



CITY OF FLAGSTAFF
WATER COMMISSION
January 16, 2020

SUMMARIZED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ward Davis
Ben Ruddell
Timothy Bowers
Malcolm Alter
Marie Jones, P&Z Rep Alter
Jamie Whelan, Council Rep

MEMBERS ABSENT

John Malin
Elizabeth Christy

STAFF PRESENT

Brad Hill
Marion Lee
Erin Young
Mark Richardson
Lisa Deem
Monica Rabb
Ed Schenk

OTHERS PRESENT

Jack Rathjen
Robert Vane
Rae Kursley

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair, Ward Davis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 19, 2019

Moved by Timothy Bowers and seconded by Malcolm Alter to approve the meeting minutes of December 19, 2019. Motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Robert Vane – Mr. Vane indicated that staff presented the Water Services Strategic Plan 2025 at the December 19th Water Commission meeting and what was absent in the plan is the overdue assessment of the health and safety of 40 aced dedicated sludge disposal site at the Wildcat Hill Wastewater Plant. Concerned of the contaminates to the aquifer that effect the downstream neighbors. Carollo Biosoilds Master Plan presented in November recommended continued use of the dedicated sludge and disposal site. Recommends staff to evaluate this before the continued use and that the Water Commission should request a follow up.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Rio de Flag Watershed Management Plan – Ed Schenk

Ed Schenk, Stormwater Project Manager presented the Rio de Flag Watershed Management Plan. The Stormwater Section is participating in a WaterSMART grant (Bureau of Reclamation) awarded to the Friends of the Rio non-profit group. The grant is for a comprehensive Rio de Flag watershed management plan (Plan). The Plan is intended to bring together the various stakeholder groups in the watershed to provide a long-term road map for watershed management and restoration for both societal goals and ecological benefit. The grant is being administered by Friends of the Rio but the plan is being created by a core team consisting of that non-profit group, Coconino County, City of Flagstaff, and the facilitator consulting group (Southwest Decision Resources). The purpose of this agenda item is to provide to the Water Commission. Staff also recommend that the Water Commission serve as the intermediary between City staff and City Council in terms of regular updates to Council.

The Stormwater Section, primarily Ed Schenk, will be the point of contact between the City and the Plan core team. Other City staff include Planning, Sustainability, and Open Space. The results of the Plan are not binding or regulatory but may be relatively high profile. A number of stakeholder workshops will be conducted over the next year and will solicit input from the Forest Service, State Lands, tribal groups, National Park Service, neighborhood community groups, Museum of Northern Arizona, Audubon Society, Chamber of Commerce, NAU, and other groups.

Two primary objectives of this project:

1. Form a broad-based multi-stakeholder Rio de Flag Watershed Group, in which Friends of the Rio de Flag serves as a convener/coordinator and collaborator.
2. Complete a watershed restoration plan, including specific watershed management projects at the conceptual level.

Activities for the Watershed Plan project include:

- Develop a mission statement, vision statement, collaboration guidance document, and goals for the watershed group;
- Conduct outreach activities including creating a communication plan, outreach plan, and information materials (i.e., brochures, advertisements, and website);
- Conduct stakeholder workshops to establish broad-based, diverse membership; The group held the first stakeholder workshop Dec. 3, 2019
- Gather information about issues and needs related to water quality, quantity, and restoration within the watershed (i.e., through stakeholder interviews and compiling research - identifying knowledge gaps);
- Conduct public sub-watershed reach-based workshops, to review and contribute diverse ideas and perspectives for a draft watershed restoration plan
- Develop a watershed restoration plan and identify priority implementation projects to the conceptual level.

The first watershed group meeting, the key components of the Rio Watershed group's mission were identified:

- promote watershed health,
- benefit human and ecological communities,
- increase public engagement for the Rio de Flag Watershed,
all through the development and adaptive implementation of the Rio de Flag Watershed Plan.

Ed Schenk reiterated that staff recommends the Water Commission serve as the intermediary between City staff and City Council in terms of regular updates to Council. The Water Commission members agreed to serve as the intermediary.

