

**CITY OF PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA
UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 24, 2022, 9:00 A.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ruchti, Chair
Abderhalden, Cafaro, Dougherty, Howells, Rooney, Tucker

OTHERS PRESENT: Neil Peters, Interim Utilities Director; Steve Adams, Utilities Engineering Manager; Kristin Simeone, Finance Director

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ruchti called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced Mr. Neil Peters, Interim Utilities Director, to the Board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

1) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1.a [Review of Regular Meeting Minutes from October 25,2021.](#)

Exhibits:

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[Minutes](#)

Mr. Dougherty **MOVED** to approve the October 25, 2021, minutes, **SECONDED** by Mr. Tucker.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

2) REPORTS

2.a [Utilities Operational Data](#)

Exhibits:

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[UAB 01-24-2022 OP Data](#)

Mr. Peters briefly reviewed the Operational Data report for December 2021 from the agenda material, noting Water to Town Average for the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) was 5.9 million gallons per day (MGD) and Average Day Flow for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) was 2.5 MGD.

2.b [City Council Action on Utilities Agenda](#)

Exhibits:

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[City Council Agenda Items](#)

Mr. Peters reported on January 5, 2022, City Council accepted the developer contributed asset for wastewater collection facilities located within a public utility easement of Scenic View Estates. He stated on January 19, 2022, City Council

approved the renewal of a 50 year extension for the Sovereignty Submerged Land Easement.

Mr. Dougherty inquired whether the 50 year lease was with the State of Florida. Mr. Steve Adams, Utilities Engineering Manager, responded affirmatively, explaining the State required the City to obtain the land lease for the construction and operation of a 12-inch water main and force main under Alligator Creek. He then provided an explanation of the requirements for developer contributed assets when turned over to the City.

Discussion ensued regarding the details of developer contributed assets for off-site improvements as well as the pricing arrangements when oversize charges occurred with new developments.

2.c Utilities Financial Report

Exhibits:

[Cover Page](#)

[UAB 01-24-2022 UT Financials Oct 2021](#)

[UAB 01-24-2022 UT Financials Nov 2021](#)

[UAB 01-24-2022 UT Financials Dec 2021](#)

Ms. Kristin Simeone, Finance Director, announced members were provided with the financial reports from October 2021 to December 2021. She then provided a detailed review of the December 2021 reports, noting year-to-date (YTD) water billings were 107.5% and YTD sewer billings were 102%. She summarized revenues compared to expenditures, concluding debt was higher due to the debt service schedule and funds for construction were transferred at the beginning of the year.

Mr. Rooney questioned if the City would be using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for water and wastewater projects.

Ms. Simeone replied with uncertainty, noting there were recent updates to how the City could allocate the ARPA funds.

Mr. Rooney inquired whether an analysis was completed regarding impacts on revenue as more properties annexed into the City.

Ms. Simeone replied same would depend, noting customers who annexed into the City paid a water tax and were required to obtain sewer services from the City.

Mr. Ruchti indicated an email was received regarding an issue with billing.

Ms. Simeone responded the Billing and Collections Division desired patience from customers as they worked through issues with staffing as well as with the Advanced Metering Infrastructure system. She added costs of materials and contractors were additional concerns to be aware of due to labor shortages and supply chain issues.

3) GENERAL BUSINESS

3.a CIP Project Status

Exhibits:

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[CIP Status Report](#)

Mr. Adams presented the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) status update, beginning with the status of the Taylor Road Water Main Project (slides 1-2).

Mr. Rooney requested members be provided with the bid packages when bids went out for projects.

Ms. Simeone stated the Procurement Division could develop instructions for members to log in to the bidding system, adding Mr. Adams could forward information to members when bids went out for projects so that members could then view same.

Mr. Adams continued reviewing the CIP status update, providing a detailed overview of the Tee and Green Water Main Improvements Project (slides 3-4) and WTP Belt Press Replacement Project (slides 5-6).

A brief discussion ensued regarding the details of the WTP Belt Press Replacement Project, including the potential to piggy back off another contract to help with costs as well as the difference between the previous and replacement belt press.

