



City of Prescott
Council Subcommittee on Water Issues

November 12, 2024 | 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 9:31 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Cathey Rusing, Chairperson
Lois Fruhwirth, Member
Ted Gambogi, Member (Excused)

3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the October 1, 2024 Water Issues Subcommittee Meeting Minutes.

MOTION BY MEMBER FRUHWIRTH TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 1, 2024 MINUTES; SECONDED BY CHAIRPERSON RUSING: PASSED (2 - 0)

B. WSA24-045 & WSA24-046: Two Water Service Applications Submitted by Dibble Engineering, on Behalf of Owner, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Location: APN 106-03-004, Comprising 240 Acres, in T14N, R02W, Section 03, SE 1/4.

Brian Ruiz, Water Resource and Environmental Services Manager, provided a presentation on the residential hall project which includes two buildings accommodating up to 300 students. The project requires around four acres for landscaping. After conducting a water demand analysis, the engineer estimated a total water usage of 34 acre-feet annually—28 for indoor use and 6 for outdoor landscaping. Since the project's water requirement exceeds 50% of the remaining residential water budget, it triggers an appeal process per water policy guidelines. Embry-Riddle has been informed of the need for the appeal process.

Chairperson Rusing asked for more details on the landscaping water usage, number of students per restroom and stormwater drainage.

Brad Sinn, Director of Facilities for Embry-Riddle responded that there will be very little turf in this project. The dorms are more like apartments rather than a typical dorm setup with private suites with 1 bathroom and 1 bedroom per student. The project aims to address the university's housing shortage, as many students struggle to find affordable off-campus housing. With a trend toward students preferring to live on campus, this housing provides a 9-month lease option, aligning with the academic year. This allows students to save on costs, return home, or pursue internships over the summer, avoiding longer, more expensive leases typically required off campus. Landscaping will be zeroscaping, artificial

turf, and they will use the city's approved plant list.

Member Fruhwirth commented that she noticed the narrative that outlines the benefits to the city mentioned the county often. She would like the City of Prescott benefits highlighted in the future submission.

Chairperson Rusing commented that it is fortunate to have a wonderful quality school such as Embry-Riddle in the City of Prescott.

MOTION BY MEMBER FRUHWIRTH TO FORWARD WSA24-045 & WSA24-046 TO COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL; SECONDED BY CHAIRPERSON RUSING: PASSED (2 - 0)

- C. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the Amended 2022 Water Management Policy - Current Residential & Non-Residential Water Budget Overview for July 1, 2024 through October 31, 2024.

Mr. Ruiz provided a presentation on the current status of the water budget. *Residential Water Budget*: Set at 50 acre-feet per year. Five projects were processed, four of which were administratively approved. One was approved by the Water Issues Subcommittee and City Council on October 22 for an 82-unit multifamily site. Total approved usage so far: 11.49 acre-feet. Remaining budget: 38.51 acre-feet. He noted the meeting was held in November instead of December since there would be no December meeting. Some administratively approved projects might slightly reduce the remaining residential water budget before the end of the period.

Chairperson Rusing asked if the Embry-Riddle dorms water application is considered residential or commercial.

Mr. Ruiz responded that the Embry-Riddle dorms were initially placed in the residential water budget but, if approved by Council at the next meeting, the water allocation for this project will not be deducted from the residential budget under the current water policy. He also noted that this project initiated the appeal process, which will conclude with the Council meeting. The next agenda item will address setting the water budget for the next period, with specific values to be discussed.

Member Fruhwirth commented on the challenges in predicting project timelines when setting the residential water budget, which aimed to simplify approvals and avoid appeals. While the Lafferty project avoided the appeal process, the Embry-Riddle project required one due to sequencing and budget limits. The process is a learning experience to improve efficiency and better align water allocations with project needs.

Mr. Ruiz moved on to the *non-residential water budget* during this period: four projects were approved: two administratively, two via the Subcommittee and City Council. Total water usage: 4.27 acre-feet out of the allocated 25 acre-feet, leaving a remaining amount of 20.73 acre-feet. Both the residential and non-residential budgets remain within their allocated limits.

Mr. Ruiz's third slide provided information on water usage from existing contracts

approved through October 31, 2024: 23 projects, including one duplex, totaling 24 residential units. Water usage: 3.98 acre-feet. This usage does not affect the residential or non-residential water budgets and is included for informational purposes only.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

- D. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the January 2025 - June 2025 Residential & Non-Residential Water Budgets, in Accordance with the Amended 2022 Water Management Policy, Guideline No. 11.

Mr. Ruiz provided a presentation with data to help set the water budget for the first half of 2025 with a recap of the water budget and usage for the period July 1 - December 31, 2024:

Residential Budget:

- Initial Allocation: 50 acre-feet.
- Usage to Date: 11.49 acre-feet (23% of the budget).
- Remaining: 38.51 acre-feet.
- If the Embry-Riddle residence hall (34 acre-feet) is approved by Council, it will not technically count toward this budget but brings the total approved for this period to 45.41 acre-feet, showing the 50-acre-feet allocation was well-calculated.

Non-Residential Budget:

- Initial Allocation: 25 acre-feet.
- Usage to Date: 4.27 acre-feet.
 - 2 projects administratively approved: 0.75 acre-feet.
 - 2 projects approved by Council: 3.52 acre-feet.
- Remaining: 20.73 acre-feet.

