



City of Prescott

Council Subcommittee on Water Issues

May 2, 2023 | 9:30 AM
201 N Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Cathey Rusing
Member Steve Sischka
Member Montoya - Absent

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 April 4, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION BY COUNCILMAN SISCHKA TO APPROVE APRIL 4 MEETING MINUTES; SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER RUSING: PASSED (2 - 0)

B. Monthly PFAS Update.

Utilities Manager Steve Olfers provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding recent PFOS treatment operations. Staff has been working on equations for the upcoming blending plan in preparation for high demand levels as spring approaches. Chino Valley wells, number two, four, and 5, and airport wells, number two and three, have been operational and in service. All combinations of the different wells should not exceed the proposed PFAS maximum contaminant levels (MCL) or the target range for arsenic. Because the PFAS proposed rule is at four, and the city's latest readings have been in the twos and threes, the city may qualify for reduced monitoring, meaning twice per year as opposed to four times per year. That determination will be made once enough information has been gathered and sent to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to prove that the city is within the required levels.

Chairperson Rusing asked if airport well number five would be put back into service and, if so, when.

Mr. Olfers replied that it would not be back in service until a treatment technique is determined, and he is unsure when that will be. The city has to meet

compliance regulations, and since blending with the current configuration at that site is not feasible, this is the best option.

Chairperson Rusing asked what the level of PFAS is at airport well number five.

Mr. Olfers stated that the PFOS level hovers around 12 parts per trillion (ppt), and PFOA is around 9. He added that the levels don't meet requirements even with the new health index.

Chairperson Rusing noted that samples sent in on March 25, 2023, have not returned any results and asked if that is unusual.

Mr. Olfers replied that samples were sent in early April and were shifted to the next quarter, which is good because staff needs second-quarter results. He added that a three to four-week turnaround is typical and that testing for unregulated contaminant rule (UCMR), which is all of the PFOS species, could also be a factor in the delay. This testing is a national requirement that may have all the labs busy.

Chairperson Rusing asked about UCMR.

Mr. Olfers said that UCMR is 29 different species of PFOS and lithium.

Chairperson Rusing noted that it is important for the public to know that the city is up to date on testing and is following all guidelines.

C. Current Residential & Non-Residential Water Budget Overview for January 1, 2023, through April 19, 2023.

Water Resources Manager Brian Ruiz provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding the current residential and non-residential water budget overview.

Residential

Between January 1 and April 19, 2023, five (5) residential projects were approved, totaling 11.93 acre-feet (AF). Three (3) projects were administratively approved, and two (2) were Council approved.

Total AF Budgeted - 25

Total AF Approved - 11.93

Total AF Remaining - 13.07

Chairperson Rusing asked if most of these were infill projects and about the water allocation to the old city hall site.

Mr. Ruiz confirmed.

Non-Residential

Between January 1 and April 19, ten (10) non-residential projects were approved, totaling 12.59 AF. Nine (9) were administratively approved, and one (1) was Council approved.

Total AF Budgeted - 25

Total AF Approved - 12.59

Total Remaining - 12.41

Projects Under Existing Contracts

Between January 1 and April 19, there were 19 projects currently under existing contracts. Seventeen (17) were single-family homes, primarily in groundwater subdivisions; however, there was one subdivision plat and one multi-family complex under existing contracts. There were 477 residential dwelling units approved under existing contracts totaling 67.13 AF, and are not included in the water budget set for this period.

Chairperson Rusing stated that she wants the public to realize these projects were approved under existing contracts.

D. Discussion & Presentation Regarding the Launch of the City's Water Conservation Website.

Mr. Ruiz provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding the launch of the city's conservation website. The website was created with grant assistance from the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) Water Management Assistance Program (WMAP). The requirements for the grant are:

- A professional web designer is used
- Submission of weekly progress reports
- Submission of data collection and final report
- Submission of a final design

Information on outdoor and indoor water conservation, drought preparation, education, activities, rebates, and incentives can be found by clicking the "WAM" tile from the website's homepage.

Mr. Ruiz asked the Subcommittee for any advice or questions on the website.

