



ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Utilities Division

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UTILITIES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Thursday, June 11th | 5:15pm

Teleconference

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:19pm by Geoffrey, who led the meeting in the absence of Leon.

Members Present: Geoffrey Larson, Janet Schempf, Bryan Farrell, Grant Ritter

Members Absent: Leon Vance, Andrew Campbell

Staff Present: Autumn Sapp, Brian McGuire, Joshua Midgett, Lori Sowa, Katie Koester

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda approved as distributed.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 12, 2019 Minutes approved unanimously

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Bryan Farrell spoke as a member of the public.

Mr. Farrell spoke to the monthly charge affiliated with hauling water from Tee Harbor. He and other residents are concerned that the billing is not contingent on whether you use water or not and believes this is a policy change.

Autumn Sapp responded

To make a change, a new rate structure would need to be added. Staff will investigate previous policies and see if and when there was a rate change and why it may have occurred. Looking during the meeting, Ms. Sapp located the water hauling and hydrant policy, in which a portion changed in 2016. Otherwise, no other changes were incurred since 1997 for the Tee Harbor area.

Katie Koester, Director of Public Works, was introduced during this Agenda item. Superintendent McGuire introduced Katie and she discussed her work background and introduced herself to the Board.

V. ACTION ITEMS

Draft of the Annual Report was reviewed. Motion by Grant, second by Bryan. No objections. Geoffrey volunteered to attend the HRC meeting on the 29th and present in addition to Leon.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

Superintendent Update

Brian McGuire spoke to the COVID-19 response of the Utility and the effects the pandemic has had on operations. Autumn Sapp acknowledged the revenue impact, which is primarily from the loss of cruise ship discharge and water usage fees. As the Fiscal Years straddle the cruise season, the impact on

FY20 is minimal. Looking forward, staff is projecting a \$750k reduction for Wastewater and a \$85k reduction for Water in FY21; there is no plan for revenue reduction in FY22. General revenues are not expected to decrease. Joshua Midgett spoke to the possible increases in commodity pricing and the CARES act funding impact on the purchasing of cleaning supplies. Brian focused on the opportunity this summer will provide to give a statistical base load for summer usage and the likelihood of cost savings with lower usage. A tourist-light/free summer could provide useful data points moving forward for the Utility to analyze and use in future decision making. *The Utility is looking to work with AKDEC to participate in Phase II of sludge testing for the presence of COVID-19 in wastewater.*

Response

Grant Ritter requested the total cost figures for the installation of the dryer building. Brian McGuire will look up this information and provide to the Board.

Geoffrey acknowledged that it is a unique situation and is interested in the base load statistics and labeled it a 'legacy'. Data points of interest could be calculating the metered water v. cruise ship water v. household water usage. Another opportunity would be to look at the FOG concerns and whether they have lessened with restaurants having been shut down. Brian mentioned that there has been an increase in grab sample acquisition frequency and that an Industrial User Survey will be sent out for JDTP.

Geoffrey also inquired as to the impact of increased use of cleaning agents in the community on the biology of the treatment plants. While the Utility is not currently taking bug specific measurements, other data points are used to acknowledge health of the biology in the plants and no significant shift has been identified at present.

Additional Update – Autumn Sapp

There is a financial hardship form for meter users that has been mailed out to delinquent customers. There is no verification requirement and it will be an option for all customers – business and residential. With the completed form there will be no shut offs for nonpayment or finance charges accrued. This extends to November 11th. At that point, the collection office will develop payment plans with those affected users. There has just been a 1% increase from April to May for non-payments. PSAs, Facebook notifications, and an ad have been sent out to make customers aware of this option. Additionally, Katie Koester has passed on the information request to the City Manager's office so that they might leverage their radio air time to share that message.

Autumn reminded the Board that rates will not increase until July of 2021.

Utility Bills have been floated as a possibility of economic hardship relief to the community.

Autumn also mentioned that the Billing department is still investigating options for processing payments via credit card. There is no timeline at present – Autumn will continue to keep the Board updated.

VII. NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Welcome to Katie from Geoffrey.

VII. ADJOURNMENT –

The meeting adjourned at 6:18pm

Next Meeting:

July 9, 2020 | 5:15 PM | Teleconference