The review highlighted that both budgets were effectively managed, with usage staying within the set limits. Mr. Ruiz displayed a table that provided estimates of upcoming residential projects for the next period, with projected water usage ranging between 10 and 25 acre-feet. These projections are based on current knowledge but may change due to delays or incomplete details.

Member Fruhwirth commented that it is exciting to see some old buildings come back into use. She asked why the new hotel at the old city hall site was not on the expected project list.

Mr. Ruiz responded that his understanding is that the water was included in the contract for that project, so it would be considered an existing contract, and it would not come through the water issue subcommittee.

MOTION BY CHAIRPERSON RUSING TO FORWARD RECOMMENDATION OF 25 AFY NON-RESIDENTIAL AND 25 AFY RESIDENTIAL WATER BUDGET FOR JANUARY 2025 - JUNE 2025 TO COUNCIL; SECONDED BY MEMBER FRUHWIRTH: PASSED (2 - 0)

E. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Green Stormwater Infrastructure.

Matt Killeen Environmental Program Manager, and Elise Anderson Stormwater Specialist, provided a presentation on Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) regarding urban challenges.

Mr. Killeen explained that GSI mimics natural processes to manage stormwater by promoting infiltration, reducing runoff, and lowering pollution. Key methods include rain gardens, permeable pavements, and rainwater harvesting at both residential and municipal scales. He emphasized the importance of updated standards, long-term maintenance, and incorporating GSI into city plans to ensure effectiveness and community benefits. Existing Arizona guides serve as valuable references but need modernization to meet current needs.

Chairperson Rusing asked if the construction community is made aware of the efforts/guidelines and would code amendments be helpful in this effort.

Mr. Killeen responded that many design professionals see it as unnecessary unless required by standards. To address this, early engagement through pre-application conferences emphasizes GSI from the start. He also acknowledged the need to update outdated stormwater codes to align with evolving federal and state regulations, stating that discussions with the legal team have begun.

Chairperson Rusing emphasized the importance of incorporating GSI requirements into the Land Development Code to ensure architects and draftsmen are aware of the city's expectations.

Mr. Killeen moved on to explain a plan to use a water quality improvement grant for retrofitting existing sites, such as city parks and school district properties, to incorporate GSI. A consultant, funded entirely by the grant, helped evaluate 25 potential sites based on eight weighted categories. The scoring system is adaptable, allowing priorities to shift depending on specific funding sources, like federal grants from EPA or FEMA. This ensures that top-priority sites align with funding opportunities, enabling quicker action when construction funding becomes available.

Chairperson Rusing asked for an explanation of the Tree Canopy Gap and how Prescott ranks in that area.

Mr. Killeen explained that the American Forest Association, a nonprofit, analyzed data to assess gaps in tree canopy coverage using GIS technology. This analysis compares the current tree canopy to the recommended coverage levels as determined by professionals. Any deficiencies are highlighted through a differential score in the "tree canopy gap" category. Mr. Killeen highlighted that Prescott's tree canopy benefits significantly from its riparian areas and creeks, which enhance coverage even in urban or industrial zones. These natural features contribute to the city's overall ecological health and beauty, making it well-positioned in terms of tree canopy despite varying levels of development.

Member Fruhwirth raised concerns about recurring downtown flooding during heavy storms, noting that even 12-inch-high curbs are insufficient to manage the water. She inquired whether there are potential GSI solutions that could address the issue while also providing environmental benefits.

Mr. Killeen responded that a third of the identified GSI sites are located in disadvantaged areas, including parts of the Dexter neighborhood. Downtown flooding is challenging due to space constraints and the large volume of water. While solutions are possible, addressing these issues in such areas requires careful planning. He noted that being the front line staff to drainage issues, they are fully aware of the challenges.

Ms. Anderson introduced ArcGIS StoryMap and displayed the StoryMap for the Subcommittee. Ms. Anderson explained that the ArcGIS Story Map is an interactive tool that educates the public about green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) in Prescott. It allows users to explore existing sites and encourages community members and businesses to create their own stormwater solutions. The project will be shared with local environmental groups and community champions, and it will continue to be developed as a resource for residents.

Chairperson Rusing asked if the stormwater team works with the parks and recreation services department regarding chemicals sprayed on fields.

Mr. Killeen responded it is not an in depth conversation they have had yet with the department. It is a topic to discuss across all departments within the city. It was noted that holistic management, focusing on natural soil chemistry, can reduce reliance on harmful chemicals. Healthy soil can better absorb stormwater, and plants can help filter out harmful substances like nitrates before they reach water sources like Watson Lake.

Member Fruhwirth praised the story map and educational efforts but emphasized the need for earlier education, particularly for newcomers. She suggested collaborating with local magazines to reach people before they move, educating them about water conservation, plant lists, and other essential resources. This proactive approach could help avoid costly mistakes and enhance long-term awareness of green practices.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

4. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM STAFF

Mr. Ruiz commented that the comprehensive agreement one report is now available on the city website. Water conservation messages are going out via local radio messages, on the city's social media, and prescottwater.com. Rebate information and applications are available on the city website.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Rusing adjourned the meeting to order at 10:47 a.m.

 1-6-25
Cathey Rusing, Chairperson

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Torey Dawson', written over a horizontal line.

Torey Dawson, Deputy City Clerk