



COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER ISSUES MEETING

REGULAR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 9:30 a.m.

201 S Cortez Street
Prescott, AZ 86303
Council Chambers

Cathey Rusing, Mayor Pro Tem - Chairperson
Brandon Montoya, Councilman – Member Steve Sischka, Councilman - Member

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PRESCOTT COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER ISSUES HELD ON SEPTEMBER 6, 2022, IN THE 201 S CORTEZ STREET PRESCOTT, AZ 86303 COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Rusing called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Cathey Rusing	Chairperson
Brandon Montoya	Member
Steve Sischka	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. Approval of the August 2, 2022, Subcommittee on Water Issues Meeting Minutes

MOTION BY MEMBER SISCHKA TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 2, 2022 MEETING MINUTES; SECONDED BY MEMBER MONTOYA: PASSED [3 – 0].

B. 2022 Water Management Policy Discussion – Current Residential & Non-Residential Water Budget Overview for July 1, 2022 through August 26, 2022.

Public Works Senior Engineering Technician Katie Hein presented the 2022 Water Management Policy to the Subcommittee. One application has been approved for residential at 11.1 acre feet (AF) per year. A total of seven non-residential projects have been approved at 10.33 AF per year, three of which were approved by the Council this year. 14.67 AF remains in the non-residential water budget, and any incoming projects that exceed 50% of that will either be required to ask for an appeal or wait until the next budget cycle. Several projects are in the review queue; however, most are under existing contracts and are not subject to the water budget. Staff has approved thirteen projects under existing projects, of which eleven are single-family homes in groundwater subdivisions. Additionally, staff has approved one subdivision plat and one multifamily complex.

Member Sischka asked for a review of an applicant's options should their project exceed 50% of the remaining budget.

Ms. Hein explained that the applicant can appeal the 50% rule to the Subcommittee on Water Issues or wait until the next budget cycle.

Chairperson Rusing added that when the Subcommittee passed the water policy, an appeal process was put in place to allow flexibility in reviewing the project.

Member Montoya asked if there was leftover water in the budget when it was initially administered and if there is a possibility that the current year's water budget will be exceeded.

Ms. Hein responded that there was leftover water, and at this time, it does not appear that the current water budget will be exceeded, but that could change if development picks up.

Chairperson Rusing commented that the water policy is continually reviewed and assessed.

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

C. Focus Topic – Recharge from Watson and Willow Lake Reservoirs 2022.

Water Resource Project Manager Leslie Graser provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding the recharge from Watson and Willow Lake Reservoirs, beginning with an overview of the acquisition of surface water supplies in 1998. Ms. Graser reviewed Watson Lake's historic and current water levels. Watson Lake's conservation pool is 9.5 feet below the spill, and the operation pool is 7.5 feet below the spill. For 2022, the levels dropped below the operation level, but not the conservation pool. The city may divert surface water supplied from Watson and Willow Lake reservoirs to the recharge facility in a volume between 0 and 3,861 AF per year. Surface water supplies may only be diverted to the recharge facility between April 1st and November 30th; however, if the granite reef area in Phoenix is spilling because of Bartlett and Horseshoe on the Verde chain, recharge may begin before April 1st with approval from the Salt River Project (SRP).

City's recharge for calendar year 2022, as of July 31, 2022

- Total pumped – 4,334 AF
- Total delivered to recharge – 2,723 AF
 - Effluent/reclaimed – 1,458 AF
 - Surface water – 1,266 AF

Member Sischka asked for confirmation that 0-3,481 AF can be recharged and if that is a maximum amount, even if there is spillage.

Ms. Graser responded that 3,861 AF is the maximum that can be taken even in the case of spillage.

Chairperson Rusing asked if adding two feet to Bartlett Dam will affect Prescott and if a trend has been noticed regarding surface water recharge.

Ms. Graser replied that she has discussed this with legal staff and was told that SRP can do that, although she feels there should be additional discussions. Regarding surface water, it is challenging to predict, adding that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has graphs available on its overdraft dashboard.

