



ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Utilities Division

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UTILITIES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

*Thursday, May 11, 2023 | 17:15pm
2520 Barrett Ave. & Teleconference – Zoom*

I. CALL TO ORDER

- a. *The meeting was called to order at 5:20pm by Board Chair Andrew Campbell*
- b. *Members Present: Andrew Campbell, Elizabeth Pederson (teleconference), Geoff Larson, Grant Ritter, Janet Schempf (teleconference), Stuart Cohen*
- c. *Staff Present: Alan Steffert (teleconference), Brian McGuire, Denise Koch (teleconference), Joshua Midgett, Laura Williams*

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- a. *May 11, 2023 agenda was unanimously approved by the Board*

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. *April 13, 2023 minutes were unanimously approved by the Board with the following change:*
 - i. *Geoff spoke to item b. i. 5. And requested the following change: realization of unfunded depreciation*

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. *2023 UAB Annual Report Draft*
 - i. *Janet was thanked by those in attendance for her work on the Report thus far and mentioned that there is the ability to add a paragraph beneath the 2022-2023 UAB ACTIVITY regarding current infrastructure concerns.*
 1. *Andrew acknowledged that this would be useful but didn't have specific language to offer and spoke to it being suited to a Rate Increase conversation*
 - ii. *Janet noted the need to correct minor typos and grammatical errors, which will not impact the message of the report.*
 - iii. *Brian spoke to the need to 'soften' the Marine Passenger Fee language, changing 'secured' to 'sought'*
 1. *Geoff asked about additional uses of these Fees in the past, to which Brian responded that in may have been pre Dashboard documentation. Grant also offered additional uses for these fees for which there is no specific wording*
 2. *It was decided to generalize this section and add a sentence stating that Marine Passenger Fees have been used in the past to fun various Water and Wastewater Utility Projects.*
 - iv. *The Report was approved by the Board noting that Janet and Joshua would work together to correct minor errors.*
- b. *Board Member Renewal & Recruitment*
 - i. *Brian noted that Keri Williamson needs to complete their application for review. Andrew offered that they would be a positive addition to the Board.*

- ii. Janet and Grant confirmed their reapplications and Joshua offered to provide Stuart with the link to do so.
- c. Rate Tool Check In
 - i. Stuart questioned if rate increases added in the individual tabs of the sheet would affect an entire Utility bill or just the tab name (Water or Wastewater).
 - ii. Geoff asked for an update on the 10-year CIP plan, which Brian acknowledged he was working on with Alan and it would be ready to share in the coming meeting.
- d. Billing Example Collection
 - i. Brian noted that staff has secured about 7-10 Utility Bills for peer review and has requested UAB members to do the same in order to acquire an adequately sized pool for peer review
 - 1. Brian spoke specifically to comparing with Sitka, who's current billing is just below CBJ's with significant anticipated increases in the coming years
 - 2. Any copies of these bills should be sent to Ty and Joshua who will redact any sensitive information before sharing
 - 3. Andrew offered that he could easily secure Hoonah's
 - 4. Stuart questioned whether staff was looking for bottom line or breakouts, which Brian replied that staff is looking for 'all of it', as it will all be useful in the coming rate discussion
 - 5. Discussion about the sustainability of rate increase, which Laura replied with examples from Colorado where monthly costs exceeded those of CBJ
 - 6. Grant spoke to a concern about union negotiations City wide and the impact these continual raises will have on the rate payer
 - a. He also spoke to the Budget book at large and the impacts that other projects have as the trickle down to the UAB and/or the Utility
 - b. Andrew acknowledged that the question should be 'what are we going to fund with the rates?' This could help answer the scope of any potential increase
 - c. Stuart questioned the role of the UAB in determining the necessity of CIPs, to which Andrew and Geoff pointed to the Report, which states the UAB's purpose and its role in advising staff and offering recommendations
 - 7. Geoff asked the question if we have to be an Enterprise Fund and what value there might be in exploring the Utility becoming more integrated into the political decision making process
 - a. Andrew offered that the UAB simply needs to develop the value proposition and express it to the Assembly, who will make the political calculus from there
 - 8. Stuart spoke to Cruise Lines being a possible source of additional revenue as their current charges don't necessarily equate to the cost of an annual user
 - a. Brian noted that use does increase as a byproduct of Cruise Ships, but that Juneau Douglas has only rarely needed to bring an additional basin online
 - b. Laura brought up the possibility of reaching out to other Municipalities that may accommodate Cruise Ship water and wastewater services for comparison.
 - i. It was noted that currently, Juneau is the only location in Alaska that provides this service
 - 9. Geoff offered that the current rate model has no 'peak cost' lever nor any 'distance' lever to accommodate for these demands on the system.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & NON AGENDA ITEMS

- a. *Brian introduced Laura Williams, CBJ's new Field Operations Supervisor for the Water and Wastewater Division*
- b. *Stuart spoke to the desire to re-initiate a conversation with Chad regarding FOG removal and the possibility of discussing solutions for this process*
 - i. *Denise noted that it is currently being discussed positively at the legislative level for Congressional directed spending*
 - ii. *Various options for pursuing FOG removal in the community were discussed*
- c. *Joshua noted that CBJ took second place at the AWWMA State Water Tasting Competition, placing just behind the Northern Utilities.*

VI. ADJOURNMENT

- a. *The meeting adjourned at 6:18pm*
- b. *Next meeting:*

HRC Assembly Meeting (Report Presentation) | July 10th, 2023 | 18:00 | Assembly Chambers

Andrew may be able to make it, but Geoff offered to go if reminded

UAB Meeting | June 8th, 2023 | 17:15 | In Person & Teleconference

Staff will reach out to ensure there will be quorum as multiple people offered they may be absent.