

City of Folsom
Utility Commission
Action Minutes
September 18, 2012 6:30 pm

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ryan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners: Bringgold, Davis, Kahlon, Oosterman, Ryan

Absent: Commissioners: Cook, Standley

Staff Present: Todd Eising, Utilities Section Manager; Michelle Parks, Administrative Assistant

Others Present:

1. **MINUTES**

Davis motioned to approve the minutes of March 20, 2012, and Bringgold seconded the motion.

AYES: Bringgold, Davis, Oosterman, Ryan, Kahlon

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Cook, Standley

2. **BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

None

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

Eising briefed the Commission on the staffing changes since the Commission had last met and advised that there have been changes within our staff; specifically, Stormy Hinkley has been replaced by Michelle Parks. Ms. Parks will be a point of contact for the Commissioners, should Mr. Eising be unavailable.

About two years ago, Utilities was merged with Public Works and Ken Payne was moved up to the City Manager's office to work specifically with the water reliability; Kyle Ericson and Todd Eising were made Utilities Section manager and run most of Utilities under Mr. Lorenz. In June of this year, Kyle Ericson terminated his employment with the City and Rich Lorenz retired in July. Due to the departure of staff members, the City Manager will be considering changes within both the Utilities and Public Works departments. By the next Commission meeting in October, there should be more details available regarding the specific plan of action. City Manager would like the

Commission to know that details regarding the department's staffing will be made known at the next meeting.

Ryan requested clarification that the budget was adopted earlier than usual. Eising verified that it was to accommodate the layoff and bumping process in an effort to initiate immediate cost savings. The budget has been implemented, at this time. A re-organization may take place in the future, but there are no current plans to implement such a change.

Comparative Billing

Eising discussed the comparative billing process currently being utilized for water usage billing since January of this year. There has been some confusion regarding the billing method. Finance is currently working on clarifying the details of the water bill and changing to a calendar year rather than a rolling year, per the direction of the City Manager.

After an extensive discussion regarding the details of flat rate billing versus metered billing, Eising answered a few questions from the Commissioners regarding other agencies' programs to promote conservation and alternate billing programs, as well as educating the public regarding the metering program currently being implemented in Folsom.

Kahlon requested information regarding how comments from residents are collected and what the recurring issues that are being reported. Eising stated the most common complaints are regarding the rolling year versus the calendar year for water usage. Once Finance has made the transition to calendar year, this issue will be resolved. Eising went on to state that he has been working with the City's Public Information Officer in order to create a billing insert that would assist in educating the residents about their water usage.

Davis suggested that on the bill a graph would show what a 20% reduction in usage would look like in cost savings.

Oosterman cautioned that there will be a considerable amount of calls regarding the change in water bills from residents that don't understand the comparative billing concept. He suggested that the City considers the option of having an outside agency go to utility customers and perform a water usage audit, then advise them on ways to conserve water and lower their utility bills. Eising stated that we currently offer this through our Water Conservation Division.

Kahlon reiterated Oosterman's concern regarding calls from residents who are confused by the new billing.

Davis stated that San Juan Water District came to him because they noticed his water usage was excessive; they checked for leaks and found the problem was with the pool equipment. Eising informed the Commission that more staffing would be needed to adopt/implement a program of that sort.

4. OLD BUSINESS

Water/Sewer/Solid Waste Rate Update

Budget

The final budget for Solid Waste, Water, Sewer and it is available on the City's website, under Finance Department. Currently, we have a \$2 million CIP budget for Water; \$1 million transfers out for Water Division. \$3 million budget for Wastewater. The Utilities Department has been working on streamlining and hope to be able to put a little bit more into our Capital Improvement Projects. Currently, our fund balance is \$6 million; we would like to use the cycle of building the funds up, then use the fund balance for projects.

Davis requested Eising define what transfers out entails. Eising responded that transfers out refers to funds going out to other departments to cover expenses, such as billing for legal services, funding positions in other departments that do work for the Utilities department.

Ryan stated that in years past, the Committee has requested a listing of transfers out for the year. Eising stated that the transfers out were discussed during the budget process, but that he would provide a copy of detailed transfers list to the commissioners for each of the funds.

Solid Waste fund balance \$6.5 million, of which \$3 million will be spent in CIP's.

CIP (Capital Improvement Projects)

Three major projects; the first is the Persifer Alley/Mormon Alley Sewer lines which are replacing older sewer lines that currently underneath buildings, including the convalescent hospital on Natoma Street. The cleanouts are inside the building, making maintenance difficult.

The next project is the Oak Avenue Pump Station project, which is odor related. This is a pipeline that has some turbulence in it, which is ten to fifteen years old and has had maintenance and odor issues associated with it for some time that are design-related. There are also pipeline issues associated with the pump station itself.

Sewer Update

RWQCB Questionnaire

Eising was asked to give a presentation on our sewer system. Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has now combined with the State to regulate sewer systems and how they are operated. The State put together about four or five years ago Waste discharge requirements, which are the directives regarding spills, reporting and to maintain the system. The RWQCB will be enforcing, along with the State. If there is a spill and the spill reaches a waterway, there are specific requirements in handling such an incident.

Back in 2000, the City had a spill down on Folsom Boulevard that went from one of our old pump stations that is no longer in service and dumped directly into the river. Because of this, we were one of the first in the State to get NPDS permit on a collection system.

In May/June, the Board began getting complaints from residents, one in particular, and contacted the City to let them know about the complaints and to provide a questionnaire, which is basically the pre-cursor to an audit. A surprise inspection took place for approximately 2 to 3 days.

Staff was interviewed and questioned extensively on procedures, systems and operations. Staff handled the audit extremely well and Eising was very proud of those who were interviewed. The Board came back with the findings of the audit, stating there were a few items found to be in need of improvement, but no substantial violations were found. The complainant was not satisfied with the result of the inspection and continued to appear before the board. The Board requested Eising come before the Board and to give an overview of what happened in 2000, what is being doing today and what happened in between.

Water Update

As an informational item only, Eising directed the Commission to the handout reflecting the current lake levels. Kahlon inquired as to what the current snow survey. Eising replied that he had heard that it was somewhere near 20% and we will continue to await new information from the Bureau sometime in April, when the rains have come.

Solid Waste Update

Solid Waste Division purchased four new sanitation trucks through grant funds. The Commission members requested clarification regarding the graphics on the trucks and the cost of such treatment. Mr. Eising informed the members that the treatment is inexpensive and was included in the purchase price of trucks.

Eising informed the Commission that David Miller, the Community Development/Public Works Director, suggested alternating meeting dates between Water/Wastewater and Solid Waste. Ryan requested clarification as to who would be sending out the meeting agendas and packets; Eising stated there would be no change in that regard.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Submitted,

Michelle Parks, Administrative Assistant

Attachments: Agenda, Minutes, Handout on the adopted budget