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## Nevada County water is clear, but customers want it transparent

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The Bear River flows along the Nevada and Placer County border within the Nevada Irrigation District near Highway 49. NID is proposing construction of...

Nevada Irrigation District's board members rejected a request to live-stream and broadcast video footage of their twice-monthly meetings on March 8, nearly one year after receiving that request in a formal letter.

The board instead approved a motion to improve the audio recording system the district currently has in place. That system saves audio files recorded from each board meeting, but only allows people with access to a district computer to listen to those files live or play them later.

The approved motion will establish an audio archive of meetings with an organized indexing feature that members of the public can access. The audio files of each meeting will stay on NID's website for one year before they are deleted.

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But Wednesday, the public said that isn't enough.

Representatives from the League of Women Voters of Western Nevada County, the Federation of Neighborhood Associations of Nevada County and the South Yuba River Citizens League submitted the original request on April 6, 2016, and sent a follow up letter before Wednesday's board meeting, which saw a packed house.

Many community members who spoke during the meeting's public comment period urged board members to reconsider the request, arguing that live video streaming of meetings is the new standard for government agencies in Nevada County and throughout the country.

Nevada County TV recently improved broadcasting equipment in other local government facilities, including at Nevada City and Grass Valley city halls.

TV staff estimated an initial cost of about \$10-\$15,000 to install the technology necessary to support live streaming of NID board meetings, said the original request letter sent to the board.

An additional \$500 per meeting would pay TV staff or contractors to operate the equipment and manage streaming, broadcasting, and archiving the content.

Sue Ghilotti, a Colfax resident who lives near the site where NID is proposing construction of the Centennial Dam, said at Wednesday's meeting that NID staff could "at least spend a little bit of money" on live streaming their board meetings, since they've already begun spending on the proposed billion-dollar project to build the dam.

Ghilotti said she left someone with a terminal illness at home, without her care, to attend the meeting. The live streaming equipment, she said, would be put in place so that "people like me, or people who are working, can see what's going on."

Many speakers echoed her concern that attending meetings in person takes valuable time away from people who have work or other obligations.

And with all the controversy over the proposed dam, some said that jam-packed meetings like Wednesday's will only continue. Live-streaming video, they argued, would mitigate that issue.

Caleb Dardick, executive director of SYRCL, said he was shocked the board didn't approve the public's request at the last meeting. He said that fostering NID's relationship with the public is the board's duty, in response to board member John Drew's comment on March 8 that it is not his responsibility to "facilitate and finance the creation of the vicarious relationship with the public."

"It's called being a public servant," Dardick said.

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