- City of Tulare: Served as financial advisor on 12 competitive and negotiated bond sales issues including over \$250 million of wastewater revenue bonds, \$33 million of water revenue bonds, \$22 million of successor agency tax allocation bonds, \$7 million of short term notes, and \$33 million of lease revenue bonds. Developed water and wastewater financial plans supporting capital and debt financing.
- **City of Millbrae:** Developed water and sewer rate studies and revised the City's Clean Bay Charges levied to fund improvements designed to eliminate sanitary sewer system overflows during storms.
- **Arvin-Edison Water Storage District:** Served as financial advisor on 5 private placement bank loans generating over \$70 million for capital improvements, the District's buyout of USBR water supply facilities, and various debt refinancings to achieve savings.
- Alameda County Water District: Comprehensive development fee study; recommended a series of modifications to existing charges to improve revenue recovery, equity and fee administration
- City of Morro Bay: Developed 10-year water and wastewater financial plans and rate studies supporting construction of a new \$145 million Water Reclamation Facility and recycled water infrastructure. Evaluated water and sewer rate structures and recommended modifications based on a cost of service analysis. Developed emergency water shortage rates. Updated the City's water and wastewater connection fees. Served as financial advisor on issuance of \$62 million of low-rate WIFIA financing and \$67 million of low-rate State Revolving Fund financing.
- **City of Fresno:** Developed wastewater enterprise financial plan and Excel-based financial model that is used by City staff to update projections. Developed new water connection fees designed to recover costs of existing facilities and future supplemental water supply projects benefiting new development.

AUTHORIZATION FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES IN CONNECTION WITH THE UPDATE OF A WATER AND SEWER RATE STUDY

This agreement is between the Olivehurst Public Utility District whose address is 1970 9th Avenue Olivehurst, CA 95961, and Bartle Wells Associates, whose address is 2625 Alcatraz Avenue #602, Berkeley, CA 94705. The District and Bartle Wells Associates hereby agree as follows:

- 1. Bartle Wells Associates agrees to provide professional services as an independent contractor for developing a Water and Sewer Rate Study Update, as described in the Scope of Services included in Exhibit A attached hereto and by this reference incorporated herein.
- 2. All work will be performed by Bartle Wells Associates. Alex Handlers, Principal & Vice President, will be assigned as project leader from BWA and will devote time and effort to successfully complete the project. Alex may be assisted by other BWA consultants as needed.
- 3. For the services described in this proposal, the fee for professional services will not exceed \$19,500 including direct expenses. Progress payments and direct expenses are payable monthly as work proceeds as provided in the Billing Rate Schedule 2021 attached as Exhibit B. The fee is based on the following assumptions:
 - a. Availability of all necessary information, in a timely manner, from Olivehurst Public Utility District, its staff, attorneys, engineers, and other consultants.
 - b. Two presentations at the District, including a) one presentation to the Board of Directors to present findings and draft recommendations and receive input, and b) a final presentation at a public rate hearing.
- 4. In addition to the services provided under this proposal, the District may authorize BWA to perform additional services for which the District will compensate BWA based on consultants' hourly rates at the time the work is performed, plus direct expenses. Any such authorization must be made and approved in writing in advance by the District's General Manager.
- 5. Additional services may include, but are not limited to:
 - Changes in project scope
 - Additional meetings or presentations
 - Any other services not specified
- 6. If the project is terminated for any reason, BWA is to be reimbursed for professional services and direct expenses incurred up to the time BWA receives notification of such termination.
- BWA or any of its employees will not engage in any activities on behalf of the District that
 would produce a direct or indirect financial gain for the firm other than the agreed-upon
 compensation.
- 8. BWA will provide the District copies of any work products related to the project at the District's request.

- 9. BWA will maintain in force, during the full term of the assignment, insurance in the amounts and coverage as provided in the attached Schedule of Insurance attached as Exhibit C.
- 10. Bartle Wells Associates shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations, and the orders and decrees of any courts or administrative bodies or tribunals, including without limitation laws requiring nondiscrimination in employment because of race, creed, color, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, national origin or other prohibited bases.
- 11. Bartle Wells Associates is an independent public finance advisory firm that is registered as a Municipal Advisor with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC Registration No. 867-00740) and the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB ID K0414). For the services in this proposal, Bartle Wells Associates is serving as a utility rate and finance consultant, but is not serving in the capacity as a Municipal Advisor regarding the issuance of debt. Any regulated Municipal Advisory activity would need to be authorized via a separate agreement.
- 12. Amendments to this agreement can be made with written approval from both the District and Bartle Wells Associates.

