



**ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS
DEPARTMENT**
Utilities Division
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DRAFT
**UTILITIES ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**
Thursday, September 8th | 17:15pm
2520 Barrett Ave. & Teleconference – Zoom

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:21pm by UAB Chair, Andrew Campbell.

Members Present: Andrew Campbell, Geoff Larson, Stuart Cohen, Janet Schempf (teleconference)

Staff Present: Chad Gubala (teleconference), Denise Koch, Brian McGuire, Joshua Midgett, Adam Wenger, Ty Yamaoka

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

a. *September 8th, 2022 UAB Agenda was approved by Board vote.*

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. *July 14th, 2022 Draft UAB Meeting Minutes were approved by Board vote with no edits.*

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

a. *None*

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

a. *Introduction of Utilities Field Operations Supervisor, Adam Wenger*

i. *Brian McGuire* introduced the new Field Operations Supervisor, Adam Wenger – who was welcomed by the UAB. He has been with CBJ since January as a Water Distribution and Treatment operator and has prior experience in the field working Colorado

b. *UAB Question Response (re: Biodiesel)*

i. *Chad Gubala* spoke to the facility in Anchorage that was previously pursuing Biodiesel generation. They are no longer doing so due to prohibitive cost – it was initially started up as a philanthropic enterprise. The program changed hands a few times and is now controlled by Alaska Waste, which now collects yellow waste/FOG and ships it south for disposal “Being in an oil oriented state, it is unlikely that anybody will level the playing field for biodiesel.” *Chad* offered to be available for an offline technical discussion on request.

ii. *Stuart* requested a quantification of the monetary savings of preventing significant FOG from entering the CBJ sewer system. *Chad* noted that the Utility is currently working on a Source Control program and working to clarify MAHLs (Maximum Allowable Headworks Loading) for each plant and thus section off FOG input to users in the community as appropriate. This data point will help the Utility staff understand the economic impact of more efficiently

- processing appropriate amounts and types of waste. *Geoff* noted that a previous study by Tetra Tech made an estimate of \$2 - \$3 million as annual costs to the Utility due to FOG.
- iii. *Stuart* asked about other end use possibilities (e.g. using to heat homes or in candles). *Brian* offered that he was currently unaware of all the approved end uses of FOG and how to treat it to get to that point, but would look into it.
 - iv. *Chad* is working with *Stuart Ashton* of *RecycleWorks* to gather data on those that are currently bringing FOG-like materials to HHW. He acknowledged that there is currently in the code an enforceable limit of “about the same amount of grease from 18 pieces of bacon daily”, which is punishable at present by a \$200 fine and jail time, though he noted that it primarily depends on voluntary compliance.
 - v. The Utility will continue to work on this issue as a part of the COBC and in conjunction with the EPA and local industrial users and will keep the UAB apprised.
- c. *Recent Utility Activity*
- i. *Chad* noted that staff is sampling twice weekly for COVID within the wastewater stream and that those data points will be posted to the CDC.
 - i. SCADA networking and security review will be occurring next week, exploring what is currently in place for the Water Supply and working to ensure that the information systems have the appropriate security set up per the EPA and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).
- d. *Sales Tax Update*
- i. *Brian* and *Denise* shared that the Assembly did not prioritize the Utility to be included in the 1% Sales Tax Contribution, that will be put to the voters this November.
 - ii. *Andrew* and *Geoff* suggested that this might be the first time in the history of the UAB that the Utility has not been supported in this way
- e. *Dashboard Introduction Presentation*
- i. *Brian* presented the Utility Dashboard, initially created in conjunction with Finance, which shows the impact of rate increases and sales tax contributions on the ability to commit to Capital Improvement Projects and Operational costs.
 - ii. This tool was initially created in 2014 after a study by the FCS group and shows both the Wastewater and Water funds, including a graphical representation of a targeted minimum fund balance and the forecasting of current income and expense projections against this.
 - iii. It is primarily used to plan for Capital Improvement Projects, measure impacts of operational cost savings, and measure the impact of Sales Tax allocations
 - iv. *Brian* noted that there would be future, in depth discussion on this tool where the UAB might better understand the various levers and upcoming projects that affect the ability to pull them
 - v. *Stuart* sought confirmation that there was information available behind each of the assumed numbers in the simple spreadsheet, which *Brian* confirmed. He acknowledged the usefulness of the tool and *Geoff* offered history on it being used to support rate increases.
 - vi. *Janet* inquired about the ability of the Utility to be funded by property taxes, noting Fire response as an example. *Brian* and *Joshua* responded that there is indirect cost sharing – in that the Utility will charge CCFR for hydrant maintenance and CBJ charges the Utility for shared services. *Brian* acknowledged that he would investigate and confirm that property taxes are not currently directly funding either the Water or Wastewater Departments.
- f. *UAB History*
- i. *Geoff* offered a brief history of the UAB, noting its ability to advocate directly to the Assembly on behalf of the Utility, making it more capable to directly impact policy than staff might otherwise might be able to
 - ii. The UAB was born out of necessity, when it was discovered that the Utility had accumulated an operating deficit of over \$25m due to the lack of depreciating large assets (such as the Mendenhall Treatment Plant). In 2004, rates were increased by more than 30% and this *still*



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did not repair this deficit fully, but due to diligence by staff and the UAB and continue minor increases and contributions, the Utility is in a better financial position

- iii. It was noted that the Assembly *cannot* obligate future Assemblies – meaning that the rate increases or other directives can only extend so far into the future.
- iv. *Geoff* also noted that UAB serves as representation of important stakeholders in the community when presenting opinions to the Assembly, giving the staff an amplified voice. He offered examples such as Sales Tax requests, CCFR billing, and rate increases wherein the UAB's support of the staff's position made it more possible to achieve proposed outcomes.
- v. *Geoff* also noted that a responsibility of the UAB is to educate both the public and the assembly on this history, on the Utility's activities, and on the current best practices and requirements within the industry
- vi. *Andrew* noted that there are some assumptions in the CIP projections in the dashboard discussed earlier and that a major responsibility of the UAB is to ensure that Staff is accurately informing this line and to find ways to support increases if necessary. Infrastructure improvement needs were briefly discussed as examples.

g. UAB Meeting Protocol

- i. *Brian* sought clarification on when and how to communicate to Board Members prior to a meeting
- ii. *Stuart* noted that texting in addition to email could be helpful, but *Andrew* offered that he is frequently not available by cell
- iii. *Andrew* noted that in future, if there is a 'maybe' response that it should be treated as a 'no' for the sake of quorum.
- iv. *Denise* also noted that there is a protocol for notifying the public as well
- v. The Board agreed that within 48 hours of the meeting if there is not confirmed quorum – either by email or cell – then staff should cancel

VI. ACTION ITEMS

VII. NON AGENDA ITEMS

a. Source Control Presentations

- i. *Denise* noted that *Brian*, *Denise*, and *Chad* are going on a 'road show' presenting the need for Source Control and its impact. Thus far, they have presented to the Juneau Committee of Sustainability (JCOS)
- ii. *Janet* noted that inserts in mailed billings are another effective way to educate the community at large

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:35pm

Next Meeting:

October 13th, 2022 | 17:15 PM | In Person & Teleconference