



CITY OF
FOLSOM
DISTINCTIVE BY NATURE

Utility Commission Regular Meeting

Approved Minutes

City Council Chambers | 50 Natoma Street, Folsom CA 95630
September 19, 2023
6:30 PM

Call to Order

Chair Menz called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

Roll Call

PRESENT: Z. Akhter, L. Ladd, M. Menz, T. Widby.
ABSENT: A. Ross, A. Silva, B. Vempati
STAFF PRESENT: Marcus Yasutake: Environmental & Water Resources Director
Mark Rackovan: Public Works Director
Emma Atkinson: Management Analyst, EWR

Business from the Floor

None.

Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the July 18, 2023, Regular Meeting.
Commissioner Menz motioned to accept the minutes.
Commissioner Widby seconded the motion.

Motion carried with the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner Akhter, Ladd.

ABSENT: Commissioners Ross, Silva, Vempati,

Directors' Reports

Public Works:

- The department is in the process of filling a vacancy for an Environmental Specialist in the Recycling team following a resignation for personal reasons.
- The department has reclassified a limited term refuse driver position to full time, following retirement of a full time employee. An increase in drivers' salaries means the City is more competitive in recruitment in the region, so is attracting more qualified drivers, which will hopefully lead to fewer incidents on some routes. Two new drivers have been recruited, so there are no current vacancies on the collection team, except for a new management position that was created for the current fiscal year. The job description for this position is currently being created.

- The department expects to receive new truck orders soon. Supply chain issues continue to impact the ability to purchase light and heavy duty vehicles in a timely manner. Collection vehicle shortages have occurred due to long repair times nationwide, resulting in route-splitting, however there have been no service failures to date. As new vehicles come in, the department will evaluate the practicality of disposing of old vehicles or keeping some for use as back up vehicles.
- The Hazardous Materials division is using recently obtained grant funds to install a storage container; they are currently constructing the concrete pad for the container.
- The Recycling division is working with a non-profit company 'The Recycling Partnership' to study recycling programs and the effectiveness of outreach. They are evaluating the trash stream to see how effective the City is in separating organics. This has not been publicized due to the nature of the study, but results will be shared upon completion, which is expected in January. Chair Menz requested that results of the study are shared with the Commission prior to being made public. Director Rackovan will discuss this with relevant staff.
- Director Rackovan confirmed that he has now postponed retirement until October 2025, and will focus on staff development and succession planning.

Environmental and Water Resources:

- The Water Treatment Plant hired a new plant mechanic; the employee was previously in the Fleet division of the Public Works department.
- Following the retirement of the Water Management Coordinator, the department promoted an internal candidate from within the Water Conservation division. This internal promotion combined with the retirement of another member of staff means the Water Management division has 2 vacancies for Water Management Specialists. The first round of interviews is already scheduled, so hopefully offers will have been made for both vacancies before the next meeting. The division hired two part time specialists to help in the interim. There is also a part time employee who handles the rebate program.
- The department has 2 other vacant positions which have been advertised. These are new positions that have been included in the current fiscal year's budget. They both provide an additional step in the career ladders, which benefits succession planning. One is in Utility Maintenance, and will focus on Leak and Loss, and Underground Service Alerts. The other is in Water Quality, and will focus on coordinating tie-ins, sampling, and bacteriological testing. Both postings, due to close on September 24th, have been advertised as promotional positions so will result in other vacancies in the department which will then need to be filled.

City:

- The City Engineer is retiring at the end of October. Interviews for a replacement have been completed, with the goal of the new hire starting in October to allow some overlap with the current City Engineer.

- A city team, made up of representatives from multiple departments, will meet within the next few months to review new rules for agencies regarding replacement of medium and heavy duty vehicles. There are some exceptions to these rules for public safety (Police & Fire) but not for Utilities. Work on this review will be a city wide effort, even though the majority of the medium to heavy duty vehicles are utilized by EWR. The new rules will be a challenge as some of the required equipment is not readily available as electric, and infrastructure is not currently available. There is a bill moving through that has the aim of minimizing the impact of the rules, though more detail is needed to evaluate how effective this will be.
Commissioner Menz commented that, based on communication with other agencies, there is a general feeling that agencies should just say no to the new rules.
- The City is also working on an Energy Services Request For Qualifications (RFQ). The City's strategic plan includes identification of areas to improve efficiencies, reduce the carbon footprint, and 'go green'. The RFQ will seek contractors who will audit to identify projects that can provide pay back based on a reduction in energy costs. The RFQ should be issued sometime in October or November.
- A consultant has been selected for the Water Vision project. The contract is currently being routed for signatures. There will be an initial internal meeting for staff and the consultant, then stakeholder group meetings will be scheduled for regular Utility Commission meeting evenings. Further information on this will be provided to the Commission as it becomes available.
- There was a discussion on the City wide sales tax at the last City Council meeting. This will likely come back for more discussion at a future meeting.

New Business

- **Water Loss Control Program Update:**

In June 2022, City Council approved a contract with E Source Companies, LLC for the Water Loss Control Program. Director Yasutake presented the findings of the program and answered questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Widby: What did comparison to other cities show? *Apparent loss was under-recorded while Real loss was over reported. It shows that we are not as good as others in the state but there are reasons, and the goal is to reverse that trend and get each reporting factor more accurate, so the trend shifts to be more in line with, or better than, State averages.*

Commissioner Widby: What is unauthorized consumption? *Un-metered use. This is not a significant amount for the City of Folsom. An example is connecting to a fire hydrant to fill up a street sweeper. Another is connection to a service line prior to meter installation on new subdivisions. There is better tracking of this now, as meters are now installed at the time the service line is installed to minimize the loss.*

Commissioner Widby: What does this tell you about budgeting for the next 4-5 years? *Budget for this is not a significant concern; staffing is more of a concern. If relevant divisions remain consistently fully staffed it shouldn't be an issue, but when there are staff vacancies or long-term absences it can affect the completion of work.*

Adjournment

The Commission was advised that they can vote at the next meeting about whether to meet in November, as the meeting is scheduled for the week of Thanksgiving.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

Respectfully Submitted:



Emma Atkinson, Management Analyst.

Approved:



Mark Menz, Utility Commissioner Chair.