



CITY OF PRESCOTT COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER ISSUES MEETING

REGULAR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021, 9:30 AM

201 S Cortez Street
Prescott, AZ 86303
Council Chambers

Councilman Steve Sischka

Councilman Brandon Montoya

Mayor Pro Tem Cathey Rusing

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PRESCOTT COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER ISSUES HELD ON DECEMBER 7, 2021, IN THE 201 S CORTEZ STREET PRESCOTT, AZ 86303 COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

1. CALL TO ORDER

City Clerk Sarah Siep called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Brandon Montoya Member

Steve Sischka Member

Cathey Rusing Member

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment will be accepted following each agenda item and are limited to three (3) minutes. Please complete a comment card and return it to the City Clerk, speakers will be called in the order received.

4. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Appointment of Chairperson.

Subcommittee Member Montoya recommended the appointment of Mayor Pro Tem Rusing as Chairperson.

Subcommittee Member Rusing that she attended all Subcommittee meetings remotely over the last few years. She has always been involved and instrumental in water issues particularly submetering.

MOTION BY MEMBER MONTOKA TO APPOINT MEMBER RUSING AS CHAIRPERSON; SECONDED BY MEMBER SISCHKA: PASSED [3 – 0].

B. Approval of the November 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION BY MEMBER SISCHKA TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 2, 2021 MEETING MINUTES; SECONDED BY MEMBER MONTOKA: PASSED [3 – 0].

C. Infrastructure Topic – Pumping vs. Recharge 2021 Update.

Water Resources Project Manager Leslie Graser provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding the Pumping vs. Recharge update for 2021. The data and numbers do fluctuate throughout the year, but effluent tracks with production depending on the time of year.

Summary:

* Total Pumped: 6,294.30 acre fee (AF)

* Total Recharge: 3,637.40 AF

Ms. Graser added that as we are moving into a new calendar year her recommendation would be to hold off until April to see this information because then numbers will no longer be provisional. Has received mixed feedback from people regarding presentation of this information so she thinks there is value in the Subcommittee determining whether they want to continue to receive the information on an ongoing basis.

Subcommittee Member Montoya asked why the consultants have asked why staff would present the information or not. He is a fan of more information and not less, so he would like to continue to receive the information.

Ms. Graser responded that the thought process is this information was presented for a bit of time because the Subcommittee didn't understand how recharge really worked, but after time it wasn't driving any decision making.

Chairperson Rusing concurred with Member Montoya and added that having a regular report keeps everyone on top of things and she would encourage it. She asked if we have a 2,700 AF deficit for the year.

Ms. Graser responded that it is the difference but not necessarily the deficit. Cannot always recharge the exact number that you pump.

Subcommittee Member Montoya asked if there is other information that would be more useful than this for staff to present.

Mrs. Graser responded that there may be, and staff will discuss that with them in the next item. There are several data sets staff can pull depending on what the Subcommittee would like to see, for example this could be monthly/quarterly/annually etc.

Subcommittee Member Sischka commented that this item was requested to give the Subcommittee perspective on averages. He wouldn't mind receiving the information on a quarterly basis because that is important information, but they don't necessarily need it once a month.

Chairperson Rusing agreed, there will be swings but knowing the general trend is important.

Member of the public Tom Rusing addressed the Subcommittee and asked for clarification on pumping vs recharge and what our overdraft is.

Ms. Graser responded that this is not the overdraft number it is one number that compares the pumping vs the recharge. Overdraft is a big topic and is seen many different ways, at this point this number does not represent that it just shows what was pumped and what was returned. Must be careful in discussing how the numbers are reached because all of the data matters. 3,637 AF will look different in annual report because of evaluation losses and because of effluent vs surface water vs permanent recharge.

Member of the public Howard Mechanic addressed the Subcommittee and commented that the monthly report was requested by former Chairman Blair in an effort to show how the city was doing with recharge. We do have an excellent recharge program, but there is no point in a monthly report. It is a yearly pattern and once or twice a year would be sufficient for this type of information. He asked what of the Active Management Area's (AMA) overdraft is the most important information and will not change every month, second most important is what is in the portfolio and the future expected demand. We don't know what the overdraft is for Prescott because it is based on our share of the natural recharge.

