

# MINUTES

Regular meeting of the City of Redlands Municipal Utilities/Public Works Commission on June 3, 2024 at 4:00 PM in the Council Chambers at the Civic Center, 35 Cajon Street. The meeting was an in-person meeting.

## **A. ATTENDANCE & CALL TO ORDER**

Present: Adekunle Ojo, Chairperson  
Steve Stockton, Vice Chairperson  
David Garcia, Commissioner  
Robert Meals, Commissioner  
Paul Norwood, Commissioner

Absent: Thomas Breitzkreuz, Commissioner  
Chandrasekar 'CV' Venkatraman, Commissioner

City Council  
Liaison: Mario Saucedo, City Council Member

Staff: John Harris, Municipal Utilities & Engineering Director; Goutam Dobey, City Engineer; Johana Silva, Commission Liaison/Associate Engineer; Sara White, Commission Liaison/Senior Administrative Assistant; Fernando Mata, Wastewater Utility Manager; Paul Mariscal, Water Utility Manager, Jung Park, Laboratory Manager

Guest

Speakers: Paul Mariscal, Water Utility Manager, Fernando Mata, Wastewater Utility Manager

Commissioner Steve Stockton, called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

## **B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of April 15, 2024, were unanimously approved.

## **D. COMMUNICATIONS**

Before proceeding with Item D., Vice Chair Stockton asked if Item B. was missed. Chairman Ojo asked for a Public Comment. No comments were made.

### **a. Director's Report**

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Director Harris stated he would move through the report as there are a few presentations requested by the commission at the last meeting.

David Garcia ask a question regarding the Crafton Hills Community College MOU termination.

Director Harris replies that the termination has to do with the sale of the city's shares of the South Mountain. The Crafton Hills Community College connection to Yucaipa water is physically there but they are waiting on state approval to turn the valve so to speak. Once completed the MOU will serve no purpose to CHCC.

## **Bids for Security Fencing Project for Water Sites:**

Mr. Harris stated that the bid for the project to build security fencing at multiple water sites came in high over budget exceeding the 5000-600k estimate range by about \$1M. Due to that fact, the city did not award the bid or move forward with the project. Funds have been budgeted for the next FY to fund the fencing project.

## **P2 Project Update:**

Phase Project: A resolution establishing the amount of \$45M for the State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan will be on City Council's June 18th agenda. This is the last step in Water Board process before drafting the agreement so getting closer on this item.

Question from David Garcia: Are we monitoring for more than just the PFAS. John Harris asked present staff for assistance with correct number of contaminants that are monitored other than PFAS.

Fernado Mata and Jung Park respond with: There are over 100 additional contaminants that are monitored at water sites. This meets or exceeds the current required by state regulations.

Question from David Garcia: Do we have any problems other than the location of that one well?

Director Harris replied: There was one other location where there was detect on the Orange St well. A detect but does not exceed the MCL. Also mentions the class action lawsuit with 3M. There are two phases of the class action lawsuit currently. We are Phase 1 so some of the first dollars will be made available to this Phase 1 group. The city is also a member of Phase 2 class which means that there will be a set-aside amount (unknown) to resolve any future found contaminate related issues.

## **Water Consumption Versus Water Conservation:**

David Garcia comments: Thanks staff for preparing and stating it as it was very educational. David Garcia makes a statement regarding the turf conservation incentive provided by the city and the limitation of the incentive considering the amount provided to incentives are too low as the incentive amount is close to 10%. Mr. Garcia believes that participation in the program could be higher if incentives were higher. Garcia proposes that there be an increase in these incentives to influence participation in the program.

Director Harris stated that staff are looking into increasing incentives and continue to monitor the program. He believes that new construction standards could play a role in the limited participation as new construction often meets standards as a requirement. Such as household fixture items sold in stores.