Chairperson Rusing asked if a separate email address is available to the public so they don't have to go the city's website to get to the conservation website and if a link to the Citizen's Water Advocacy Group (CWAG) will be included.

Mr. Ruiz confirmed, stating that the address is <https://prescottwater.com/>.

Public Works Deputy Director Gwen Rowitsch stated that each tab links to the website and that the city website provides examples of Information available on the various websites.

Chairperson Rusing commented that the water conservation program is voluntary, and this is one way to inform the public about how to save water. She asked if information on carwashing and the city's plant palette were included and suggested adding a city composting program.

Mr. Ruiz replied that he would look into that, adding that there is a link to a

drought-tolerant plants list for this area.

E. Discussion & Presentation Regarding an Overview and Status Update on the Water Resource Management Model (WRMM).

Water Resource Project Manager Leslie Graser provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding an overview and status update on the water resource management model (WRMM). She stated that there needs to be alignment between the city's WRMM and the current policy. The WRMM is an Excel-based, spreadsheet-driven tool with a GIS component for data set analysis and visual presentation. The WRMM is updated annually; however, staff may begin to update bi-annually.

Forward Efforts

Alignment Needed

- 2022 policy
- General Plan update
- Long-term management plan
- Mayor Ad Hoc
- Interdepartmental Coordination

Ms. Graser stated that there are different versions of the WRMM: the water service area version, used for the Decision and Order (D&O), and other discussions regarding the service area; the General Plan version, and the D&O version used to file with ADWR. She continued with an overview of WRMM Version, June 2022, WSA 22- 046, administratively approved, consisting of 458 multi-family residential units at 63.84 acre-feet (AF).

Concerns

- WRMM did not have the 458 multi-family residential units in its planning.
- ADWR requirements for groundwater allowance increase may not be met. This area didn't have a preliminary plat in 1998
- The policy doesn't define the timeframe of an existing contract nor if other requirements need to be reviewed.

Member Sischka asked for confirmation that a portion of Prescott Lakes was not included in the WRMM.

Ms. Graser confirmed that it doesn't qualify for a groundwater allowance, so the city had not planned to serve that area.

Chairperson Rusing stated that the map shown poorly identified the area in discussion and clarified that the map shows the parcel of land on the hill below Astoria on the corner of Highway 89 and Prescott Lakes Parkway. She added that she was shocked to learn that water was approved administratively and asked how this happened.

Ms. Graser replied that this is how the 2022 policy works right now. With policy shifts through the years, these types of misunderstandings have occurred, but she believes that the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee will address the effectiveness of the current policy.

Chairperson Rusing asked what the cap on administratively approved water is.

Ms. Graser replied that this fell under the current policy and explained that the word "existing" is being used differently now; therefore, since this has an existing contract, that is all that was considered.

Member Sischa asked for confirmation that this was part of the water allocation for the Prescott Lakes master plan and that the WRMM didn't catch it.

Ms. Graser replied that there was no legal authority to seek groundwater allowance from the state. In 1998, a preliminary plat awarded a final plat was awarded more supplies.

Ms. Graser continued with WRMM Version June 2022, WSA 22-033, located behind the Gateway Mall (Palmer Apartments), consisting of 209 multi-family (MF) units at 55.25 AF, and was Council approved.

Concerns

- The WRMM had 36 MFR anticipated
- Due to this level of demand, the 209 MF units were not recognized in the WRMM or the 2021 D&O application.

Ms. Graser provided a brief review of water rights given to the Bullwhacker Ranch, explaining that these old agreements were vague and growth was unexpected. She added that the WRMM is being updated with 2022 billing data, and although the agreement could be updated, the numbers already filed with the ADWR would be thrown off.

Chairperson Rusing commented that when the city approves water, it is with the impression that the water is available within the WRMM. It is obvious that the water was not available in this situation. She asked why the Subcommittee had not been provided this Information.

Ms. Graser replied that levels of confirmation are needed in the 2022 policy, and staff will be working on that.

Chairperson Rusing asked if the property owner knew there was a water allocation for 36 units when he purchased the land.

