

# Aptos water hookups raised to \$600

Effective immediately, it will cost \$600 in storage and transmission fees to connect one dwelling unit to the Soquel Creek County Water District. This is a 72 per cent increase over the \$350 fee which has been charged for the past five years.

Water district directors held a public hearing Monday night on the fee increase — a public hearing at which none of the public showed up — and decided to raise the charge after reviewing a report of capital improvement costs.

A report from district Engineer-Manager Robert Johnson stated, "The object of this storage and transmission fee is to assure that the new demand (new connections or growth) pays for a portion of the cost of the facilities necessary to meet this new demand."

In his report, Johnson reviewed the costs of providing storage and transmission facilities and wells, coming up with a cost of \$510.25 per dwelling unit for a new connection.

Johnson also pointed out that during the five years the old rate

has been in effect, an inflation rate of 10 per cent per year would bring the current fee to \$563.67.

At least one director thought the new rate should be higher. Larry Bargetto said perhaps it should go as high as \$1,000 per dwelling unit, but should at least contain a 20 per cent "contingency" factor.

Other directors disagreed, however, saying Johnson's figures justified a fee closer to \$600 — the amount finally settled upon.

Director Dan Kriege said he thought the storage and transmission fee should be evaluated oftener than every five years — perhaps every two years.

During the discussion, board chairman Ken Izant pointed out that the money raised by the storage and transmission fees has enabled the district to operate without having to levy a property tax.

The storage and transmission fees for non-dwelling connections — commercial buildings, etc. — will be also calculated to reflect a similar increase.

In other business, directors:

—Heard a report from the district's counsel, Robert Bosso, that on Monday the regional coastal commission passed, without comment, the district's application for permits on two storage tanks on which work had been halted after the commission turned down the district's bid for an exemption. Bosso said he would wait until the permits are received before withdrawing his appeal to the earlier denial of exemption.

—Approved a change order costing \$5,328 for additional excavation needed on the Austrian Way and Mar Vista tank sites, after the contractor ran into "spongy soil" at the two sites and had to excavate and refill the areas.

—Approved a contract with the US Geological Service for the first phase of a groundwater study, costing \$3,600. In this phase, the USGS will study all available data on ground water yield and salt water intrusion in the area from Rodeo Gulch to La Selva Beach.

A second phase, which will cost about \$40,000 if approved, calls for the actual measurement of

the groundwater yield and salt water intrusion in the basin.

—Agreed to continue its advertising campaign in the newspapers calling for residents to conserve on their use of water. Johnson reported the ads, which have cost \$607.20 so far, have proved effective. It was directed future ads should commend the public for its response to the voluntary conservation program.

—Gave conditional acceptance to the water mains at the Deer Park Center which had been completed and flushed, with only cleanup work remaining.

—Approved an agreement with the Central Santa Cruz County Water District for an intertie between the systems at Huntington Drive. The Central County district will pay half the cost of the Soquel Creek extension to the district boundaries, half the cost of the intertie, and all the cost of extending its own line to the intertie site.

—Filed, with little comment, a letter from the Santa Cruz City council asking the district to institute compulsory water rationing equal to that now in effect in the city.