Member of the public Peter Kroopnick addressed the Subcommittee, asking how much of the recharged water is from the wastewater treatment operation versus rainfall and how that compares to what is sold to the golf courses and other major clients.

Ms. Graser replied that as of July 31st, the effluent side had delivered 1,500 AF, surface water had delivered 1,300 AF, and sales were about the same.

Chairperson Rusing asked if the golf course is not using as much effluent.

Ms. Graser replied that she does not have that information as that was not a topic agendized for this meeting; however, she feels that is a correct assumption.

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

D. Discussion Regarding the Water Conservation Code, Incentive Program and Prescott City Code 3-10-8.

Water Resource Project Manager Kay Sydow provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding the Water Conservation Code, Incentive Program, and Prescott City Code 3-10-8, beginning with the announcement that former Governor Babbitt recently declared Prescott as having the best rebate program in the state. Ms. Sydow continued with an overview of current rebates for Toilets, Commercial Urinals, Ultra-efficient Washing Machines, WaterSense Smart Irrigation Timers, Active and Passive Rainwater Harvesting Rain Barrels and Cisterns, Rain Gardens, and Turf.

Toilet Rebates

- 1.28 gallon per flush (GPF) - \$75
- 1.0 GPF or 1.28 Dual Flush - \$100
- Those customers on septic receive an extra \$50

Since FY17, four hundred and three 1.6 GPF toilets, one hundred ninety-five 1.0/1.28 Dual Flush toilets, and eighty-four 1.28 GPF toilets have been rebated.

Commercial Urinals

- Flushless design, flush once at specified intervals, and the 1 quart per flush models - \$50

Ms. Sydow noted that the new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard for urinals is 0.5 quarts per flush; therefore, staff would like to adopt the new standard. In addition, since FY2017, five commercial urinal rebates have been issued.

Ultra-Efficient Washing Machines

- Each ultra-efficient washing machine - \$50
- Those customers on septic receive an extra \$50

All washing machines must be on a list provided by the Consortium for Energy Efficiency (CEE). Since FY20, when the washing machine rebate was introduced, one hundred forty-five rebates have been issued.

WaterSense Smart Irrigation Timer Incentives

- Residential and Non-Residential, per device - \$75

The device must be EPA approved and use local weather data or soil moisture sensors. Outdoor water use timers can save 7,600 gallons of water per device. From FY17 to FY22, sixty-two smart irrigation timer rebates have been issued.

Chairperson Rusing asked if the timers automatically turn off during the monsoons.

Ms. Sydow replied that she believes they turn off automatically.

Active Rainwater Harvesting – Rain Barrels or Cisterns

- 100-gallon capacity minimum per gallon of storage (can be a combination) - \$0.50 per gallon / \$500 maximum

For FY17-FY22, eighty-eight rainwater harvesting rebates have been issued.

Rain Garden

- 50 sf minimum to capture 400 sf - \$3 per square foot of basin footprint / \$500 maximum

Prescott is the only city in Arizona to offer a rain garden rebate. There was one rebate issued in 2020 and again in 2022. Ms. Sydow noted that the rain garden how-to manual has been revised with better instructions and is available on the city's website.

Turf

- Residential / 200 sf minimum - \$0.50 per sf
- Nonresidential / 1,000 sf minimum - \$0.50 per sf

A total of seventy-nine turf removal projects have been completed over the last six years. In FY21, Prescott Unified School District replaced its grass football field with turf, saving over 3.7 million gallons of water.

Overall, an annual average of over 2 million gallons of water has been saved from FY17 to FY22, with Turf replacement being the largest contributor.

Recommended Changes

- Toilet – no changes
- Urinal – increase rebate to \$100 (0.125 GPF only)
- Washing Machines – no changes
- Irrigation Timer – no changes
- Rain Barrel – suggesting a tiered approach: 50–65-gallon tank stays at \$ 0.50 per gallon, 75+ gallon tank increased to \$1.00 per gallon. Maximum of \$500 stays the same
- Rain Garden – no changes
- Turf - \$1.00 per sf; remove minimum size requirement

Member Sischka supports increasing some of the rebates and asked how close staff has come to the current \$40,000 threshold for rebates.

