CITY OF TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES  
PUBLIC UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2018

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting of the Public Utility Advisory Board of the City of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico to be held in the City Commission Chambers, 405 W. Third, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, on Tuesday, January 16, 2018 at 5:30 P.M.

INTRODUCTION:

PRESENT:
George Szigeti, Chairman  
Ron Pacourek, Member  
Gil Avelar, Member  
Randy Ashbaugh, Member

ABSENT:
Jeff Dornbusch, Vice Chairman

ALSO PRESENT:
Juan Fuentes, City Manager  
Jesus Salayandia, Water/Wastewater Department Director  
Andy Alvarez, Sanitation Director  
Traci Burnette, Grant Project Coordinator  
Boaz Easley, Electric Division Director  
Tammy Gardner, Electric Division Administrative Assistant  
Ruby Otero-Vallejos, Water/Wastewater Administrative Assistant  
Kristin Weddle, Scale House Operator  
Angela A. Torres, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chairman Szigeti called for approval of the agenda.

Vice Chairman Dornbusch moved approval of the agenda as submitted.

Member Avelar seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular meeting of Monday, December 18, 2017:

Chairman Szigeti noted a few corrections on page 3 and page 4 of the minutes.

Chairman Szigeti moved approval of the December 18, 2017 minutes as amended.

Member Pacourek seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

There were no comments from the public.

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

There was no response to public comment.

Discussion/Update: Electric Department- Bo Easley, Electric Division Director:

Electric Division Director Easley reported the following:

- High School Fitness Center-They are still waiting on the contractor for the ground breaking.
- Animal Shelter – The electric portion should be complete in about 3 weeks.
- They met with Bohannon Huston Inc. last Thursday to review the engineer drawings for the Cielo Vista Subdivision. Hopefully they will be 100% finished with the drawings by the end of January.
- Substation Battery Replacement – American Electrical Testing Company is engineering the replacement of the batteries in the battery container box that hold the batteries. Hopefully they can go out to bid on that by the end of the month and they should be finished with the design by mid-January.
- McDonalds Construction – They pulled the old primary underground wire and replaced the transformer.
- They contracted out, a pole replacement on the corner of Austin & Clancy that was done last week and a new switch was added.
- Merchant testing went well. His crew tested last Friday and everyone passed.
- He’s been working with DARcor and Associates on all of the lift stations for Phase 2B of Wastewater Treatment Plant Project.

Discussion/Update: Sanitation Department – Andy Alvarez, Sanitation Director:

Andy Alvarez, Sanitation Director reported the following:

- His crew has been periodically driving through alleys to check for illegal dumping.
- They will be working with Gordon Environmental on the monitoring wells at the BLM Landfill, at the Oasis Golf Course. These wells are at ground level, and we need to bring them up to code which is above ground level. That will be one of their large projects this year.
• Recycling is going very well. It looks like the department that he has been working with will soon be purchasing plastics because they found a company out of Texas who purchases plastics.

• Curbside Recycling is a future goal of his. The process for that would be to purchase new Polycarts, purchase a new Polycart truck (which is around $250,000) and expand the facility, because curbside recycling would require single streaming, which is where we dump the mixed recyclables on the floor, we bail everything together, and we send it to vendor who will sort it for us. He may also need one or two more employees to handle this.

• He is working on a notice for policies and procedures of what is supposed to go into your Polycart. The notices will be added to the utility bills and will include where Polycarts need to be placed, and what time they need to go out and if the rules are not followed, then they won’t get their trash picked up. He also wants to put something in writing stating that there will be a charge for additional items that do not fit in the Polycarts. The reason for that is because the cost to pick up items that are not on the regular trash route is not cheap, because he has to pay for fuel, he has to pay for the labor, and he has to pay for the wear and tear on the truck.

Discussion/Update: Water/Wastewater Department - Jesus Salayandia, Water/Wastewater Director:

Traci Burnettie, Grant/Project Coordinator, reported the following:

• They have implemented Phase 1 for the Wastewater PER and it is complete for the most part. That money, as received by a USDA Grant is as a total of 4.4 million dollars. They are in the process of Phase 2A right now, and that should be completed by July.

• Phase 2B, which is their big phase, is a 5.2 million dollar grant loan combination through USDA, and that is in the design phase right now. We are 90% complete on that design. Jesus and Arnie will review those, and they will then go to USDA and NMED for review and approval, before we start moving forward on that. It will be the end of 2018 before start going out to bid and getting contractors for that project.

• Within the Water PER we identified Cook Street Station and our Chlorination System as well as treatment for the water. The PER specifically speaks of the downtown infrastructure. We are working on applying for multiple grants. We’ve applied for 3 grants through the Water Trust Board, 3 grants through Colonias, and 3 grants through USDA. We have a pending application through USDA right now for the Cook Street Project, as well as a pending application for the 1st Phase for NMFA Colonias. We applied through Water Trust Board. However, they do not have a lot of funds at this time.

Chairman Szilgeth – He heard... the fact that our water rates haven’t been updated in a number of years, may be hurting our ability to get some of this funding. Is that correct?

Traci Burnette, Grant/Project Coordinator - Yes, that is correct. Our rates are a lot lower than other Municipalities, and she believes that plays a part, because the funding sources are looking at, if we raised our rates, then it’s possible that we could have that revenue to repair our own lines and they are also looking at, if they give us a grant loan, or grant cash match... can we make that loan or that match, and if we don’t have that revenue to support that, then they aren’t going to grant us the money. They also want to know if they give us a few million dollars to fix those lines, do we have the revenue to keep up on those lines. They don’t want to spend money
on something that's just going to fall apart again. She believes that the last time the water rates were increased was back in 2007.

Jesus Salayandia, Water Director reported the following:

- The Manhole Project will begin within the next month or so.
- The high priority alarms on the SCADA aren't going to dispatch when they should be, so that is being addressed.
- Phase 2A Clarifiers – They just finished the framing for the 12ft walls and they poured the concrete for the flooring.
- North Date will be getting a generator.
- They interviewed potential candidates for positions they have open and both candidates are certified. One has a level 4 Water certification, and a level 4 Wastewater certification. And the other one has a level 4 Wastewater certification, and will be testing for his level 3 certification for Water.
- About a month and a half ago, they had a main blow out on Clancy. The 10 inch cast iron Force Main, which pumps the sewage from Clancy Street up the hill, blew out at the bottom. However, they contained it, and Smith Co. did the repairs.

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD:

Chairman Szigeti – He presented the Electric Cost Adjustment at the last City Commission meeting, but they asked that they not take any action on it until all the data could be verified. He will be meeting with the Utility and Electric Dept to go over the numbers to make sure everything is 100% kosher, and then they will take it back to the Commission for action. He noted that City Manager Fuentes pointed out that the ordinance allows us to increase the pass thru, but it only allows us to increase it. It doesn't allow us to adjust it downward if costs go downward. So that is one thing that we will have to change on the ordinance.

Member Pacourek – The minutes quote, “Mayor Green made the motion to change the name to energy cost adjustment” when is the wording going to be changed on the utility bills?

City Manager Fuentes - That is going to require an ordinance change, so we will have that drafted, and then taken to the Commission for approval.

Brief discussed ensued regarding the Electric Cost Adjustment.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF:

There were no additional comments from staff.
ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Public Utility Advisory Board, George Szigeti, Chairman, declared the meeting adjourned.

APPROVAL:

PASSED AND APPROVED this 20th day of February, 2018 on a Motion duly made by [Signature] seconded by [Signature] and carried.

George Szigeti, Chairman
Public Utility Advisory Board