



# TOWN OF JEROME

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING - WATER METER PROPOSALS OF THE TOWN OF JEROME COUNCIL CHAMBERS, JEROME TOWN HALL 600 CLARK STREET, JEROME, ARIZONA

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025, AT 3:00 PM**

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#### **3:00 (Part 1 0:01) 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mayor/Chairperson to call meeting to order  
Town Clerk to call and record the roll.

Present were Mayor Alex Barber, Vice Mayor Jane Moore, Councilmembers Dr. Jack Dillenberg, Issam "Izzy" Sharif, and Sonia Sheffield.

Staff present included Town Manager Brett Klein, Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett, Public Works Director Martin Boland, Crewmember Robert Vega, and Deputy Clerk Kristen Muenz.

#### **3:01 2. PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

*There were no petitions from the public regarding any non-agenda items.*

#### **3:01 (Part 1 1:40) 3. NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion/Possible Action

##### **A. Consideration of Proposals Received in Response to the RFP for an Advanced Metering Infrastructure System, and Selecting One Vendor to Complete the Project, With or Without Modifications to Their Proposal**

Selected vendors will provide a 35-minute presentation / question and answer session, and Council may approve a vendor to engage in discussions for an agreement and possibly completing the project.

3:15-3:50 - Western Environmental; 3:55-4:30 - Aquaflow; 4:35-5:10 - Metron; 5:10-5:45 - Fortiline

*Mayor Barber introduced Item 3A. She stated that Becoming Water Smart in Arizona is a great thing; there are 8 or 9 municipalities including Prescott that are following suit with a smart water system. Mayor Barber said she brought it up because there is probably not another community in Arizona that is surface water and she has questions for the proposers. She said that town staff, including the wastewater contractor, Henry MacVittie, had supported it. However, she felt that Vice Mayor Jane Moore in her capacity knows the water system the best and she is also apprehensive, but they are trying to do what is right by the Town of Jerome.*

*Town Manager Brett Klein said that the main, overarching factor is saving labor for town staff. He then introduced some videos taken as Crewmember Robert Vega and Administrative Specialist Michele Sharif traversed some of the more difficult parts of the meter routes.*

*Mayor Barber said she would like to make a statement that, when the State of Arizona formed the AWR in the early 1900s and said they owned all the water, Jerome was one of the few places that had been formed beforehand. She said this is a situation unlike any other in Arizona with a system this old that needs to be worked on. Mayor Barber said she was not apprehensive about this to make it harder for the people in town to have to work and she thanked the crew members again.*

### 3:11 (11:04) Western Environmental

*Amy Gamache, president of Western Environmental Equipment and Western Environmental Utilities, gave her proposal presentation.*

*Councilmember Sharif asked if the connection was cellular for the drive-by meter reads and Ms. Gamache responded that it was radio frequency.*

*Mayor Barber asked if you opt out, will you keep your old meter in place until the end of its useful life, or could you get the new smart meter but keep it in "dumb mode." The Western Environmental presenters responded yes, you do not have to get rid of all your meters at once.*

*Mayor Barber read a section of the warranty and asked how much it would cost to replace the system if damage occurred that was not covered by the warranty.*

*Ms. Gamache replied that it would be an extreme case because they have not had any fail.*

*Mayor Barber asked Mr. Boland how many high-pressure regulators to slow down the pressure and Mr. Boland said we had 8.*

*Vice Mayor Moore agreed that we sometimes have debris that gets into the water system and asked if that potentially could damage the meters and Ms. Gamache replied that it would have to be a big rock.*

*Mr. Boland approached the dais with an example of the current water meter's filter and explained that the new meters had a similar filter, which protect the meters from any large debris.*

*Vice Mayor Moore said that some people may want to opt out and asked if they could have a Badger brand mechanical meter installed instead. Ms. Gamache said yes, it was a mechanical meter, and they could have the option to opt-in at a later time.*

*Councilmember Sheffield asked Mr. Boland how much trouble it was to move a meter box to a better location and Mr. Boland said that there were only a few that would need to be moved, which would be a matter of digging up the box and making sure the lid protects the new meter.*

*Ms. Gamache said there was an antenna included in the proposal that could go through metal.*

