

**Citizens’ Water Advisory Commission (CWAC) Minutes**  
**March 12, 2024, 6:00 p.m.**  
Spinney Mtn. Reservoir Room/Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Janet Marlow, Dick Eason, Daniel Widrich, Tom Coker, Dennis Dechant, John Dingess, Angie Binder (Teams)

Absent: Jay Campbell

Staff Present: Alex Gagliardi, Greg Baker, Marshall Brown, Kathleen Kitzman, Cat Olukotun, Shonnie Cline, Alex Davis, Melissa Grove, Melina Bourdeau (Teams), Sarah Young (Teams), Michael Valdiris (Teams)

Visitors Present: Gregory Gibson

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The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM.

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**1. Approval of February 13, 2024 Minutes**

The February 13, 2024 minutes were approved.

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**2. Introductions/Public Invited to be Heard**

None

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**3. Communications Update**

None

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**4 Large Water Purchase**

Alex Davis gave a presentation on the purchase of a large farming operation in the Arkansas Basin. A brief history of the Arkansas Basin Agricultural/Municipal Partnership Project was provided. The idea is to lease up to 10,000 acre feet of water per year for three out of ten years and allow the farmers to continue utilizing the land. The purchase price of approximately \$80 million, including land, water and farming. The purchase will significantly reduce the cost to Aurora for drought recovery alternative of leasing from multiple farmers.

J. Bender asked what they are farming currently.

A. Davis answered that they are currently growing alfalfa mostly.

D. Dechant asked if Aurora would be making money off leasing the land.

A. Davis explained the money will pay for our assessments as well as operation and maintenance costs.

J. Dingess asked what feedback has been like from that area.

A. Davis answered that Rick Kienitz has been doing a lot of outreach in the area and so far the feedback has been very positive. The plan to not permanently dry out the land has generated positive feedback.

T. Coker asked where we got the \$80 million.

M. Brown explained that it is a combination of reserves, cash on hand and issuing debt. The revenue to pay for a majority of this will come from connection fees, not rate money.

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## 5. 2024 Business Services Proposals

C. Olukotun introduced three items that Aurora Water is proposing to take effect in 2025. These proposed changes are to continue to better serve our customers, align with Aurora’s mission and vision, and to provide more transparency regarding our rates and fees process. The proposals include a Multi-Family water and sewer connection fee study, Multi-Family class study, and implementing water allocations. Based on these changes, Aurora water is expecting Ordinance changes to Division 3 – Rates and Charges.

G. Gibson asked how the studies are funded and who determines the criteria of the study.

C. Olukotun answered that a lot of this comes from our data and we are looking closer at it.

M. Brown added that some of the criteria came from Council during last year’s Rate and Fee process. They specifically asked to look at the multifamily class to see if data supported our fee structure and methodology.

J. Dingess stated that it would be beneficial to have a sort of historical cheat sheet on the topic of allocations.

J. Dingess asked why pursue this instead of raising the rates or adding more increments to our tier structure.

M. Brown answered that could be an option also. With these accounts, there isn’t a significant cost difference between tiers though.

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## 6. Legislative Update

K. Kitzmann provided an update on recent legislation to the commission. The Second Regular Session of the Seventy-fourth General Assembly convened on January 10th and is scheduled to adjourn on May 8<sup>th</sup>. Aurora Water is tracking several bills this session, a few that are being followed closely were shared with the commission. HB 241362 is meant to incentivize grey water. Current regulation by CDPHE is not a statewide program and local jurisdictions have to opt in. Proponents of this bill would like it to be opt out and for there to be tax incentives. Aurora Water is opposed to this because we already have basically a 100% reuse system and we currently have debt that we are paying that is on the ratepayers, so it wouldn’t make sense for individuals to build a redundant system at a localized scale when we already have a large scale system. SB 24171, the restoration of Wolverines is being monitored by Aurora Water also. We do have suitable habitats in some of our watersheds.

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## 7. Aurora Water Technology Landscape

M. Grove provided a presentation on current and future technologies being utilized. Aurora Water strives to enhance services, improve efficiency and address critical challenges (i.e. succession planning) with the implementation of technology. In this presentation, we explore the key aspects of Aurora Water’s digital journey, provide examples of Aurora Water is leading the way in the utility industry, explain that digital is the new standard, and look at what is coming. The presentation included information regarding paper map book to digital map transformation, use of pipe assessment technologies, digital workflows and enhanced mapping applications, cloud-based CCTV and CIS solutions, artificial intelligence uses, 3D facility models, business intelligence, real time and remote asset monitoring, technology for regulatory compliance, asset inspections, EMMS System, as well as drone implementation and uses.

D. Dechant asked if size of pipe matters when estimating which pipes need replaced.

M. Grove answered that the AI software uses two values, probability of failure and consequence of failure to suggest replacements.

T. Coker asked how archiving works.

M. Grove explained that we don't delete from the database so records will not disappear.

D. Widrich asked if water collaborates with other departments in the city when utilizing this technology.

M. Grove answered yes, multiple departments take part in these discussions and planning.

J. Dingess asked if there are any security requirements.

M. Grove described some of the security standards and shared that most utilities have the same standards so most software have those standards built into them, even blurring out sensitive information. Because we are a critical infrastructure, our security standards are in accordance with the FBI and Homeland Security.

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## 8. Review Follow-Up Questions

None.

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## 9. Confirm Next Meeting

There will be several staff and commission members that will be out of town at the time of the next meeting so a poll will be sent out to determine the next meeting date.

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## 10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10PM

*Janet Marlow*

Janet Marlow (Apr 18, 2024 14:52 MDT)

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Janet Marlow, Chair  
Citizens' Water Advisory Committee

Adopted: April 17, 2024