Ms. Sydow reviewed the past years' rebates, indicating that in 2020 rebate amounts were increased, bringing the total up significantly. In 2021, a total of \$46,776 was rebated, exceeding the threshold.

Member Sischka asked why the last three years were so much more than previous years.

Ms. Sydow responded that changes to irrigation system requirements made a huge difference and that 2020 was the year washing machine rebates were introduced.

Deputy Public Works Director Gwen Rowitsch addressed the Subcommittee, adding that staff feels 2020 rebates were numerous due to COVID. For example, people spent more time than previously remodeling their homes. Additionally, there has been an increase in public outreach.

Member Montoya asked if there are items staff has considered adding or removing to the rebate list and asked about the hot water recirculation rebate.

Ms. Sydow replied that the hot water recirculation rebate is part of the new rebate program and has already garnered applicants. She hopes for more interest in the rain garden rebate program.

Member Sischka asked how far staff is willing to go regarding the maximum amount of rebate monies issued per fiscal year.

Ms. Rowitsch replied that staff budgets a forecasted amount based on previous years' trends but feels that the rebate program is not about money; it is about saving water. If the line item is exceeded, money is moved around. A rebate applicant is never turned away.

Member Montoya asked if it is reasonable to assume that the amount may need to be increased for the next fiscal budget cycle.

Ms. Rowitsch stated that the amount might need to be adjusted; a projection will be made mid-year to assess.

Member Montoya asked if staff works with retail stores to provide marketing materials that explain the rebate options and if there is signage explaining the rain barrel located at the library.

Ms. Sydow responded that she has plans to do more outreach, and there was signage at the rain barrel during water awareness month.

Ms. Rowitsch added that with respect to the rebates Prescott offers compared to other communities in Arizona, Prescott has the most extensive list. Staff would like to recommend some changes to some of the rebates and some of the criteria, however, nothing needs to be removed; even just one participant creates water savings.

Member Montoya asked staff to expound on their turf outreach.

Ms. Rowitsch replied that there are many opportunities around the city for turf removal and reminded the Subcommittee that everyone does their part in different ways; not everyone will want their grass removed, which is okay.

Chairperson Rusing asked if staff has contacted the County regarding the toilets and urinals to be installed at the new jail.

Ms. Sydow replied that she has not but will follow up on that idea.

Member of the public Sandy Griffis (Yavapai County Contractors Association) addressed the Subcommittee reiterating the end goal is to save water, and with some considerations, an even better job could be done. She recommends increasing the toilet rebate to \$100 for the 1.28 single flush, \$125 for the 1.0/1.8 dual flush, and \$150 for the 1.0 single flush. Ms. Griffis also promotes the increase of turf replacement to \$1.00 per square foot and removing the minimum size requirement, adding that offering a rebate for removing grass will help incentivize turf replacement. She also suggested that participants receive a check rather than have a credit on their water bill.

Member Montoya agrees that issuing a check may be more effective.

Chairperson Rusing asked what the contractors in Phoenix are using in their mass-produced homes.

Ms. Griffiths responded mostly the 1.8 single-flush toilets.

Member Sischka asked if a recommendation decision is time-sensitive; he feels more conversation with the industry would benefit.

Ms. Sydow responded that staff would like to take it to Council in the next few weeks, however, if the Subcommittee needs more time, that is an option.

Chairperson Rusing commented that she supports incentivizing turf removal, increasing the dollar amounts for the toilets, and sending out checks rather than issuing water bill credit.

Ms. Sydow replied that the best way is to issue a credit; issuing checks is not how the program is set up to work.

Member Montoya stated that he supports the toilet rebates that Ms. Griffiths suggested and would like to incorporate those changes immediately and discuss the changes to turf replacement further.