*Vice Mayor Moore asked if there was the possibility of a pilot program and Ms. Gamache said they did offer a pilot program of 10 units for 3 months.*

*(45:44) Town resident Margie Hardie asked if resident's utility bills would go up or change in any way and Mr. Klein replied that they should not as the installation expense would be covered by a grant. Any ongoing fees would be minimal.*

*Ms. Gamache explained that the only ongoing fee would be for cellular service, which could be locked in for 10 years.*

*Ms. Hardie then asked if the residents would pay for that service and Mayor Barber replied that the town would decide on whether to pay those costs or pass them on to the customers.*

*Ms. Hardie asked about repairs and said that right now, we don't pay for those, we pay with taxes and we pay for our staff. Her third question was, would they do preventive maintenance, what would be the required infrastructure that the town would have to install, and would the town be charged per meter for service.*

*Mr. Klein explained that each company was provided with the total number of meters in the town that needed to be replaced and that information was used for the proposal's estimates.*

### 3:54 (Part 1 53:27) Aquaflow

*Mike Ellis, the representative of Aquaflow Solutions Inc., introduced himself and gave his presentation.*

*Mayor Barber asked if they could convert the town's current meters to work with their system and Mr. Ellis confirmed that they could.*

*Mayor Barber asked if the data would be secure and Mr. Ellis replied, yes, the data would be secure. Mayor Barber then repeated her question about protection from debris and Mr. Ellis said that their meters do include a screen. Mayor Barber asked if high pressure or turbidity would affect the warranty and Mr. Ellis replied that it would not, and he didn't feel the pressure rating would be exceeded.*

*Vice Mayor Moore asked about surges in the event that a hydrant is turned on Mr. Ellis said there is an option to add a check valve for surges.*

*Mr. Boland said that he didn't feel the town experienced much backflow and asked if the valve could be added later and Mr. Ellis answered that it could.*

*(Part 1 1:10:17) Town Resident Margie Hardie asked what their response time for repairs was.*

*Mr. Ellis replied that it would depend on the type of repair. He said he makes it a priority, so he would estimate a response within 24 hours.*

*Mr. Hardie asked, if we opt out or half the town opts out, what does that do to the cost, and will it then revert back to our town staff to do repairs for the opt-outs? She said, it could be lot.*

*Mr. Klein explained that of course, if it was not the vendor's equipment, town staff would do the repairs.*

*Ms. Hardie then asked, if half the town opts out, the town would still pay the same amount.*

Mr. Klein replied that the vendor would only charge us for the number of meters we received. The additional charges mentioned by the last vendor was based on services per meter.

Ms. Hardie asked how much it would all cost and Mr. Klein said the total estimate was included in the packet.

Ms. Hardie asked why their company was better than their competitors.

Mr. Ellis replied it was because he had three alternatives.

#### 4:31 (Part 2 1:32) Metron

Alex and Justin, the representative of Metron introduced himself and gave his presentation.

Mayor Barber asked for clarification on the screen for warranty purposes.

Justin answered with single jet meters that there are not screens required.

Mayor Barber asked about replacing a meter that would not be under warranty.

Representatives confirmed that it ultimately depends on size but quoted that the meter they were presenting would be about \$45.

Mayor Barber asked for clarifying information about opt-outs versus customers who want the cellular enabled meters.

Metron representatives confirmed that is possible by a change in the register type to something not as advanced.

It was asked what kind of meter body is in the ground.

Mr. Klein confirmed they are Sensus. He noted the quote they provided was for cellular, asking if the Town went for the AMR meters how that would be different.

Metron Representatives confirmed the cost would be lower.

Mayor Barber asked about Data security.

Metron Representatives outlined their security including single sign-on and the employment of a Chief Data Officer for compliance oversight.

Mr. Boland shared his input that this meter is the only one that is digital, the others are all rotary dial.

Ms. Barber asked if they could be submerged if there was water that got into the box.

Metron Representatives answered that they are hermetically sealed and can be submerged, also noting that as long as the antennae is above water it will still transmit.