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Director Harris states that there have been changes to the program in the past such as that the turf conversion to artificial turf is no longer in play due to the fact that the CC was no longer supportive as the artificial turf and some of the other environmental hazard concerns artificial turf poses. Director Harris stated that Mr. Garcia's comments will be considered and discussed among staff.

Mr. Ojo comments on the use of gallons saved in terms of reported water savings. He feels like it is exaggerates savings on a utility scale and believes that acre feet should be used as water-saving measurements. Mr. Ojo states that the water savings reported from yard conversions using the rebate program are minimal based on the fact that the city water usage.

Director Harris replies and states that based on his conversations with residents he believes that gallons are typically used because the average resident understands gallons better than acre-feet when it comes to measuring water. Director Harris asks Goutam Dobey to confirm that the reduction of water usage is 14%-15% per participating customer.

Mr. Ojo states that regarding the rebate program when you divide the amount of water saved and the amount spent is this a good use of resources if it is taking money from customers to pay other customers to do something ineffective. He also states that turf removal can be a large expensive project and the rebates available are so low in dollar amount that a higher rebate would be a much greater incentive to program participants

Director Harris responds: The FY 21/22 rebate amount was a little less than 21k and with that limited amount he feels like the water savings that are gained from the rebate program are in a good place. He stated that the water saved is roughly 43 acre feet of water, to put in perspective that is about the same amount of water the city uses to irrigate the California Groves and personally feels like it is a step in the right direction versus attempting to package a project \$20,60,75k at a time it would take many years to develop enough escrow money to build anything meaningful.

Mr. Ojo agrees with Mr. Harris's statement in support of the current program.

Director Harris reminds the commission that this information is not specific messaging that was put out to the public but that it is information that was requested from the commission regarding the water savings from the incentive program.

Mr. Garcia states his reason for concern and request for information was due to the fact that the consumers in Redlands residents use 85% more than the national average.

Director Harris stated that it is a good point that the percentages can be misleading and that this subject could be an agenda topic on its own. He added that the water exchange agreement holders are the highest usage accounts an average of 2000-8000 units of water bi-monthly versus the average residential consumer bi-monthly average using 200 units. So, when talking about conserving water those accounts are opportunities to do better and he is working on that.

Mr. Stockton makes the statement that it does show good faith and keeps conservation on the table.

No further comments:

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Chairman Ojo brings forth an upcoming CC agenda item, item B. Development Impact Fee Study.

Director Harris states that the item will be continued at the July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. They need to pause due to questions from a contractor's group.

Director Harris speaking Yucaipa Sustainable Groundwater Management Agency Withdrawal. It doesn't make sense for the city to be part of this anymore sense they don't own any more shares. He stated that the city can represent the community if necessary, with a seat at the table. He adds that the ground water sustainable management plan was the initial reason to join that group.

Mr. Garcia voices a question about the NPDES Permit. Understands the reason for it but what is the support agreement?

Mr. Harris states that when they split the department there were two NPDES positions. One went to DSD and the remaining inspector still with MUED resigned. Which took about 18 months to backfill the position. It was then converted to a Regulatory Compliance Position that is filled now. This is likely a limited-term agreement to get the city caught up on inspections that were not completed during that 18-month window of the vacant position. This position is for business inspections not for the WWTP.

Mr. Stockton, No further questions.

## **E. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Recycled Water System Update**

Wastewater Manager, Fernando Mata provides a presentation on Recycled Waster System Update.

Mr. Stockton asks for clarification on the source of the water in the ZeeWeed MBR treatment process.

Mr. Mata provides clarification on the source of the water and the process.

Mr. Mata extends an invitation to visit the plant if desired.

Mr. Mata continues with the close of the presentation. Opens the floor for questions.

Commissioner Stockton asks from a reporting standpoint do you differentiate between non-potable water and recycled water or are they commingled?

Mr. Mata replies that there is a commingling area in the 1350 zone and they are transitioning a good amount of the non-potable users to recycled water. To get ahead they are enforcing a purple pipe for when they do transition to strictly recycled water.

