

## **Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, November 14, 2023**

**Friday, October 20th- ReGen Monterey Board Mtg-** Not a lot of big items on this agenda, but I was honored to provide the service wards for our board Chair, Jason Campbell and Director Jerry Blackwelder for over 5 years of service on the board. I've very much enjoyed serving with both of these gentleman and am grateful for their dedication to both Regen Monterey and our communities. Our one big discussion for the morning was approving a limited pilot study for automated controls for our LFG (landfill gas) collection wells. Currently, we have close to 100 wells that collect methane from our landfill which then gets converted into electricity producing about 5 megawatts of energy. The quality and quantity of this gas varies over time and requires workers to cover the 150 acres to check on the wells, making adjustments as needed. With this pilot study, 20 of our wells will be fitted with automatic control equipment that will allow ReGen Monterey staff to remotely and continuously control these wells which can lead to an increase in quality gas collection, which ultimately provides greater revenue and reduced health and safety risks, as our employees won't need to be in the field servicing these wells. The estimated pilot study costs are \$110,000 and our board agreed with staff that this would be a worthwhile look at innovation that can move us in a more profitable and healthy direction. Additionally at this meeting, we approved a 5% pay raise for our General Manager and also appointed an ad-hoc nomination committee that will consider board chair and vice chair appointments for next year.

**Tuesday, October 24th- City Council Mtg-** For me, this evening was full of positive experiences! We started off with three proclamations. Council member Ragsdale-Cronin read our breast cancer awareness month proclamation and then Council member John Uy read the LGBTQ+ history and Filipino-American history month proclamations. All very important topics to recognize. And in true John Uy style, he provided some delicious Filipino food that we all took a moment to share right after the proclamations (and honestly, you should have also seen us dive into those lumpia as soon as our council meeting was officially over- yum!).

Next, we had a presentation from United Way about their "211" service that they provide to the community. This is a service that can be reached through dialing 211 or by texting (898-211) or online (211montereycounty.org). They are able to provide information on over 2,000 resources in regards to housing, help with paying for utilities, healthcare, food, transportation, and during the pandemic, they also helped with scheduling COVID vaccinations. I think we often forget this service exists, so I'm happy they were able to highlight the good work provided by United Way.

The following presentation was from our local DRO resident and Monterey-Salinas Transit General Manager/CEO Carl Sedoryk. He provided a very comprehensive overview of the

services that MST provides while noting that MST focuses their attention on “People, Planet, and Performance.” As a board member, I’ve been impressed with MST’s desire to meet the needs of our diverse community by offering not only the fixed route bus services, but the “Rides” program, van pools, and taxi vouchers which provide additional services to those who are elderly, have disabilities, or are veterans in our community. They also have a clear focus on putting bus service where it’s needed the most. With the “Better Bus Network” they are increasing ridership and efficiency of service. And they are also deeply committed to creating a zero-emission fleet which they’ll be doing through electric and hydrogen fuel-cell busses.

Our only item of business was a tobacco ordinance presentation by Gonzalo Coronado who is the Chronic Disease Prevention coordinator for Monterey County. With support from council member Hallock, he and I were able to bring this item to the council so that we could provide direction to staff to implement a few ordinances that will help to make sure tobacco is not being sold to our youth but will also provide an atmosphere that supports healthier living through smoke-free spaces (both outdoor and multiunit housing). I’m thrilled to report that the council had a very positive discussion about these ordinances and all seemed to be very supportive of this direction. Our only public comment on the topic was a message of strong support from Blue Zone Community Program Manager Tanja Roos. The next step will be for staff to bring back three ordinances which will include a tobacco retailer license ordinance (this would address sales to youth), an outdoor smoke-free ordinance (this would address making our parks, bike trail, and other outdoor spaces smoke-free), and a smoke-free multiunit housing ordinance (we were thinking 4 units and above, excluding The Oaks condominiums, would be required to be smoke free). I’m excited to continue work on these ordinances as they come back to the council for approval.

