



Water Services Advisory Commission

Oasis Water Campus
7070 W. Northern Avenue
January 7, 2015
6:00 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – 6:00 p.m.
- II. ROLL CALL:** Present: Chair Ron Short, Vice-chair Jonathan Liebman, Commissioners Robert Gehl, Ruth Faulls, Roger Schwierjohn, and John Sipple
- Staff: Craig Johnson, John Henny, Dr. Doug Kupel, Javier Setovich, Amanda McKeever, Dan Hatch, Mark Fortkamp, Tom Gill, Anthony Weathersby, Thomas Relucio, Hayme Amaya, and Sally Melling, Recording Secretary
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**
- Approval of the Final Minutes, December 3, 2014 meeting - Motion for approval made by Comm. Faulls, seconded by Comm. Sipple. **APPROVED 6-0**
- IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Craig Johnson, P.E., Executive Director

Mr. Johnson gave department updates to the Commission. He explained that the construction in front of the plant is being done by the neighboring asphalt business to install a 12” water line for fire protection and they asked if they could share the roadway during the 4-5 weeks of construction time needed.

Mr. Johnson informed the WSAC that a large part of staff time is being used for preparing the department’s budget for the City Manager. Budgets are due by January 16 with internal reviews being done from February 9-20. The Council Budget Workshops are scheduled for February 3 and 17, and March 17. Topics to be discussed at these sessions include overview of the process, policy discussions, revenue information, and the CIP. The budget book will be presented to Council on April 14 and April 21. The presentations will include sit-down discussions with the Council. Adoption of the tentative budget will be at the voting meeting of May 26 with final adoption on June 9, and adoption of the property tax on June 23. The CIP budget has been drafted and presented to the Budget office; a review will be scheduled soon.

Mr. Johnson explained to the Commission that on the January 27 meeting, a mayoral proclamation for the Municipal Water Services Centennial will be presented. The actual anniversary date is February 25. A traveling display is being developed to show the history of water services. On October 3, a symposium will be presented on Water-Past, Present, and Future, which will be tentatively planned to be held at the main library.

Mr. Johnson then provided an update on the request for putting the audio meeting recordings on the website. Staff researched the request and after consulting with the city's Marketing Department and Channel 11 staff, it was determined that the best option is to utilize a third party website such as Soundcloud.com which will provide up to three hours of recordings at no cost. Anything beyond the three hour limit will require a paid membership. A link to the recordings could be placed on the WSAC web page. The Commission provided positive feedback on this item and staff will proceed with gathering additional information.

Mr. Johnson congratulated the Commission on completing their first year of service. In order to review the upcoming goals and priorities, Mr. Johnson said that the Commission could review the Citizen's Advisory Task Force on Water and Sewer for the recommendations they felt were critical. He also offered coordinating a retreat for the Commission and work with HR to facilitate it. The Commission strongly supported the idea of holding a retreat. Mr. Johnson said staff would formulate a worksheet in advance to start planning for the retreat.

Action: No action required, information only

V. URBAN IRRIGATION

Dr. Kupel stated that staff has no recommendation at this time. He reminded the Commission that at the Public Participation meeting of October 1, 2014, the City Council and the public were advised that no recommendation will be forthcoming until the budget acceptance and rate evaluation are completed. He stated January is the start of the budget process and April 14 is scheduled as the date for Council budget presentation. He stated it is premature for the Commission to take action at this time.

Dr. Kupel announced that the long running interest of having informal meetings with the public will be addressed at the end of January through Councilmember Aldama's district meeting. Councilmember Aldama has set a district meeting for January 28 at 6 p.m. in Glendale Women's Club with Urban Irrigation as the only topic. Dr. Kupel clarified that although this is not a WSAC meeting, it must be correctly noticed as a possible WSAC quorum could occur. He advised the Commission to wait on taking any action.

