Buckman Direct Diversion Project

A joint regional project of the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County to build a reliable and sustainable water supply.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Buckman Direct Diversion Board

FROM: Erika B. Schwender and Nancy Long EBS

DATE: September 5, 2012

RE: Operator Training Program and Tuition Reimbursement Agreement

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The Buckman Direct Diversion Board entered into a contract in 2010 with the Santa Fe Community College to fund a training and certification program for the staff of the Buckman Regional Water Treatment Plant. The training program was designed to prepare facility staff to produce high quality drinking water and to professionally maintain the facilities and equipment of the BDD project. The operator training program is still being offered at the Santa Fe Community College although, due to the current offering of the classes at the Santa Fe Community College, it may take up to one year to receive certification rather than six months when the classes were first developed and offered in 2010. Due to the financial commitment that was being made on behalf of the employees, the BDD Board directed the development and implementation of a tuition reimbursement agreement was designed to help protect the training investment in the employees. The research and recommendations for the tuition repayment agreement were made by CDM as the Board Engineer in 2010. Based upon that research and the recommendations and direction from the BDD Board, an Employee Tuition Repayment Agreement was developed with the City of Santa Fe as the employer. The current form of the Employee Tuition Repayment Agreement provides as follows:

- The water certification program at the Santa Fe Community College is provided to the employee at no expense to the employee.
- The employee continues to receive full salary and benefits during the training program.
- The employees agree to reimburse the City for the cost of the training currently in the agreement at $14,000 on the following schedule should the employee voluntarily terminate his or her employment:
    - 100% of the cost of the training within the first two years.
    - 50% of the cost of the training after year two but before year three.

Although most employees receiving the training have signed the Employee Tuition Repayment Agreement, it appears that the agreement has not been uniformly offered to all employees. This has caused the BDD staff to revisit the agreement, reviewing its terms including the amount of the cost of the training as provided in the agreement and the terms for repayment. It is believed that CDM arrived at the amount of $14,000 as the cost of repayment based upon development of the program with the Santa Fe Community College. The actual cost of training including out-of-state tuition, fees and books is approximately $3,335.00.

To better reflect the actual cost of the training, BDD staff is recommending to the Board that it revise the Employee Repayment Agreement be revised to provide for the actual cost of the training to include tuition, fees and books. Should this new tuition repayment agreement be implemented, it is also recommended that an agreement superseding the existing agreement be prepared for each employee that has previously signed the agreement at $14,000 so that all agreements are uniform. The term for repayment is also being further evaluated for possible recommended revision. BDDB staff seeks direction from the Board as to possible revision of the agreement and its continued use.