

Water district approves La Selva hydrant loan

Residents in La Selva Beach will have improved fire protection sooner than expected if a \$37,000 loan for 15 fire hydrants can be arranged between Soquel Creek County Water District and the local fire district.

"Actually, we would be putting up the front money — we would be repaid later," water district general manager Bob Johnson told directors at their Monday night meeting.

Directors agreed on a short-term (one to three years) loan "to be paid back with interest." They directed Johnson to notify the La Selva Beach Fire District and work on a mutually acceptable interest rate and payment schedule.

The fire district will levy a

special charge to water users to finance the hydrants. Under a new Assembly Bill (AB 320) the charge is legal, said Johnson.

As to the amount of special fees each customer will pay, Johnson said, "These are knotty questions each (utility) district faces. How do you do this fairly? It's up to the fire district (this time). We are (simply) talking about \$37,000."

Johnson said in his opinion, La Selva residents are "interested in better fire protection" even though there will be a charge.

If an agreement is reached between the two agencies, the 15 hydrants will be placed 1,000 feet apart in La Selva.

"The whole area will be improved," observed board president Ken Izant.

In other business:

— Directors discussed the best way to notify water users of the district's water conservation resolution.

Benefits and shortcomings of bill inserts, special notices by mail, newspaper and radio advertising were considered. William Lovvorn, community information representative for the water district, will check with advertising agencies and possibly other utility companies to determine the best plan for Soquel Creek District.

— Directors instructed Johnson to seek bids for five studies to reevaluate Soquel Creek surface water and to assess sizes of off-stream storage (holding ponds) for future use by the district.