Mr. Adams then summarized the WTP Filter Media Replacement Project (slides 7-8), WTP Well 1 Electrical Repair Project (slide 9) and Septic to Sewer (STS) Master Plan Project (slides 10-11).

Ms. Simeone noted staff continued to research funding options for the STS Project, particularly as different programs became available through the ARPA.

Mr. Rooney indicated funds were awarded to various communities for STS projects; however, he opined grant opportunities would be difficult for the City since Charlotte Park was outside of City limits, noting Charlotte County (County) would be responsible for applying for those grants.

Ms. Simeone stated the County supported the STS Project, but did not include Charlotte Park in their STS plan and would not fund same.

Mr. Adams continued reviewing the CIP status update, summarizing the Master Pump Facility (MPF) Upgrade Project (slides 12-13), MPF Tank Coating Project (slides 14-15), Henry Street Force Main Improvements Project (slides 16-17), Herald Court Gravity Sewer Replacement Project (slides 18-19), WWTP Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Upgrade Project (slide 20) and WWTP Improvements Project (slides 21-22).

Mr. Tucker questioned how to access the plans for projects.

Ms. Simeone replied details relating to bids and specifications of projects were available when released from the Procurement Division and documents for awarded projects were available on the City's website; however, information relating to projects completed by contractors might not be available for viewing.

Discussion ensued regarding the Utilities Department's review process for developer constructed projects, including the performance standards and operational procedures for the developers.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Peters provided a brief overview of his background with the Utilities Department since being employed by the City in 1992.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Cafaro stated Mr. Brandon Moody had hosted a presentation regarding a water quality study the County would be completing and had indicated the City prohibited sampling water in a zone that extended from the City into Charlotte Harbor, questioning why the City was not cooperating with the County in the study.

Mr. Rooney responded a misinterpretation could have occurred and the City might not have been asked, recalling members had expressed desire for Mr. Moody to attend a Board meeting.

Mr. Adams indicated staff would seek direction from the City Manager's Office, noting the invitations to Mr. Moody to attend meetings had not progressed further.

Mr. Cafaro opined the lack of cooperation with the County did not reflect well for the City and might need to be addressed with the City Manager.

Mr. Tucker suggested the Board develop a recommendation for staff to approach the County and inform them the Board desired communication between the City and County.

Mr. Ruchti then recalled an article regarding issues with the quality of water systems around the country and regulations for drinking water being violated, questioning whether a notice should be included with the customer's billing to address such issues.

Mr. Dougherty suggested directing customers to the website to view the Consumer Confidence Report and a summary be included in the Report to provide an understanding to customers.

Discussion ensued regarding potential methods for public outreach regarding information such as the positive performance of the Reverse Osmosis (RO) Plant, with Mr. Rooney suggesting the Board assist staff with developing answers for frequently asked questions.

Mr. Rooney **MOVED** for the Board to assist staff with developing same, **SECONDED** by Mr. Abderhalden.

Mr. Abderhalden spoke in favor of educating the public on the requirement for staff to adhere to standards of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Ruchti inquired how to move forward with providing information to the City's marketing manager.

Ms. Simeone replied members could develop the information and same could be included in the public information the City shared.

Mr. Cafaro expressed hesitancy for the Board to develop information, speaking in favor of serving as an advisory board for the Utilities Department.

Discussion continued regarding the rationale for members to develop information to share with the public.

Mr. Rooney **MOVED** to recommend the City Manager/City Council develop an update for the public on the RO Plant as well as some of the benefits and accomplishments of the City, to the extent the Board could assist with same.

Mr. Dougherty indicated the City Manager and Communications Manager would need to be in agreement prior to members developing same. He then **SECONDED** the motion.

Mr. Ruchti confirmed members had no objection to him meeting with the City Manager regarding this discussion.

VOTING AYE: Abderhalden, Cafaro, Dougherty, Howells, Rooney, Ruchti.

VOTING NAY: Tucker.

MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Chair

Recording Secretary