Dr. Kupel provided information on cost of CIP and expenses for the irrigation system. Mark Fortkamp, Thomas Relucio, and Salt River Irrigation worked to produce a map showing the location of repairs. He explained the different areas of the map and said that staff had decided to use \$19,000 plus the \$15,000 set aside as contingency funds for anticipated repairs before the start of season. The nature of the repairs include replacing pipes under sidewalks, changing valves on gates, working in trouble areas where frequent pipe breaks to reinforce those pipes, and root invasion.

Comm. Gehl asked if this included the maintenance agreement costs. Dr. Kupel replied it was both, the maintenance costs and the \$15,000 set aside in the budget. Established practice has been not to spend the set aside amount to not make the cash-flow amount upside down; spending these set-aside funds make the gap between revenues and expenses even wider.

Dr. Kupel explained to the Commission that staff was unable to secure a lot of information on long term capital expenses. He apologized and stated much of the information needed was not available due to schedule availability with the SRI contractor and the holidays.

Staff consulted with Stantec Consulting, which is an area engineering firm, to gather tentative information from them as they have worked with City of Tempe staff on Tempe's irrigation system. Stantec Consulting's estimates were between \$150,000 up to \$400,000 to make upgrades in the next five years. Vice Chair Liebman asked if those amounts are written into the budget. Dr. Kupel replied they were not as these figures are just rough estimates. Dr. Kupel reiterated that the system is working well and is not a pressurized system since it is gravity-fed. He stated there is the question on whether there is a need to spend that kind of money. Vice-Chair Liebman asked if that would be a FY 2017 budget item. Dr. Kupel replied that yes, funds for the item would need to be found and a place in the Budget would need to be determined.

Chairman Short asked if this amount is for items that are critically needed or are just wanted. Mr. Johnson replied that no study has been done. He clarified that staff asked the private contractor what areas he would concentrate repairs on if he were in charge. Vice-chair Liebman asked if all the other items on the CIP list required studies. Mr. Johnson explained that those items have consultant-driven Master Plans to work from dating back to 2002. He explained that there were numerous ways to approach the process of obtaining technical data to guide decisions such as hiring a consultant to evaluate everything for a complete picture, or using the staff subject matter experts to concentrate repairs to specific areas. Vice-chair Liebman asked if a Master Plan is needed. Mr. Johnson reiterated that staff did not complete a fully study, and technical data is needed to determine what direction to go in. Mr. Johnson clarified that a study could be used as the Master Plan for the irrigation system. Comm. Schwierjohn stated that although this is only an estimate on repairs, he feels this gives a better number since the prior figure of \$7 million is outdated. Mr. Johnson cautioned that irrigation flows cannot wash out roads, flood people's properties, or flood out into the street.

Comm. Sipple asked if there was a record of the areas that require a frequent need for repairs and asked how long these repairs usually last. Dr. Kupel replied that records are kept and Water Services Operations Superintendent Mark Fortkamp maintains them. Dr. Kupel pointed out that the quality of repairs has improved. He explained that in prior years, the focus of repairs was to keep the cost of repairs as low as possible and that currently regular maintenance and repairs are made with quality items by the private contractor. He explained that a repair list will be posted on the website in the future. Chair Short asked if the repairs will be done by April. Dr. Kupel replied that yes, the plan is to get repairs completed by April in time for the start of the new season.

Dr. Kupel then supplied further information on Chair Short's question about the availability of CDBG Grants for irrigation. Dr. Kupel contacted the city's liaison for CDBG funds and reported that there is a possibility of funding, however, the process is very competitive. The grant cycle begins in the fall of this year. Dr. Kupel stated he is not sure of the amount range of the grants. Comm. Schwierjohn stated that federal funding of HUD and CDBG home dollars have been declining since attempts to balance the federal budget began three years ago. He cautioned that while funding might be available today, it might not be around for very long. Comm. Schwierjohn added that those funds have been greatly diminished and it is extremely competitive. Chairman Short also suggested looking into Transportation funds available for public enhancement and historic preservation. Mr. Johnson offered to coordinate presentations by Mr. Lopez, the city's CDBG liaison on the award committee, and Kristen Krey, the city's grant administrator. Dr. Kupel noted that the Bureau of Reclamation also is a possibility for funding. Dr. Kupel offered to contact them after the holidays when more staff would be available.