Authorized by:

OLIVEHURST PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

Ву	
Print Name	
Title	
Date	
BARTLE WELLS ASSOCIATES	
Ву	
Print Name	
Title	
Data	

EXHIBIT A

SCOPE OF SERVICES

This section presents a proposed scope of services that Bartle Wells Associates believes will form a sound basis for completing this assignment. BWA can work with the District to modify and finalize a scope of services and corresponding budget that meets all the District's objectives and expectations. BWA's general approach is to work closely with staff and other members of the project team, identify objectives, set milestones, have frequent communication, and remain flexible to resolve unanticipated issues.

1. Project Team Orientation

To initiate our work, hold a conference call to accomplish the following:

- Identify members of the District's staff and others who will participate in the project.
- Determine the roles and responsibilities of all project participants.
- Establish project schedule and key milestone dates.
- Discuss objectives and expectations of the project team.
- Identify key issues that may impact the results of our work.

2. Investigation & Data Collection

Assemble the information necessary to understand and describe the current financial condition of the District's water and sewer enterprises, its customer base, near-term and long-term revenue requirements, and its ability to finance operating and capital programs. Assistance and cooperation of District staff and/or the District's consulting engineers will be needed to assemble the background information, which may include:

- Current water and sewer enterprise budgets
- Historical financial information such as audited financial statements
- Fund reserves as of the beginning of the fiscal year
- Customer and utility usage and billing information
- Capital improvement plan and cost estimates
- Projected growth
- Existing financial policies
- Any other information relevant to the assignment

3. Update Forecasts & Projections

Based on the data assembled from the District and other sources, prepare forecasts and projections to serve as the basis of the long-term financial plans. Review projections with District staff for agreements on assumptions, interpretation of data, and completeness of approach.

4. Review Current Water & Sewer Rates

Review the District's current water and sewer rates. Identify potential modifications of the water and sewer rate structures to improve equity and achieve other District goals and objectives.

5. Conduct Survey of Regional Water & Sewer Rates

Conduct a water and sewer rate survey of selected regional agencies. Present findings in easy-to-read graphs or charts.

6. Recommend Minimum Fund Reserve Targets

Recommend fund reserve targets for the District's water and sewer enterprises and Incorporate into financial projections. Develop a plan to help the District achieve and maintain the recommended reserve targets.

7. Develop Water and Sewer Cash Flow Projections

Develop cash flow projections showing the financial position of the District's water and sewer enterprises over the next 10 years. The cash flow projections will estimate future revenues, expenses, and fund balances. Key assumptions will be clearly identified. BWA recommends the use of slightly conservative projections for financial planning purposes. The cash flow projections will be used to identify future revenue requirements and evaluate future rate increases. The projections can also be used to evaluate various "what if" scenarios such as the impact of different levels of capital funding.

8. Determine Annual Revenue Requirements

Based on the cash flow projections, determine annual revenue requirements for water and sewer rates. Revenue requirements will generally include:

- Operating and maintenance expenses, including operating cost inflation
- Capital improvements, including repairs and replacements
- Debt service obligations, if applicable
- Maintaining a prudent level of fund reserves

9. Develop Preliminary & Final Rate Recommendations

Develop water and sewer rate recommendations based on a cost-of-service approach. The rates will be designed to meet the District's water and sewer funding needs and will incorporate input from the District. BWA often recommends agencies phase in necessary rate adjustments over time to minimize the annual impact on ratepayers.

10. Calculate Impact on Customer Bills

Calculate the impact of rate recommendations on the water and sewer bills of a range of District customers and present findings in tables and/or charts.

11. Document Key Findings & Recommendations

Draft a summary report or memorandum highlighting key findings and recommendations. The report will include background information on water and sewer rates and finances, identify financial challenges and future revenue requirements, and include proposed water and sewer rates and impacts on a range of District customers. Incorporate District input into a final version.

