

**CITIZENS' RATE REVIEW COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Wastewater Treatment Plant

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**Members Present:**

Chair Matson Haug  
Beth Keyser  
Charles Zickefoose

Ernie Amundson  
David Maben

Mike Gougler  
Tony Rourke

**Staff Present:**

Howard Hamilton, Public Works Director  
Janelle Nordyke, Finance Director  
Deb Galardi, Galardi Consulting  
Jennifer L. Nelson, Recording Secretary

**Others Present:**

Helen Brown                      Don Clements

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**1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Introduction**

Chair Matson Haug began the meeting at 7:00 pm and asked for the roll call.

**2. Proposed Utility Bill Grant Program**

Chair Haug wished to go over changes to the brochure and had Charles Zickefoose read his feedback concerning the draft proposed utility bill grant program procedure. Discussions followed concerning implementation of the Citizens' Rate Review Committee (CRRC) role.

**Motion #1: Zickefoose/Gougler** to recommend City Council adopts the proposed draft policy to implement the Proposed Utility Bill Grant Program CRRC procedure.

Janelle Nordyke spoke of all policies being placed into one standard operating procedure book because they are dealing with more than just the one grant. Charles Zickefoose replied this was the only one addressed to the CRRC. David Maben added this is the only one that involves another organization; other requests come individually to the City.

Tony Rourke asked who deems it necessary to conduct interviews. Ms. Nordyke replied that if a non-profit agency providing utility assistance, such as YCAP is involved, they can apply for a grant from the City and then the individuals needing assistance would go through the non-profit organization first. The CRRC would not be approving the individual.

Chair Haug spoke of there being a need to publicly review any requests for dispersing funds and this being the public body appointed to complete that review.

Beth Keyser suggested requiring all applications to be made within a specific time frame and then review them all at the same time at a scheduled CRRC meeting. She believed this would allow for equal distribution between all applications in need at the same time. Discussions followed concerning the benefits of creating a limitation versus the idea of "first come, first serve" and what would be the best time frame to receive applications.

**Motion #2: Keyser/Maben** to amend the proposed utility grant program procedure to establish a start and stop time for the application period from May 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> with all applicants being reviewed at one time by the CRRC during the July or August scheduled meeting.

**Motion #3: Rourke/Gougler** to amend the amendment to the proposed utility grant program procedure by establishing an additional time frame from now until November 30, 2009 to accept grant application requests within the current fiscal year to be reviewed at a regularly scheduled CRRC meeting following the deadline.

**Vote #3:** (6 Yes/0 No/1 Abstain [Amundson]) Motion carried.

**Vote #2:** To amend the policy as amended. (7 Yes/0 No) Motion carried.

**Vote #1:** To recommend City Council adopt the proposed draft policy to implement the Proposed Utility Bill Grant Program CRRC procedure as amended. (7 Yes/0 No) Motion carried.

### **3. Continuation of Water Rates Discussion:**

Deb Galardi presented the staff report including a PowerPoint (see official meeting packet for full report).

The discussion started with debt service coverage and the need for annual net revenues to generate in excess of the actual annual debt service, the projections for fiscal year 2010/11 are at a deficit of some \$580K which needs to be reduced by either increasing gross revenue or decreasing spending. Trends were reviewed with historical rate increases, price elasticity, weather impacts, and economic impacts. For every \$100K reduction in System Development Charge (SDC) revenue to promote economic development in 2009 correlates to a 2.5% increase to the rates; so the \$480K reduction in SDCs has to be made up for someplace.

Chair Haug stated that it was the policy of this committee to determine a fair allocation of those costs. Ernie Amundson added he felt it was also necessary for the committee to represent the citizens' interests, not the City's. Ms. Galardi mentioned there are benefits with an increased tax base and new water bills from the new homes would also be factored into the balance.

