

ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Utilities Division

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UTILITIES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES WORKING SESSION

Thursday, March 31st | 5:15pm

Teleconference – Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:18 pm by UAB Chair, Bryan Farrell.

Members Present: Andrew Campbell, Stuart Cohen, Bryan Farrell (chair), Geoffrey Larson, Elizabeth 'Buffy' Pederson, Janet Schempf

Members Absent: Grant Ritter

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

Community Members Present: Tyler E., Carole Triem

II. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. *Water & Wastewater 101 – Brian McGuire*

- i. Brian McGuire introduced the Utilities slide deck, a high level overview of the CBJ System, and offered a walkthrough of the facilities and their uses. He made special note of Salmon Creek being a micronfiltration plant, and touched on the penstock repair work by AEL&P. Last Chance Basin is a well field system and primary source of water.
- ii. Brian McGuire shared to high-level process between the 3 wastewater plants, Mendenhall plant (MWWTP) was originally a flow through system, but is now a SBR system. He shared details on the Dryer system, how it has had some cost savings and that it lessens the risk of environmental impact. Juneau Douglas Treatment Plant (JDTP) is an older plant and is the primary recipient of Cruise Ship waste, Lori shared more later in the meeting in regards to projects for this facility. The Auke Bay Treatment Plant (ABTP), a smaller packaging plant, serves entire Auke Bay area and surroundings.

Questions

- i. *Stuart Cohen* – If two of the wells switched to VFDs, and five remain without, is it cost effective/planned in CIPs to bring the other 5 up to date? *Brian McGuire* - There are plans in the works to bring them up to date with VFD installations. LCB will see a boost in energy efficiency.
- ii. *Stuart Cohen* - Where do the dried solids go? Shipped down south? *Brian McGuire* - no, we actually haul it straight to the landfill.
- iii. *Stuart Cohen* - As an average how dry are these solids? *Brian McGuire* – on average our solids sit somewhere between 92% - 99%.
- iv. *Stuart Cohen* - Can't we burn the dried solids? *Brian McGuire* - Unfortunately, no. This is due to the higher levels of PFAS in our sludge, meaning that it isn't feasible at this time. Only allowable use currently is as a top cover

b. *Project Overview – Lori Sowa*

- i. JDTP: replacement of the motor control center (MCC) and installation of HVAC system, Vactor Truck/Septic Receiving Station, a project to lessen the impact of septic dumping, and a method of better screening/treating material. Future Projects: Control Strategy for Acceptance of Cruise Ship wastewater, UV building upgrade, and major roof repair.
- ii. MWWTP: SBR SCADA Replacement, security camera installation, review of operational strategy and potential improvements, instrumentation upgrading, condition assessment of equipment/unit process, outdated electrical controls/hardware due for upgrade, and an Industrial User Survey, which will be a method of tracking and learning who our major industrial inflows belong to. Future Projects: Replacement of UV disinfection system, possible addition of Decant tank, and repair upgrade of the SBR tank walls.
- iii. ABTP: updating the cathodic protection, the MCC unit, and a potential install of a UV system.
- iv. Collections: Lift station upgrades – including Gruening Park and Channel Drive, improving communication systems between lift stations and the Treatment facilities, and continuing to work with Streets and DOT on aligning sewer line replacements with street reconstructions.
- v. Water: Installation of surge suppression equipment, 2021 Sanitary Survey, Pump station replacements and upgrades – including Bonnie Brae and Lee St., and mixer additions to reservoirs to prevent freeze up.

Questions

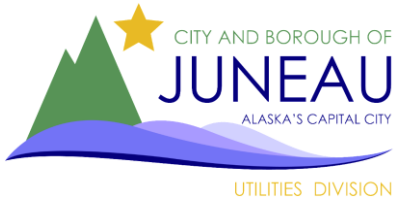
- i. *Bryan Farrell* - Asked about the timeline of these projects. *Lori Sowa* – Most of the projects shared will begin/be completed in a 1-5 year and 5-10 year timeframe.
- ii. *Bryan Farrell* - What kind of treatment system is ABTP? *Lori Sowa* – ABTP is a repressed flow package facility

c. *UAB History – Geoff Larsen & Brian McGuire*

- i. Geoff gave a brief financial history of the Utility, noting that prior to the formation of the UAB, the Utility existed with an operational deficit while being cash positive due to a lack of tracking the depreciation of assets.
- ii. Geoff then shared information regarding rate increase studies performed in 2003-2014, Rate increases started after the Rate Study was presented to the Assembly. UAB and Public held off on increases until 2014, Assembly passed a rate increase 5 year plan.
- iii. Brian McGuire noted that rate increases are a necessary evil for the continued operation of the Utilities. Rising costs associated with investing in upgrading water & sewer lines that are showing degradation, having to coordinate with Street replacement work, and infrastructure is showing signs of outdatedness – all of which add up to a need to repair and replace before catastrophic failures.

d. *Budget – Autumn Sapp & Joshua Midgett*

- i. Autumn Sapp gave an overview of the dashboard, original creation by Comptroller Sam Muse and the previous Finance Director. It takes in account multiple rate years, debt services, loans and grants, and forecasts those numbers out years ahead.
- ii. Joshua Midgett, explained the use of the dashboard as a projections tool and how it is useful as a guideline to future fiscal spending.



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Questions & Comments

- i. *Andrew Campbell* - the dashboard was extremely helpful in the approach to the Assembly when seeking 5 year Rate increase plans.
- ii. *Geoffrey Larsen* - the dashboard simplified complex issues, and allowed the UAB to garner a portion of that head tax to boost revenue of Utilities.
- iii. *Stuart Cohen* - As things get drier and drier, the possibilities of a really bad fire event in the future? What is the Utilities level of preparation? *Brian McGuire* - risk analysis puts Downtown as the highest risk of fire event damage that may impact Water storage.
- iv. *Carole Triem* - are we/the CBJ still in the danger area, has the rate increases pulled us out of the hole? *Geoff Larsen* - shared some past discussions related to rate modelling with the assembly. The sales tax inclusion into the revenue of the utilities, helps with maintaining infrastructure, but not completely. Balance act between what we can sell to cruise ships, keep in reserve, and the public use.

III. ANNUAL REPORT

Bryan Farrell volunteered to write the first draft of the Annual Report and is to work with Joshua Midgett on having this go out to the UAB ahead of the next scheduled meeting for review.

IV. ADJOURNMENT –

The meeting adjourned at 6:52pm

Next Meeting:

May 13th, 2021 | 5:15 PM | Teleconference