Councilmember Sheffield noted that this is the only proposal without any wires. She asked Mr. Boland to speak on why that would be ideal, if it is, and if he would anticipate any additional issues using these without the wires. Mr. Boland said as long as they can read through a metal lid, he doesn't foresee any issue. Regarding the wires his concern was for mice and other rodents chewing on, which we had had and then ended up reading the meter by hand.

Councilmember Sharif asked if the transmission is in a dormant or "standby" state until it needs to broadcast.

Metron Representatives confirmed that is correct, adding that they've been tested in hot, cold, wet and dry conditions and have been getting an average of 22 years out of the battery.

Mr. Boland asked what it would take to swap out a meter if it changed from cellular to drive-by.

Metron Representatives answered the swap out is just the brain on top.

Vice Mayor Moore questioned the mountainous terrain and asked if the signal would be ok.

Justin answered the most difficult terrain he's experienced for an installation is Globe, but the signal is ok according to the propagation study with Verizon.

#### 5:09 (Part 2 38:37) Fortiline

Rhonda Duran, representative of Fortiline, gave her presentation on Kamstrup water meters.

Mayor Barber asked if customers opted out could they connect to an existing system.

Ms. Duran responded yes, they can.

Mayor Barber followed up asking about future meter replacements, if there was an option to stick with a "dumb" meter.

Ms. Duran answered yes, they can be sold separately or together. She also clarified that the "dumb" meters would not have the Ultrasonic technology.

Mr. Boland asked about the leak detection if the system had the ability to notify of a leak on the main line.

Ms. Duran answered yes and gave examples of what would appear on reports for the various types of leaks detected.

Mayor Barber questioned the warranty.

Ms. Duran answered that the meters have internal filters to keep everything out of the meter housing.

Mayor Barber asked about the data security.

Ms. Duran answered that the FCC license would be owned by town, Town would own the data and it's all Microsoft cloud based.

The website was reviewed and Mr. Klein asked if a customer could set their own warnings for water usage.

Ms. Duran answered yes, each customer can set notifications and limits to their own specifics.

Ms. Moore asked about pressure surges and if the meters could handle that.

Ms. Duran said yes, because they can handle such a high-pressure rate, they usually don't have any issues like that.

Ms. Moore noted to wired on one of the meters and asked about it.

Ms. Duran answered that it is for the encoded meters hooking up to an existing system. If Town goes with new meters, then everything is fully integrated and there are no wires.

Mr. Boland asked if a meter went out, would it be replacing a head or the whole meter.

Ms. Duran answered it would be the whole meter.

#### (Part 2 1:10:26) Discussion after Presentations

The Council held discussion regarding the evaluation of four vendors, focusing on innovation, data management, cost, and operational impacts. Differing views were expressed regarding smart versus mechanical meters, data privacy and "invasiveness," and the Town's readiness to adopt advanced technology. Council members also expressed favor in narrowing the consideration to two vendors, to compare adaptability, compatibility with existing infrastructure, and the ability to offer an opt-out mechanical option for residents. Staff and Public Works input emphasized practicality, maintenance efficiency, and the potential benefits of reducing manual meter reading to free up limited Town resources.

Financial considerations were also central to the discussion, including alignment with available grant funding and long-term affordability. Council acknowledged that while some proposals exceeded grant amounts, modifications could reduce costs, particularly by separating mechanical meters from optional cellular or cloud-based components. There was agreed consensus that all residents must retain the option to decline smart technology, and that final selection should prioritize staff recommendations and budget feasibility. A motion was ultimately made by Councilmember Dillenberg and seconded by Councilmember Sharif to select Metron as the vendor, with direction to proceed with or without modifications to the proposal, including opt-out provisions and further clarification on technology deployment and costs before final implementation.

**Motion to approve the proposal of Metron, with Staff Direction to draw up an agreement with options to be considered at the next meeting**

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER				X		
DILLENBURG	X		X			
MOORE				X		
SHARIF		X	X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

#### Part 2 (1:52:18) 4. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Dillenberg made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor Barber seconded the motion and called the question, adjourning the meeting at 6:23p.m.

**Motion to adjourn at 6:23 p.m.**

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER		X	X			
DILLENBURG	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

APPROVE:

Alex Barber, Mayor

ATTEST:

Brett Klein, Town Manager