Ms. Galardi continued with the staff report by reviewing the revised schedule of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), Capital funding sources, and preliminary rate increases. She showed how \$4.36 million would be needed from rates (net of debt service) if no new debts incurred. The only options would be to further defer capital projects, reduce operation & management (O&M) costs, or growth needs to make up for the 12% projected rate increase.

Tony Rourke spoke of impacts of Springbrook 24" Mainline upsizing being needed for the Austin property. Howard Hamilton discussed how development on that property has been deferred because of the economy and they can only speculate on maybe 50 houses being built in 2010 and maybe 250 in 2011. If the 250 permits were pulled, then the upsize would be put in the following year.

Ernie Amundson asked if the rates would be raising 50% over next 4 years. Ms. Galardi said this was correct according to the preliminary results and it is a matter of balancing the risks of deferring certain capital projects.

Howard Hamilton discussed critical projects like reservoirs that do not meet seismic standards and replacing mainline valves so small areas can be isolated for waterline repairs. Discussions followed about the Potable Zone 1 Reservoir Study and CIP project.

Ernie Amundson spoke of penalizing current rate payers for future residents of new homes. Ms. Galardi mentioned reimbursement fee money collected through future SDCs being used for any kind of capital improvements and the rates would not have to increase to pay for those kinds of things. Mr. Hamilton added that costs are never flat nor do they go down, they are always on the rise such as electric utilities, the costs for federal and state fees, additional required testing and dramatic chemical cost inflation.

Tony Rourke asked what could be done if they were asked to cut \$4 million more out. Mr. Hamilton stated they would shove projects further into the future, defer O&M wherever possible and at some point we would reach a minimum safe production buffer capacity, at that point we could not have any additional customers or increases to demand and then they would have to declare a moratorium on growth.

Don Clements mentioned how a city must have a plan in order to declare moratorium and the federal government usually steps in as well. He said that raising the rates is not the problem; it is how fast they are raised.

Mike Gougler said they can't just keep raising rates; they have to cut costs, too. He said the rates weren't raised for ten years and now there is a question of how to fund needed projects.

Don Clements asked if SDCs can be used to pay for debt coverage. Ms. Galardi said that they can but cannot be relied on for debt payment; rates have to be enough to pay for debt, O&M, and coverage. Rates have to be high enough to cover costs if the SDCs do not come in.

Ms. Galardi continued with the staff report by discussing the cost of service rate issues and special rates, including the Springs customers' rate with a four year phase in and the reclaimed water rate. She covered allocation of O&M costs, costs to service parameters, peaking factors, and the next steps in the process.

#### **4. Public Participation:**

Chair Haug passed around a sheet of paper for winter averaging considerations concerning establishing a sewer rate when moving from one house to another. An issue came up when a citizen, Dan Schutter, requested being able to keep the old rate when he moves to a new home.

The four possible choices given to resolve this request were: 1) to keep the same established rate as the previous residence; 2) use the rate of the new residence; 3) use the number of people in the household to set the rate; and 4) make a bill adjustment up or down according to the difference between the rate established at the next December –March period and the rate established when moving into the new residence.

Discussions followed about whether someone would be requesting this if they moved out of town or into town from another area and how much extra work it would make for the Finance Department to change the policy or to make exceptions by request.

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| <b>Motion #4: Rourke/Zickefoose</b> to keep the current policy in place. (7 Yes/0 No) Motion carried. |
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#### **5. Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

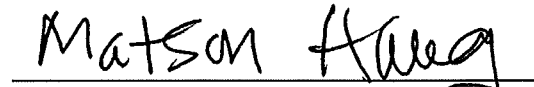
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| <b>Motion #:</b> <b>Amundson/Gougler</b> moved to accept the meeting minutes from September 30, 2009. (7 Yes/0 No) Motion carried. |
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**6. Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.

**Approved by the Citizens' Rate Review Committee this 10<sup>th</sup> day of November 2009.**

  
Recording Secretary

  
Citizens' Rate Review Chair