Comm. Gehl stated that he had previously requested the item be placed on the agenda in order to make three action items. He explained those items were as follows: a statement of support for the continuation of the irrigation program, work to unlink the cost of irrigation from the water rates to make them more in line with the actual cost of the service, and to make a recommendation to include some type of notice with a customer's first water bill when they are within the irrigation service area and inform them that they might qualify for irrigation delivery.

Comm. Gehl concurred that it may be too early to take all those actions but stated that he supports the continuation of the urban irrigation program. Comm. Faulls, Comm. Sipple, Vice-Chair Liebman, and Comm. Schwierjohn all agreed and each voiced their support. Chair Short concluded that the WSAC supports the continuation and preservation of the irrigation system for the city of Glendale with fair and equitable techniques to maintain the system.

Comm. Schwierjohn added that he has researched the City of Tempe's irrigation program and feels the similarities could be helpful for Glendale's review. Tempe's approach for irrigation billing includes user fees and capital improvement fees, and provides a credit for the green canopy benefit provided. Tempe phased in this fee structure over a five year period. Comm. Schwierjohn recommended interested parties go to the City of Tempe's website and view the PowerPoint presentation provided on irrigation. Comm. Schwierjohn will provide the website address to staff to forward to the commission members. Mr. Johnson stated staff would also put it on the web page for public use.

Action: No action required, information only

VI. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Chair Ron Short reviewed the opportunity for audience members to address the Water Services Advisory Commission.

One person spoke:

Robin Berryhill, N. 59th Lane, thanked the WSAC for their support of irrigation. She has had prior experience with Tempe's irrigation system. Ms. Berryhill asked if the \$19,000 discussed for repairs is in addition to the \$39,000 allocated for repairs. She asked if there is a warranty on repairs done by Salt River Irrigation. She said she would like the delivery schedule to go to 11 months of deliveries as Tempe does even though it would require higher customer costs.

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Vice-Chair Liebman repeated his request for a February meeting item to better understand the CCR data presented at the December meeting. He requested a clarification on any unexplained metrics for items not met and steps taken for remediation. Dr. Kupel assured the Commission that all categories are within parameters.

Comm. Schwierjohn requested information on the dropping water levels and Colorado River challenges with emphasis on what approaches are needed, drought information, and ways to keep the water levels from dropping further. Chair Short asked how the city's drought plan addresses this issue. Mr. Johnson assured the Commission that the department is prepared for such an event.

Comm. Faulls asked that Mr. Lopez be invited to address the Commission about CDBG funds. Mr. Johnson explained Mr. Lopez is not the city's grant coordinator but leads the CDBG funds committee. Dr. Kupel explained Kristen Krey is city's grants coordinator. Chair Short requested if it was possible to get Ms. Krey to come present information to the Commission. Mr. Johnson replied staff will check on availability but reminded the Commission that the last time it was investigated, there were no funds available for irrigation. Mr. Johnson replied that both would be invited to speak to the Commission.

Comm. Sipple requested a City of Tempe irrigation program expert be invited to address the Commission.

Vice-Chair Liebman asked for an overview of physical security and protection of assets and steps to prevent unwanted access. Mr. Johnson stated staff is limited in how much information can be divulged but will provide the parameters of Homeland Security that are in place.

Mr. Johnson asked the Commission if an early evening or perhaps later time slot during the week would be acceptable for a retreat. Comm. Sipple replied that Mondays are not open for him. Mr. Johnson stated he would work with HR to see what could be developed.

VIII. NEXT MEETING: February 4, 2015, 6 p.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn was made by Comm. Schwierjohn, seconded by Vice-Chair Liebman. **MOTION APPROVED 6-0** by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Melling, Recording Secretary