



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Board of Directors
Title: Overview of Website Homepage Improvements and Meetings/Agendas Hub
From: Adriane Mertens, Communications & Public Affairs Manager
Through: Ben Horenstein, General Manager *BJH*
Meeting Date: October 10, 2023

TYPE OF ACTION: Action X Information Review and Refer

RECOMMENDATION: Receive staff update on website homepage improvements and the new Meetings/Agendas Hub

SUMMARY: Over the past several months, staff has been implementing changes to the District’s website homepage and transitioning the Board meeting calendar and agenda documents to a new online hub to improve navigation and accessibility for District customers and staff.

DISCUSSION: Staff continuously updates its public-facing website (marinwater.org) to enhance the customer experience and promote priority messaging. Last year, staff collected input from the public, the Board of Directors and District staff regarding areas of the website most in need of enhancements.

Based on this input and assessment of the website, website analytics, and other agencies best practices, staff identified a number of priority website projects for its 2023-24 work plan, including: 1) an update to the design of the homepage; and 2) transition to a Meetings and Agenda Hub – a new third-party system for calendaring and cataloguing board and committee meetings and agendas.

Both projects are primarily aimed at making it easier for customers to find what they are looking for quickly on the District website. Additionally, the Meetings and Agendas Hub functions internally in the organization as an agenda management system and is expected to improve efficiencies for District staff who write or review staff reports, track and provide approval of agenda items, or compile and post meeting agenda packets.

Both projects were developed in parallel beginning in late spring and launched September 29, 2023, introducing several new features, including the following:

Refreshed Homepage Design

- A dropdown mega-menu that is built into the website framework so that it appears on every webpage helping users better find what they are looking for on the site quickly.

- Relocation of the google translate feature to the top of the page to improve accessibility for customers who need to access the website information in a different language.
- Relocation of buttons linking to key customer functions such as “start service,” “pay my bill” and “access my account.”
- A rotating slideshow that can be changed out frequently to keep content fresh and promote customer rebates, helpful services and other important announcements.
- Large and colorful icon buttons for quick access to popular topics and areas of the site most frequented by users.
- Large call-out to the new “service finder” page which helps customers better find staff contact information and online forms required for the type of support they are seeking from the District, i.e. help with a leak adjustment, requesting a water meter installation, obtaining watershed land-use permits.
- Simple one-click access to the new Meetings & Agendas Hub for users tracking board and committee meeting items.

Meetings and Agendas Hub

- Hyperlinked agenda which allows users to access staff reports and supporting documents for specific agenda items directly from where the item is listed in the agenda rather than searching the entire agenda packet which can often range in length between 50 to a 100 pages or more.
- Catalogued and searchable agenda packets from board and committee meetings over the last ten years.
- Ability to view running list of upcoming or past board and committee meetings all on one centralized page, and access an individual meeting’s agenda, video recording, and presentations (if available) all from this same page.

Staff will provide a brief live tour of the improved website (marinwater.org) to review these features.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENT(S): None.