

**UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

January 19, 2012

Public Works Department – Water Utility Conference Room

Board Members Present: Dick Behrends, Chair; Geoff Larson, Vice-Chair; George Porter; Scott Willis; Matt Van Steenwyk; Leon Vance; Janet Hall-Schempf

Staff Present: Kirk Duncan, Jim Heumann, Tom Trego, Dave Crabtree, Patti Rumfelt

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Mr. Behrends, Chair.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the December 8, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved as emailed out in the agenda packet.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

Board decision on next meeting date: February 16, 2012. No board members had a conflict with this date; Ms. Rumfelt will send out a reminder email for this date.

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Proposed Rate Structure

Mr. Crabtree distributed a 1-page handout that gave the current water code definitions along with his proposed definitions, specifically for “Large Commercial” and “Bulk Water”. He does not believe the current definitions serve the purpose of making the rates equitable for various customers. He is also concerned about why the rate for “Bulk Water” is the same rate as for metered, yet there is a distinction in definition. Mr. Crabtree is seeking the Law Department’s assistance in getting these changed. The Board was in favor of having the code definitions rewritten, so they are clear and consistent. Mr. Larson suggested comparing the current definitions to the old ones, to better understand the intent in changing them to the current ones. The intent was most likely to recognize varying customers’ needs, such as cruise ships (who fill up with fresh water while in port) as well as fish processing

businesses. Discussion followed regarding the impact these large volume customers have on the water system, such as extra wear-and-tear on the equipment used to produce these extra millions of gallons of water each summer. Current rates are not based on the true cost of providing this water to the bulk & commercial customers. Not only does the cost to meet the peak of the high user need to be included, but the cost of upkeeping the system must be added and amortized over the year. Mr. Willis added that AEL&P performs a cost of service study which is then used to establish the rates. Mr. Porter inquired about the dry summers we experience and whether the Utility denies water to high-demand customers, such as the cruise ships. Mr. Crabtree responded that cruise ships are denied water at times, but fish processors are not. Mr. Willis added that AEL&P has “interruptible customers” who occasionally are denied power during peak times. Further discussion was heard about modifying the Water code so that water for fire supply is maintained and that year-round customers have priority. Cruise ships would not be considered year-round customers because they are not consistently hooked up to the system (although the infrastructure to the docks is hooked up year-round). Mr. Crabtree reiterated the fact that has been addressed at previous meetings, regarding the need for a 1-million-gallon water tank that could handle the demand of the cruise ships in addition to the year-round customers. Discussion was heard regarding the possibility of getting cruise ship passenger fee revenue to help fund this big tank. Mr. Duncan stated that the Assembly makes the decision regarding what projects are funded by passenger fee money; he encouraged members to speak to Assembly members to get their input and thoughts.

Mr. Crabtree also distributed a 1-page summary from the last rate study that was performed, showing average usage by quarter and by geographic area of town. He pointed out that the average home usage was 7500 gallons per month. The current meter study done by the Utility showed an average usage of 4400 gallons per month. Members were intrigued by these numbers and discussed the possible reasons for the decrease in average household usage. Is it due to citizens being more aware of water conservation efforts, or perhaps due to appliances being more efficient now?

B. Fats, Oils & Greases (FOGs) Concerns

Mr. Trego reported that FOGs continue to be a big problem for the Juneau wastewater treatment system and that staff have recently increased their efforts to remove accumulated build up. The amount of FOGs entering the collection/treatment system has increased in recent years and contributes to increased processing and maintenance costs. Mr. Porter asked if there are any current requirements for grease traps to be checked. Mr. Behrends noted that the Plumbing Code mandates grease traps to be installed accordingly. Mr. Duncan stated that he recently spoke with CBJ Building Inspector Charlie Ford who confirmed this, but added that there is currently no enforcement mechanism in the

code. Mr. Behrends added that plumbing companies are frequently called upon to clean and certify the grease traps but agreed there is no enforcement being done.

Mr. Heumann noted that FOGs increase the cost of wastewater processing, and he is hopeful that the Utility will someday be able to directly charge those customers who produce them. Mr. Duncan stated that currently Household Hazardous Waste events will accept used grease; however, customers must store it until a collection event is held. One idea that has been discussed is to have a manned tub available year-round for customers to discard their used FOGs.

C. RFP to Evaluate FOGs

Mr. Duncan distributed a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) which requests proposals from firms specializing in FOGs issues. Mr. Heumann added that the ultimate goal of the RFP is to identify measures for reducing the cost that CBJ spends on treating and disposing of FOGs. Mr. Porter asked if the RFP project would be able to identify locations around town where FOGs are coming from. Mr. Duncan responded that this is being done by staff, who are increasing efforts to identify local producers. A general discussion of FOGs-related issues followed.

D. Sample Pre-Treatment Ordinance (Marysville, WA)

A copy of a FOGs pre-treatment ordinance for the City of Marysville, WA, was included in the UAB meeting agenda packet for informational purposes.

VI. NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Member Resignation – UAB member Matt Van Steenwyk has submitted his resignation from the board, and he and his family will be relocating out of Juneau on February 14th. The Board thanked Mr. Van Steenwyk for his time and input and wished him well.

Wastewater Report – Mr. Larson requested further detail about the 230 tons of diesel-contaminated biosolids mentioned in Mr. Trego’s report. Mr. Trego stated that a previously reported diesel “slug” which entered the Juneau Douglas wastewater plant was initially thought to consist of about 5 gallons of oil but was later estimated to be as much as 100 gallons. The diesel fuel contaminated the plant’s pressed biosolids material for several weeks and has been very expensive to treat and deal with. The ADEC was notified and is attempting to identify its source.

Mr. Larson also inquired about the 130 tons of mono-fill material being shipped south as reported in Mr. Trego’s memo to the board. Mr. Trego responded that, although the mono-fill is permitted to accept sewage sludge, previous practices also allowed the introduction of fuel contaminated materials into it. The Utility has since eliminated this practice and is working to remove the contaminated

material which is being shipped to an approved disposal location in Oregon. The material is being shipped south because there are no approved disposal locations for it in Juneau.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patti Rumfelt

Patti Rumfelt, Administrative Assistant II
CBJ Public Works Water Utility