Mr. Stockton asks, How does that fit with the obligation for water for Mountain View in terms of total values?

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Mr. Mata responds that after the upgrade there will be plenty of water to supply Mountain View and all other users.

Director Harris adds thoughts that Mata and himself are currently renegotiating the agreement with SCE which was a 20 year agreement that expired a year and a half ago but we are currently in an extension year. They currently have 3k acre-feet per year and would like to reduce the taker pay volume to more like a 1.5-acre fee a year. If reduced it will open availability for local use. Mr. Harris also states that we do have an option to expand service to recycled water to customers if desired.

Mr. Gracia asked if SCE didn't use our treated wastewater would we still meet our discharge permits?

Mr. Mata explained that we would still meet them.

Mr. Garcia asks an additional question regarding the new requirement for food waste bins for residential customers. Mr. Garcia voices concerns regarding the possible influx of food waste in the water system as more customers may dump food waste into the sinks versus bins.

Mr. Mata replies that they are fully aware of the possibility of the influx of food waste but that it is not a concern at this time. It is anticipated and staff will continue to monitor.

Mr. Mata continues the presentation.

Mr. Ojo asks for confirmation that when recycled water exceeds demands the overage is placed in ponds to percolate.

Mr. Mata confirms that this is accurate.

Mr. Ojo comments on the non-potable water treatments and asks if the wells were deliberately drilled to take advantage of aerators with lower ground water quality. Mata referred to Mr. Mariscal for response.

Mr. Mariscal comments that water quality is the main driver for turning a well into a non-potable well. So wells found to have low-quality water would be used as non-potable water wells. Most of those non-potable wells were found to be high in nitrate so they were repurposed as non-potable.

## **b. Non-Potable Water System**

Water Utility Manager, Paul Marcial provides a presentation on Non- Potable Water for the Commission.

Mr. Garcia asked a question in regards to the Bear Valley Mutual Water and if it is a water exchange for water from the river.

Mr. Marcial states: They are direct connections so we can sell them water if needed.

Mr. Harris states: We could sell water to BVMW if needed but it's not commonly done.

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Mr. Ojo asks: Does the city receive water from BVWM?

Mr. Harris states: We can take BVW from the city shares but water is delivered by priority but do use some water at Hinkley. Discussion continues with Mr. Ojo regarding the use of water from Bear Valley Mutual Water.

Mr. Marcial continues his presentation on non-potable water.

Mr. Garcia asks questions regarding materials used for the pipelines.

Mr. Fernando Mata assisted with answers to the questions regarding the color coding and tagging of the new versus previously existing pipelines.

Mr. Ojo asks a question regarding the recent master plan for water.

Mr. Harris responds with clarification of the water system master plan for portable versus non-portable.

Mr. Garcia asks how many monitoring inspectors are there?

Paul Marcial replies there are two compliance officers.

Commissioner Stockton, No further questions from the Commission.

## **F. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES, AND/OR REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Stockton asks the commission if they have anything for this item.

Mr. Ojo speaks about a water project tour he participated in and the water quality choices of the voters in this area in the 1960's who preferred the Feather River which is a high quality.

Mr. Stockton speaks on the Delta Conveyance Project regarding the tour of the project that he participated in along with Mr. Ojo and what he took away from that.

Mr. Garcia request a tour of the WWTP.

Mr. Harris suggests rotating the meeting locations to the WWTP and other sites in the future so a tour can be provide to attendees who are interested. He will discuss with staff and schedule based on the availability of site.

Mr. Ojo makes suggestion for an agenda item related to water conservation that he believes would be good for a presentation in the future, in terms of the water budget objectives for the city. He states savings and projected budgets can be information for the community.

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Mr. Harris states that the item requested can be completed.

G. ADJOURNMENT – Next regular meeting is August 5, 2024 at 4:00 PM

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:06 PM. The next meeting of the City of Redlands Municipal Utilities/Public Works Commission is scheduled for August 5, 2024.