Ms. Rowitsch replied that it is at the discretion of the Subcommittee, adding that the removal of turf is the incentive; to add another incentive to install a specific product would be unusual.

Chairperson Rusing added that contacting the County regarding fixtures, rainwater harvesting and artificial turf at the jail should also be completed.

Member of the public Peter Kroopnick addressed the Subcommittee, stating that shower timers need to be addressed. There are many places these could be utilized.

Ms. Sydow replied that shower timers were once on the rebate program but were removed due to lack of interest.

Member of the public Howard Mechanic addressed the Subcommittee, stating that focusing on the amount of water saved over the money spent gives the public the impression that cost is no object. Instead, the city should consider any expenditure and solicit suggestions and input before voting. Additionally, in his opinion, incentivizing turf removal is a bad idea.

Member of the public Leslie Hoy addressed the Subcommittee, stating that she is concerned about the artificial turf because water runoff does not recharge anything and agrees that staff should elicit more suggestions but does not want to see decisions stalled while staff continues to receive more suggestions.

MOTION BY MEMBER MONTOYA TO FORWARD ONLY THE PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF TOILET REBATE INCREASES TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL AS FOLLOWS: \$100 FOR 1.28 SINGLE-FLUSH, \$125 FOR 1.0/1.8 DUAL-FLUSH, \$150 FOR SINGLE-FLUSH; SECONDED BY MEMBER SISCHKA: PASSED [3-0].

5. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM STAFF

Ms. Rowitsch presented the Pumping vs. Recharge update to the Subcommittee:

- Total Water Pumped Year to Date – 4,334 AF
- Total Delivered to Recharge – 2,723 AF
 - Effluent/reclaimed – 1,458 AF
 - Surface Water – 1,266 AF

Ms. Rowitsch continued with general announcements:

- Groundwater Users Advisory Council (GUAC) met on 08/08/2022
 - Active Management Area (AMA) gave a director's report
 - Groundwater Withdrawal Fee Recommendation
 - Statewide Planning Updates
 - Discussion about Overdraft and Safe-Yield in the Prescott AMA

Utilities manager, Steve Olfers provided a presentation regarding PFOS and PFOA stating that staff has been working hard to understand the situation and to disseminate that information to the public.

- Chino Valley Wells sampling has been completed and there were slight detections in three of the four wells.
- Chino Valley well #1 has been turned on and will also be tested for PFOS/PFOA.
- All wells will be tested in-house monthly, and the samples sent to Legend Labs, the contracted laboratory. Samples of the blended water from the five Chino Valley wells are also being tested. Blending at the Airport wells is not possible due to the infrastructure, however wells #2 and #3 have been tested and there were no detects. Future plans include running Chino Valley well #2 and 4 and Airport well #2 as much as possible.
- Sampling of the influent and effluent at both plants has been completed. Results forthcoming in October.
- Biosolids from both wastewater plants will be tested by Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).
- The scope of work for the study of the PFAS treatment systems has been sent to Waterworks. The kickoff meeting is September 1st.

Member Montoya asked if Waterworks will be assisting in identifying remediation efforts.

Mr. Olfers confirmed that Waterworks will be assisting with PFOS remediation, arsenic remediation, and infrastructure improvements by the airport.

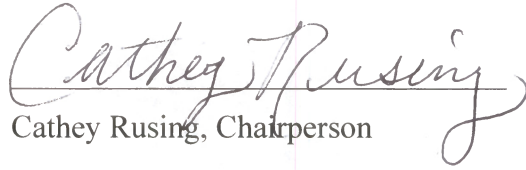
Chairperson Rusing asked if staff is working on finding the source of the contaminants and reminded everyone that the contaminant levels are in parts per trillion, adding that she has total confidence in Prescott water.

Mr. Olfers replied that most of the efforts have been put into the first step which is to look at wastewater influent and effluent and attacking at the wellheads.

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

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairperson Rusing adjourned the meeting at 11:20 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 September 6, 2022. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 15th day of November, 2022.

AFFIX
CITY
SEAL




Jennifer Wiita, Deputy City Clerk