

CITIZENS' WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CWAC) MINUTES

April 21, 2020 6:00 pm

Public Participation through call in number (listen only)

1-720-650-7664

Access code: 964 375 257# (no participant code)

Members Present: Janet Marlow (Chair), Tom Coker (Vice Chair), Jay Campbell, Angie Binder, Don Langley, Richard Eason, David Patterson, William Gondrez,

Excused Absence: There were no absences

Staff Present: Marshall Brown, Dan Mikesell, Steve Sciba, Alex Davis, Jo Ann Giddings, Greg Baker, Rory Franklin, Elizabeth Roberts, Sandy Moore

Visitors Present: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS

- M. Brown walked the committee through different aspects of providing essential services and events during the COVID-19 pandemic. The spread of COVID-19 has resulted in various government, county and executive orders and health advisories. It has also caused the closure of the many city facilities, including the Aurora Municipal Center, for health and safety considerations. Currently, many employees are working remotely from home when possible. For employees working remotely, there are several different types of tracking mechanisms available to managers to account for an employees' time and productivity.
- M. Brown explained the types of services being provided. Daily operations continue, including water treatment and distribution, and maintenance activities throughout the system. Aurora Water is still providing service to our customers and many steps that have been implemented to keep both employees and citizens safe.
- M. Brown gave the committee details of Aurora Water, placing a moratorium on water shuts offs due to health and safety concerns. Several delinquent water accounts have been reinstated that were previously shut off. The balances on these accounts are being preserved. The Billing Department has been providing payments plans to those in need.
- M. Brown asked the committee's opinion on restricting the shut off moratorium to only extend to residential and multifamily only accounts to meet life, health and safety concerns. Delinquent commercial accounts would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Irrigation-only accounts would not be included in the moratorium. The committee voiced no objection to this proposal.
- M. Brown updated the committee on Aurora Water Cares Program, which provides up to \$250 in payment relief for customers in need. City Council has been informed of the need to continue to fund Aurora Water Cares. Aurora Water added an additional \$50,000.00 into the program and will reassess demand as needed.
- M. Brown explained some delay in revenue, probably mostly due to a rise of shutting off delinquent accounts, in conjunction with the moratorium of shutting off delinquent accounts. Water account liability is tied to the property. Depending on circumstances, it may need to be addressed by placing a property taxes lien on the property.
- There might be the possibility of assistance for residents and utilities through federal legislation. The city is

closely monitoring federal COVID-19 legislation.

- M. Brown explained the water and treatment plants have continued to operate, providing normal services.
 - G. Baker discussed a rise in residential water usage of six percent based on analysis of 5,500 Advanced Meter Interface (AMI) water meters. This increase is likely due to more people are staying home. Commercial usage has dropped off. System-wide water use is within the anticipated range.
 - M. Brown referenced the reasons for moving forward with the project of the switching out Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) meters, which required drive-by readings to collect the usage data. The AMR meters are coming to the end of their life cycle. New AMI meters, which transmit via cell phone network, providing usage information on a greater frequency, will be installed over a four-year period.
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PERSONNEL IMPACTS

M. Brown referenced due to COVID-19, city libraries and many Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) facilities have been closed. Due to these closures, 600 contract and contingent employees have been furloughed. At the present time there is a hiring freeze. There are currently approximately 20 vacant positions in water. These have been identified as critical positions and probably 15 of the positions are proceeding forward on an exception basis.

OPERATIONS

- S. Sciba presented a general overview of Operations including critical functions and maintenance activities still being accomplished. Main breaks, water quality issues are being responded to and completing necessary repairs. Fire hydrants. Large and small valves are being maintained and repaired as needed. Routine sewer main cleaning has been reduced. Sewer main cleaning of known trouble spots and large transmission lines has continued. Storm Water of inspection of outflows has continued.
 - S. Sciba explained service representatives are not performing delinquent payment shut offs. Some non-essential have types of customer service calls have been cut back, but for the most part, they are still responding, and the work is being done. Work is being accomplished with social distancing, and wearing a mask when needed, to include entering a building if required
 - S. Sciba noted that many crews are staggering their shifts, and distancing in common areas, using a mask when needed. Further distancing is also being accomplished by not having crews ride together. Some vehicles were obtained from divisions not using their city vehicles as employees work remotely from home. Vehicles are being cleaned frequently.
 - S. Sciba discussed and reviewed the safety measures being taken at the facilities. The front desk areas are taped off for people to stay behind the tape for chemicals and supplies deliveries and such as needed.
 - S. Sciba explained any storm drain, trash, and graffiti issues are being addressed as quickly as possible.
 - W. Gondrez expressed concern of the possibly of discarded gloves getting into storm drains with wet weather causing run off. He said he would advise his crews to be watching for discarded gloves along with other items.
 - G. Baker mentioned the possible need to keep an eye out this summer along the Highline Canal for additional issues. The cleanup for the Highline Canal was cancelled, and there very well might be issues that would need attention.
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PROJECTS – ONGOING AND UPCOMING

- M. Brown reviewed the current capital projects and expansion projects. Growth and development are being tracked and moving forward at this time.
- M. Brown referenced Wild Horse is in the permitting and early design phase and is going forward. The Southeast Area Maintenance facility (SEAM) is still moving forward. The SEAM facility is for the current and future needs of staff and equipment. The department had already outgrown the current facilities several years ago. The department's operational budget is being reviewed.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

J. Giddings reviewed and explained the financial climate of Aurora Water. She said there have been some discussions with rating agencies. Rating companies are not looking at raising anyone's rating this year. Future ratings may be based how things are managed through the current issues. The department is not looking to acquire debt this year, which is good. She said maybe in a year or two. There are several crash reserves that have been previously put aside. These reserve funds can be utilized if needed.

RAMPING BACK UP

M. Brown explained a slow phase concept is being considered, in returning staff to the work environment. A recovery committee has been formed and will be reviewing and planning how and when to restore city services.

REVIEW FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AT THIS MEETING

R. Eason inquired if there had been employees that tested positive have had issues with COVID-19.

M. Brown explained approximately five to 10 employees have self-quarantined within a high-risk category. Approximately 30 employees of 460 employees had self-quarantined previously, who had symptoms or had been exposed to someone. Most employees have returned to work. The actual testing has been limited to test to first responders.

G. Baker walked through the cancelling of Water Festival, explaining there are no events allowed at venues at this time. Aurora Public School and Cherry Creek Schools closed and are distance learning. Education has put together digital presentations for all the grades.

J. Marlow asked what the plans might be for city employees to return to work.

M. Brown explained a recovery committee has been formed, and will be reviewing and planning how to restore Services. G. Baker noted per Governor's Safer at Home order, offices will initially bring workers back at 50% capacity, with social distancing practices in place.

T. Coker asked if there were any updates on the properties required for Wild Horse.

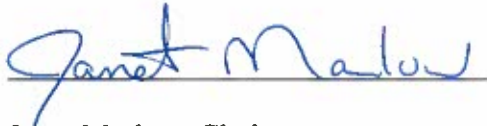
G. Baker said he would see if they could go ahead and put in on the agenda for a future meeting.

CONFIRM NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

The next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, May 12, 2020, remotely via WebEx.

15. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.



Janet Marlow, Chair
Citizens' Water Advisory Committee



Submitted by: Sandy Moore
Administrative Specialist, Aurora Water

ADOPTED: 5/12/20