Member of the public Peter Kroopnick addressed the Subcommittee and stated that the sound of the Subcommittee mics is very distorted this morning, he added that many of the numbers that staff has

presented before are important but also looking at future demand is key. 5,000 AF more per year is projected in the future and that is something that should be high on the agenda.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

D. Focus Topic: Introduction to Calendar Year 2022. Discussion Regarding the Water Issues Subcommittee Resolution, Annual Calendar, and Forecasted Topics.

Ms. Graser provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding planning for the upcoming year. She discussed the guiding Resolution for the Subcommittee which serves as a guide for the balance of Council related to decisions on Water Issues.

Subcommittee Member Montoya asked what the mechanism is to making changes to the Resolution. He added that it is his understanding that a new policy is being reviewed and that may determine what the Subcommittee does and asked for confirmation.

Deputy Public Works Director Gwen Rowitsch commented that staff could work with the Subcommittee to revise the Resolution and then it would go through Council for approval and added that this could be done in conjunction with any changes to the Water Policy.

City Clerk Sarah Siep added that the Mayor intends to form an Ad Hoc Commission regarding the Water Policy which will be done after the first of the year and additional details will be forthcoming.

Chairperson Rusing added that she wants to see a statement about conservation in the Resolution and she would like to see an overdraft report every six months.

Ms. Graser continued stating that the entire region is an Active Management Group and there are tools related to overdraft online which are being reviewed at the state level.

Subcommittee Member Sischka added that there are 13,000 unregulated wells within the Prescott AMA and asked how that information is added into how the state looks at communities and come up with overdraft.

Ms. Graser responded that they use a multiplier to determine the overdraft impacts.

Chairperson Rusing asked if there has ever been anything at the state legislature related to bills impacting how the legislation impacts water in our community. Would like to see more communication about what is happening at the state level.

Ms. Graser responded that the City is a member of Northern Arizona Municipal Water User Association (NAMWUA) and they represent the city's interest at the state legislature. Staff works with Barry Aarons as a lobbyist and Tyler Goodman with his involvement in legislative sessions. Could provide a report to the Subcommittee regarding this information if desired, keep in mind that water issues at the state level can get tricky because each region has different needs.

Member of the public Howard Mechanic addressed the Subcommittee and reiterated the importance of determining the overdraft for the community. It does fluctuate every year and need to look at it over a long-term average and Prescott should provide leadership in the AMA. Wants the Subcommittee to prepare a Resolution for Council stating that they want to reach safe yield in the AMA. Another goal for this Subcommittee he would suggest is to provide guidance to Council on how to address the Big Chino Project, the city doesn't want it or need it, but we are obligated to PV by contract to either work on the project or sell it.

Subcommittee Member Sischka commented that the Chair meets with staff to establish the agenda in advance of the meeting and he would like to do the same, how difficult is it for that effort to be doubled.

Ms. Rowitsch said that is achievable, but she just needs to know who would like that time.

Ms. Graser continued the presentation with an overview of the 2022 calendar with deadlines.

Subcommittee Member Montoya asked about a calendar on the website.

Ms. Siep responded that the meetings which are consistent are listed on the landing pages for the BCC and added that City Clerk staff is working with IT on getting a master calendar on the city website as well.

Subcommittee Member Sischka asked if the information regarding the Big Chino Modeling Study will be available to the Subcommittee this year.

Ms. Graser responded that the consultants will be providing the report to staff in July for their review and will be able to look it over and then present it with additional information to the Subcommittee after that to determine how the city would like to move forward with the model.

Chairperson Rusing commented that public education and participation is important. She also asked if the drop-by-drop will be done again.

Ms. Rowitsch responded that there are many things happening in Water Resources and have to prioritize staff time to the most important of those. Over the last year because of D&O and

Comprehensive Study and Model they have been more focused in regulatory. With COVID limited face-to-face interaction with the public but have been looking at that and will continue to do so. Conservation is always at the forefront and will be doing a website overhaul.