12. Proposition 218 Compliance

Assist in drafting the required Prop. 218 notice and complying with the other procedural requirements of Prop. 218. BWA recommends that the Prop. 218 notice provide clear and concise explanation of why rate adjustments are needed. We have found that ratepayers are much more accepting of rate increases when they understand the need for rate adjustments. Confer with the District's legal counsel as needed.

13. Teleconferences, Meetings & Presentations

Have telephone conferences or online meetings with District staff to review findings, recommendations, and options for consideration. Receive ongoing input from District staff to ensure final recommendations reflect District objectives. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation and present finding and recommendations at a District Board meeting. Receive Board input, answer questions, and incorporate input into final recommendations. This proposal assumes two meetings/presentations including: 1) a presentation to the Board to discuss preliminary findings and recommendations and to receive Board input, and 2) a presentation at the final Public Hearing to consider adoption of proposed rates.

EXHIBIT B



BARTLE WELLS ASSOCIATES BILLING RATE SCHEDULE 2021

Rates Effective 1/1/2021

Professional Services

Financial Analyst I	. \$110 per hour
Financial Analyst II	. \$135 per hour
Consultant	
Project Consultant	
Senior Consultant	
Senior Project Manager	. \$225 per hour
Principal Consultant	. \$265 per hour

The hourly rates for professional services include all overhead and indirect expenses. Bartle Wells Associates does not charge for administrative support services. Expert witness, legal testimony, or other special limited assignments will be billed at one and one-half times the consultant's hourly rate.

The above rates will be in effect through duration of this assignment.

Direct Expenses

Subconsultants will be billed at cost plus ten percent. Other reimbursable direct expenses incurred on behalf of the agency will be billed at cost plus ten percent. These reimbursable costs include, but are not limited to:

- Travel, meals, lodging
- Printing and photocopying
- Special statistical analysis
- Outside computer services
- Bond ratings

- Automobile mileage
- Messenger services and mailing costs
- Graphic design and photography
- Special legal services
- Legal advertisements

Insurance

Bartle Wells Associates maintains insurance in the amounts and coverage as provided in the attached schedule of insurance. Additional or special insurance, licensing, or permit requirements beyond what is shown on the schedule of insurance are billed in addition to the contract amount.

Payment

Fees are typically billed monthly for the preceding month and will be payable within 30 days of the date of the invoice. A late charge of 1.0 percent per month may be applied to balances unpaid after 60 days.

EXHIBIT C

SCHEDULE OF INSURANCE

Insured: BARTLE WELLS ASSOCIATES

Bartle Wells Associates will maintain in force, during the full term of the assignment, insurance in the amounts and coverage as provided in this schedule. If additional insurance is required, and the insurer increases the premium as a result, then the amount of the increase will be added to the contract price.

TYPE OF INSURANCE	COMPANY POLICY NUMBER	COVERAGES AND LIMITS	EXP. DATE
Commercial General Liability	Hartford Insurance Company Policy #35-SBA PA6857	 \$2,000,000 General Aggregate \$2,000,000 Products Comp/Op Aggregate \$2,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury 	6/1/22
Excess/Umbrella Liability	Hartford Insurance Company Policy #35-SBA PA6857	 \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence \$1,000,000 Aggregate \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence 	6/1/22
Automobile Liability	Hartford Insurance Company Policy #35-UEC VU2842	■ \$1,000,000 Combined Single Limit	6/1/22
Workers Compensation & Employers' Liability	Hartford Underwriters Insurance Company Policy #35-WEC FG7858	Workers' Compensation: Statutory Limits for the State of California. Employers' Liability: Bodily Injury by Accident - \$1,000,000 each accident Bodily Injury by Disease - \$1,000,000 each employee Bodily Injury by Disease - \$1,000,000 policy limit	6/1/22
Professional Liability	Chubb & Son, Inc. BINDO94045	Solely in the performance of services as municipal financing consultants for others for a fee. Limit: \$2,000,000 Per Occurrence & Aggregate (including defense costs, charges, and expenses)	6/1/22