**Wednesday, October 25th- “An Evening of Hope for Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation” by Paul Hawken-** This was a joint fundraising event for Communities for Sustainable Monterey County and the Rotary Club of Monterey Cannery Row. They were able to bring in author, entrepreneur, and environmental activist, Paul Hawken who authored the book, “Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation” to speak to an audience (200+) about his thoughts on the climate crisis. I attended as a ReGen Monterey board member (ReGen Monterey was one of the largest sponsors of the event) and was very pleased (but not surprised) to see the number of enthusiastic monterey county residents who are committed to doing local actions that will allow us to connect and advocate for changes that will help us to reverse this current crisis.

**Thursday, October 26th- Del Rey Oaks Townhall mtg with Monterey County Supervisor Wendy Root-Askew and Mayor Scott Donaldson-** This was a nice evening to have both our County Supervisor Wendy Root-Askew and Mayor Scott Donaldson together to talk about things that pertain to both our city as well as the county. Mayor Donaldson touched on some city issues, including our recent cap on short-term rentals

(unhosted), as well as our Housing Element, and our desire to realign South Boundary Road. Supervisor Wendy Root-Askew was able to provide an overview of the county in terms of organizational structure, budget, and services. In the end, much of the discussion centered around water and the city's need to accommodate 270 affordable housing units for our upcoming 6th cycle Housing Element, most of which will be focused on our former Fort Ord parcels.

**Wednesday, Nov. 1st- ReGen Finance Committee-** The main item for this meeting was reviewing our draft audit for FY 2022-23. The auditor from Eide-Bailly presented, and essentially there are no findings and all looks good. They are waiting on a couple of items before it's finalized. We also talked about designating some of our used equipment as "surplus equipment" which means this equipment would either be sold for scrape metal or go out to auction. In general, these pieces of equipment have reached their end of useful life cycle of service. Turns out we are required by State law to phase out all off-road equipment that is not powered by a cleaner diesel engine (Tier 4) by 2026. This law provides great incentive for us to change over our equipment at a rate that will allow us to meet that law (when I asked, it looks like we are ontrack for meeting that requirement). After recognizing that our equipment may be sold across state lines or even out of the country to move us closer to that 2026 deadline, it brought about the question of whether this was any better (giving someone else our "dirty" engines) versus always selling it for scrape metal and not polluting outside of CA. Interesting topic indeed which it sounds like the board will visit in the future.

**Wednesday, Nov. 1st- Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster Board Mtg-** We had two main topics to discuss for this meeting. The first was looking at unit cost calculations for water which is charged to those who pull more than the allowed amount from the Seaside basin. The Watermaster is required to calculate this cost every year and at this time, the method of calculation was being questioned. Since there were no entities who overdrafted the basin this year, it was a bit of a theoretical discussion as it wouldn't actually apply to anyone at this time, but nonetheless, it was an interesting conversation. Historically, the Watermaster looks at the future potential sources of water and calculates the cost of an acre foot of water based on those combined costs. It was the method of combining those costs (taking averages of averages) that was at the root of this discussion. In the end, we voted for a method suggested by Director George Riley that based the cost on the "flow weight" or percentage of water that a particular source would be able to provide for the overall acre foot of water calculation. After some discussion, we ultimately voted unanimously for this method of calculation.

The second item that we discussed was the option for in-person, virtual, or hybrid Watermaster meetings. After some discussion, we decided we needed more information in terms of finding places where we could use zoom technology for free, and that we also wanted to have this discussion with the full board (we barely made quorum that day). With that, this discussion was tabled for December's meeting.

**Wednesday, Nov. 1st- Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster Replenishment Ad Hoc Committee mtg-**

The main item on this agenda was having our attorney present to us the various methods of getting funds to purchase replenishment water once it becomes available. The options that were discussed include:

- Going back to the court and asking for a change in the assessment fees for water
- Looking a projects that we can pursue and then providing the ability to bank that water (i.e. deposit 100 acre feet of water and then be allowed to draw down only 80 acre feet)- so this isn't getting additional money, but it does provide us with the water that we ultimately need
- "Passing the hat" with our member agencies for funding
- Creating a structure that would allow another organization/member jurisdiction to apply for grant money that the Watermaster could then use as leverage to help with other water projects

There was no real clear answer on this topic but it was still a good conversation. We ultimately asked that this be brought back to the larger board for further discussion.