Ms. Graser said that the property owner could see where there were pieces of land the city would commit water to, adding that staff has to read documents, know more than .17 and .12, and know historical obligations.

Chairperson Rusing stated that she finds today's examples shocking and asked how many more parcels the WRMM has underestimated besides these two.

Ms. Graser replied that it is a work in progress by the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee, and although there are other examples, she doesn't have a firm number.

Policy and WRMM

Ms. Graser reviewed Policies 10-15 and the related concerns:

- Policy 10 - new non-residential development projects shall return no less than 75% of the water sold as wastewater. The concerns are that the return flow analysis for D&O showed a possibility of a 70% return and a 65% was used to be conservative. The city doesn't have a way to ensure compliance with this policy's return flow requirement before or after approving water supplies.
- Policy 14 - Appeal of the 50% rule and the December 2022 clarification, which states it does not have to be subtracted. The concerns are that the volume is not deducted from the remaining supplies yet adds real demand to the WRMM, and the real demand for that parcel could be more demand than the WRMM has planned.
- Policy 15 - water supplies associated with an existing contract shall not be amended to increase the number of lots or volume used; any such proposal shall require a new WSA. The concern is how long the WRMM can absorb the increased/upsized demands.

Chairperson Rusing stated that Policy 15 is a huge loophole that needs to be closed and asked for a copy of the slides after the meeting.

Ms. Graser reiterated that there needs to be an alignment with the 2022 policy, the General Plan update, the long-term management plan, the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee, and some interdepartmental coordination.

Member Sischa commented that Council needs a refresher on the WRMM and suggested a Study Session, especially for the new Council members. He asked if the WRMM included Big Chino Water Ranch.

Ms. Graser stated that Big Chino Water Ranch is not included in the WRMM and that a Study Session is possible, adding that resuming regular Executive Sessions to discuss water rights would be beneficial.

Member Sischa replied that he was not talking about water rights, only providing a refresher on the WRMM to Council.

Chairperson Rusing concurred and asked if Policy 15 should be brought to Council sooner rather than later.

Ms. Graser said a quarterly update from the Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee to Council is scheduled for May 9, 2023, and will include the policies discussed today.

Chairperson Rusing thanked Ms. Graser for her hard work and dedication.

Mr. Ruiz commented that the policy changes over the years have been dramatic and, as a result, staff is going through some growing pains. One of the issues is that contracts used in development agreements are not standardized. Although they most likely won't be made standard, staff needs to be aware of that so they can provide the information necessary to understand the implications. Another issue is the definitions of uses such as "committed," "projected," "future," and "existing" that need to be communicated and correctly applied to the WRMM.

5. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM STAFF

Mr. Olfers provided a presentation to the Subcommittee regarding the recent sanitary sewer overflow that occurred in Granite Creek Park in mid-March. Ten (10) manholes had sanitary sewer overflows (SSO), and staff has been working with ADEQ to find solutions so that this does not happen again, adding that staff has plans to upgrade the system to stay compliant. The system has recovered, and everything has been cleaned up, with all bacterial counts within the lakes and rivers back to or below normal.

Chairperson Rusing stated that she went out to the park right after the cleanup and could not tell anything ever happened, adding that this was an unprecedented event - she has seen Granite Creek crest the bridge one other time since 1986.

Mr. Olfers stated that the bacterial levels came down quickly, and because the reservoir is low contact, there were not a lot of restrictions. The event overwhelmed the city's systems, and water is still being released from Willow Lake; however, the city is well on its way to recharge goals because of the wet winter.

6. ADJOURNMENT

11:00 am

 8-1-23
Cathey Rusing, Chairperson

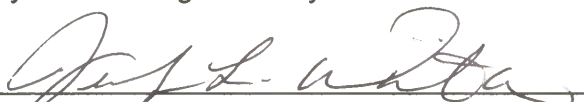
ATTEST:


Jennifer Wiita, Deputy City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the

Voting Meeting of the Council Subcommittee on Appointments held on May 2, 2023. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


Jennifer Wiita, Deputy City Clerk