B. Proposed Public Works to Water Services Stormwater Maintenance Switch – Mark Richardson & Monica Rabb

Public Works and Water Services propose to transfer Stormwater infrastructure maintenance responsibilities to Water Services. Mark Richardson, Water Services Operations Manager presented this item and the presentation is for information only; intended to elicit comments, suggestions and keep the Commission apprised of our engagement strategies. Mark introduced Scott Overton, Public Works Streets Director who was present. Mr. Overton said the reason for the switch is for the increase in the infrastructure system and equipment failure. This became more than they handle.

For several years, Public Works and Water Services discussed how to optimize the maintenance of the City's 93 miles of stormwater infrastructure. Recently, the two divisions along with Finance have worked out the logistical, operational, and financial aspects of how to transfer this maintenance function from Public Works-Streets to Water Services-Stormwater.

As part of the FY2020-2021 Budget, Public Works would like to transfer the maintenance of stormwater infrastructure to Water Services. This will be accomplished by stopping the transfer of funding from the Stormwater Enterprise Fund to Public Works – Streets HURF Fund (e.g., FY2019-2020 Budget of \$344,000). The 2.25 FTEs and other contractals and commodities costs that are funded through this transfer will transfer to Water Services to deliver the maintenance program in the Stormwater fund. Lastly, the new Hydro Vac Combo truck will also be will be purchased this year with Stormwater funds and remain in the Water Service inventory after July 1. Operationally, Water Services – Collections Section already operates three Hydro Vac Combo trucks (One will be replaced in FY20 with an new Hydro Jet truck) for maintaining the City's sewer collection system, and can easily accommodate a another Vactor truck and crew dedicated to stormwater infrastructure maintenance. Although the Collections Section will manage day-to-day operations, the Stormwater Section will manage maintenance operation procedures, efficiency, maintenance requests, and work orders.

Malcolm Alter assumes open channel maintenance is included and if staff has resources for open channel. Mark indicated the resources available are for the closed systems and the open channel are being built into the system to allow for contracted services. Malcolm said there is a document on how each reach is to be maintained and Ed Schenk, Stormwater indicated they are aware of the document.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jack Rathjen, citizen said he has an issue with the price of water. Every Division within the City of Flagstaff would like to be part of Water Services. The reason is Water Services is an enterprise fund and believes that Stormwater is not part of Water Services. It should be called something else so it will not be tied to Water Services. He is concerned about money.

Brad Hill clarified that Water Services has four separate funds which includes Water, Wastewater, Reclaimed Water and Stormwater. Stormwater has its own separate enterprise fund and that this will not have an impact.

C. Communications update – Lisa Deem & Mark Richardson

Lisa Deem provided an update on communications and public outreach efforts in 2019. The Communications Program initiated in 2018 attained momentum in 2019, with website development, news blogs and public events. Lisa presented the latest efforts to engage the public, using door hangars to notify residents of water-related incidents or issues.

The Communications team provided an overview of news, blogs and education campaigns conducted in 2019. Of specific interest, Communications would like to make the Commission aware of focused outreach and notifications related to the services residents receive. Extensive use of rack cards and door hangers allow field staff to communicate responsibly with residents, providing accurate and complete information.

- The Leak Detection Cards, and Radio Meter Read replacement notifications provide information specific to work done in focus neighborhoods.
- The Easements Door Hanger, vetted through Legal and Real Estate, begins a conversation long overdue with homeowners about existing City easements, in an attempt to work together toward a safer community.
- Blocked easements have long been a problem for field crews in Water Distribution, Wastewater Collection and Stormwater. This notice makes the resident aware of an easement or utility infrastructure on their property and invites a conversation to work toward a beneficial solution.

Ward Davis said Water Commission would like to see feedback on the communication on a future agenda.

V. OLD BUSINESS - None

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS TO/FROM THE CHAIR, COMMISSION OR STAFF

Timothy Bowers requested for an update on the Red Gap Ranch as a future agenda item.

Brad Hill congratulated Ben Ruddell and announced that Ben was reappointed to serve on the Water Commission.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Malcolm Alter moved to adjourned at 5:00 p.m. and seconded by Timothy Bowers.