

CITY OF VENTURA

VENTURA WATER COMMISSION MINUTES

Grant Burton
Commissioner Chair

Susan Mulligan
Commissioner Vice-Chair

Nova Clite
Commissioner

Suzanne McCombs
Commissioner

Gerhard Hubner
Commissioner

William Ackerman
Commissioner

Robert McCord
Commissioner

Susan Rungren, Ventura Water General Manager
Miles Hogan, Assistant City Attorney
Debra Gallegos, Recording Secretary

SPECIAL MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020, 5:30 P.M.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE STAY AT HOME ORDER AND THE COUNTY OF VENTURA HEALTH OFFICER DECLARED LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY AND BE WELL AT HOME ORDER RESULTING FROM THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19), CITY HALL IS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.

Water Commission conducted this meeting in accordance with California Governor Newsom's Executive Orders N-20-20 and N-35-20 and COVID-19 pandemic protocols.

Commission Vice Chair Mulligan called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

ROLL CALL – WATER COMMISSION

Present: Commissioners Ackerman, Clite, Hubner, McCombs, McCord, and Mulligan
(all via teleconference/video conference)

Absent: Commissioner Chair Burton

WATER COMMISSION ITEMS

1. OATHS OF OFFICE

The City Clerk performed the Oath Swearing In for the new Commissioner, William Ackerman.

2. MINUTES

Approve the minutes of the June 23, 2020 Regular meeting.

Members of the Public: None.

Commissioner McCord moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Clite seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Ackerman, Clite, Hubner, McCombs, McCord, Mulligan.

NOES: None.

Commissioner Vice Chair Mulligan declared the motion carried, 6-0.

3. MOUND BASIN STUDY

Staff recommends the Water Commission receive this report and an oral presentation.

Members of the Public: Burt Handy – emailed comment.
No vote.

4. AMENDMENT NO. 14 (THE WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT) TO THE WATER SUPPLY CONTRACT BETWEEN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES AND THE VENTURA COUNTY WATERSHED PROTECTION DISTRICT

Staff recommends that the Water Commission recommend that City Council adopt a resolution directing the Ventura County Watershed Protection District to approve a Resolution Authorizing Amendment No. 14 (The Water Management Amendment) to the Water Supply Contract between the State of California Department of Water Resources and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District.

Members of the Public: Burt Handy.

Commissioner Hubner moved to approve the recommendation. Commissioner Clite seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Ackerman, Clite, Hubner, McCombs, McCord, Mulligan.

NOES: None.

Commission Vice Chair Mulligan declared the motion carried, 6-0.

5. 2020 WATER AND WASTEWATER RATE STUDY – PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL PLAN SCENARIOS

- a) Receive this written report and oral presentation by Raftelis Financial Consultants Inc. on the 2020 Water and Wastewater Rate Study – Preliminary Financial Plan Scenarios.
- b) Provide direction on financial plan options to use as basis for the Cost of Service analysis.

Members of the Public: Joe Richardson – emailed comment.

No vote – the Water Commission provided feedback and requested the item be brought back at the October 27, 2020 meeting with additional information.

6. MODIFYING UPCOMING REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

It is recommended that the Commission consider modifying the Water Commission Regular Meeting dates for the November and December meetings to the following dates:

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Members of the Public: None.

No vote – the Water Commission indicated support, and a Resolution to modify the meeting dates will be brought forward at the October 27, 2020 meeting for approval.

Commissioner Hubner asked when the Chair and Vice Chair would be selected since they are typically selected at the first meeting of the new fiscal year. Ms. Rungren and Mr. Hogan explained that the San Buenaventura Municipal Code requires the Commissions to elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson each January for a one-year term, and the City Clerk had requested we adjust to that schedule. Ms. Rungren plans to bring forward the selection of Chair and Vice Chair at the January 2021 meeting, and Chair Burton and Vice Chair Mulligan have indicated they are willing to continue serving in the roles until then.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS: None.

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

COVID Update

COVID Update as of 10/07/2020 – Waived late fees = \$388,000; Door Tags (no shut offs but we are doing late payment notice) = \$230,000; online VISA payment fee = \$400

Consumption overall is approximately the same as last year during these past months.

There are no households within Ventura Water's service area that are currently without water/wastewater services due to unpaid bills.

Ventura Water has Revised Rule 2020-001 with Rule 2020-002 and Rule 2020-003, suspending any new customer shutoffs and new late fees for nonpayment from May 11, 2020 to September 21, 2020 and then until further notice, in concurrence with the City Council extending the emergency date to November 21, 2020.

Department Updates

Staffing - Lisa Kern, Management Analyst took the Early Retirement Package her last day was August 6, 2020 but had vacation to burn so was done in early July.

Lauren Bueling, Management Analyst, last day was September 17, 2020.

Michael Coon the Finance Director will be assisting water with finance information when needed.

We are working with Human Resources to fill vacant positions and working on staffing request for the next budget cycle.

Ventura River Litigation - For the Ventura River Litigation, we have a few updates. Additional information regarding these brief updates is available on the venturariver.com website.

First, the City amended its settlement agreement with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper in August 2020 adjusting the pilot project regarding the City's operations at Foster Park.

Second, the City entered into a letter agreement in early September with the City of Ojai confirming the City of Ventura is not seeking attorneys' fees from individuals or businesses who received a notice or are named in the City's cross-complaint.

Third, on September 15, the City and four other entities – Ventura River Water District, Meiners Oaks Water District, Rancho Matilija Mutual Water Company, and the Wood-Claeysens Foundation (Taylor Ranch) – jointly released a proposed collaborative court-binding solution (called a “physical solution”) to protect the Ventura River Watershed and all those who rely on it. We are now in a meet and confer period with the other parties as they review the document. The next status conference with the Court is scheduled for November 16, 2020.

Again, we post all updates that can be shared publicly on the venturariver.com website.

September 15, 2020 – at the Association of Water Agencies Water Issues Committee Meeting Presentation I provided a brief introduction and Shawn Hagerty Special Counsel with Best Best and Krieger provided an update on the litigation.

October 1, 2020 – Ventura Water Staff Jennifer Tribo presented to Ventura River Watershed Council on the Proposed Physical Solution.

State Water Interconnection Environmental Impact Report (EIR) - For the litigation filed by the California Water Impact Network challenging the State Water Interconnection Project Environmental Impact Report, a final hearing with the trial court has been scheduled for March 15, 2021.

Past Council Info. of Interest

Council Action 7/27/2020 – Ventura Water Workshop

- Overview of Water and Wastewater operations
- VenturaWaterPure & alternatives
- Community Engagement and Polling Results
- Rate Impacts Overview

Council Action 10/5/2020 – Ventura Water Presentation

- Recap from July 27, 2020 Workshop
- Overview of existing water quality and supply challenges
- VenturaWaterPure and alternatives
- Next Steps which include approval of two positions, VenturaWaterPure Program Director and Senior Management Analyst

We are moving forward on the VenturaWaterPure Project with consultants and we will be doing some Geotechnical work at Marina Park for the outfall and brine line location.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:02 P.M.