2022 Forecasted Topics:

- * City Water Policy Updates
- * Memberships – NAMWUA, Upper Verde Water River Watershed Protection Coalition (Coalition)
- * Governor and ADWR Workgroups – Prescott AMA Groundwater User’s Advisory Council (GUAC), Governor’s Groundwater Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council, ADWR Management Plans Workgroups (MPWG)
- * Regulatory Requirements – D&O; annual water withdrawal and use report; drought management plan
- * Water Conservation and Education – water education; water conservation rebate program
- * Infrastructure Topics – pumping vs. recharge; static water levels and city production; volume pumped at city wellfields
- * Other – water resource management model; tbd

Subcommittee Member Sischka commented that it is important to ensure the public is aware of how the water is allocated so they understand the reconciliation of the water we have.

Subcommittee Member Montoya concurred and said that would be beneficial to see for the Subcommittee, the Council, and the public.

Public Works Director Craig Dotseth added that staff is regularly looking at the metering and returns we are receiving from developments. There are still questions about the meters and are looking into converting to new meters should have proposal back within the next month. Can report, review and discuss with the Subcommittee quarterly or semiannually.

Chairperson Rusing asked when the D&O will be released by the state.

Ms. Graser responded that each of the applications typically get a Notice of Deficiency after filing by 12/31 which then puts a stop on it. Staff will then provide any additional information and resubmit so they will simply have to keep us updated.

Assistant City Attorney Dana Walsh added that they have 210 days per statute but with the NOD it will stop and so will likely be longer than that.

Ms. Graser commented that the last time it was submitted in 2007 and went out to the public in 2009 and then in 2011 finalized. So it can take quite a bit of time.

Member of the public Leslie Hoy addressed the Subcommittee and asked when the Salt River Project (SRP) information will be known and available to the public. When will we know the impact on the Verde River and whether pumping will be available.

Ms. Graser responded that it will likely not be known in July. Bringing in another supply is a long march and there are IGAs in place as well so decisions will need to be made at a Council level on how to move forward based on the assessment of that model. If this was solvable it would've been done a long time ago.

Member of the public Peter Kroopnick addressed the Subcommittee and commented that there will likely be various interpretations of the results of the Model and the Citizen's Water Advocacy Group (CWAG) is happy to be part of that discussion to try and work together on all of that.

Member of the public Howard Mechanic addressed the Subcommittee and commented that the city previously had very limited water supplies and allocated less, since that time ADWR allocated more but the city provided water without limit because there was more than was needed. The only limiting factor he sees is if there is desire to limit the amount of new development and rate of growth in the city.

Chairperson Rusing commented that we are already capped at a specific use of water per year so even if the Big Chino is tapped that won't be impacted.

Ms. Graser stated that there is much to wade into with regard to water supply, need to look at how the D&O will shake out and make additional decisions moving into the future with water supply.

Community Development Director Bryn Stotler commented that project decisions are related to land use decisions so staff will be in the room and available to answer any questions they Subcommittee may have.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

5. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM STAFF

Ms. Graser stated that the January meeting will be rescheduled to January 11 due to the Holidays and the Strategic Planning Meeting on January 4th, she also commented that general announcements can be kept or removed as desired by the Subcommittee

General Updates:

- * Sonoran Institute – Growing Water Smart Workshop March 1-3, 2022; City will be part of this and will sit down with the Institute to explore issues tied to water and land
- * Submittal of ADWR Drought Plan – submittal on Jan. 1, 2022
- * NAMWUA and Coalition Board meetings in January 2022

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Rusing adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m.


Cathey Rusing, Chairperson

ATTEST:


Jennifer Wiita, Deputy City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Subcommittee Meeting of the Council Subcommittee on Water Issues of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on December 7, 2021. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 11 day of Jan, 2022

AFFIX
CITY
SEAL




Jennifer Wiita, Deputy City Clerk