

## REGIONAL WASTEWATER RECLAMATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Transamerica Building  
Pima Association of Governments' 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
177 North Church Avenue  
**Thursday, May 19, 2011**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Sheila Bowen	John Lynch	Ann Marie Wolf
John Carlson	Amy McCoy	Jackson Jenkins
Bob Iannarino	Armando Membriola	Jeff Biggs
Kendall Kroesen	Mark Stratton	

#### **Committee Members Absent:**

Barbee Hanson	Rob Kulakofsky
Brad DeSpain	
Bill Katzel	

- I. CALL TO ORDER.** Chair Sheila Bowen called the meeting of the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Advisory Committee (RWRAC) to order at 7:48 a.m.
- II. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE.** Nancy Petersen, Deputy Director of Environmental Services for the City of Tucson, spoke about the Household Hazardous Waste Program. Ms. Petersen stated that Pima County had issued a termination notice to the City of Tucson for the current IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) that would go into effect June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. The terms of the current IGA include a funding split of fifty-fifty between the City and the County though there are other funding sources available such as the sale of recycled materials. Ms. Petersen said that she believed both the City and the County were committed to the program, however, the County has indicated it would like to reduce the funding and base it on the population of unincorporated portions of the County which amount to about 35.9 percent. Currently the City and the County are looking at possible cuts to this program in order to keep the program running with reduced funding. Ms. Petersen supplied the committee with two handouts showing statistical and participation information regarding the program.

Mark Stratton asked what the previous funding was in comparison with the proposed funding. Ms. Petersen stated that the City and the County had each previously contributed about \$300,000. Now it looked as though the City would contribute \$347,000 and the County would contribute \$235,000.

Sheila Bowen asked for the specific funding sources for the program. Ms. Petersen said that the City of Tucson funds the program through a residential garbage collection so every resident who lives in the City of Tucson has a line item on their utility services bill that includes an environmental services fee which, in part, goes to fund the Household Hazardous Waste Program. Ms. Petersen stated that she believed the County funded the program through the sewer fees which meant that the residents of the City of Tucson were paying for the program twice.

Jeff Prevatt added that the County had put out a memo to County Administration stating that though it was a County program, RWRD was the sole funding source for the County portion. The memo suggested that other departments within the County might want to contribute as well. Jackson Jenkins said that PDEQ had agreed to fund the program.

Ann Marie Wolf expressed that she had specifically requested that the topic of the Household Hazardous Waste Program be placed on the May RWRAC agenda but that it had been left off and therefore could not be discussed in detail. Ms. Bowen and Mr. Jenkins apologized for this oversight.

Ms. Petersen continued by saying that a new IGA was being drafted but was not yet in place. One of the key issues that must be resolved, however, was where to cut the program in order to accommodate a reduced budget. Ms. Petersen added that, at this time, it looked as though the Northwest Monthly Outreach site would

be cut as well as other outreach events.

Ms. Bowen asked that if other committee members wanted to get involved in the process, where might they find information and resources. Ms. Petersen said that committee members could attend steering committee meetings as well as contact the City or the County directly with comments or concerns. Ms. Bowen asked if that contact information might be something that could be sent to the committee members. It was agreed that this information would be forwarded to the committee members.

Frank Bonillas of the Household Hazardous Waste Program said that the program had been operating for 25 years and had been very successful with 98% of collected material being recycled. The program is successful throughout Pima County with events in Green Valley, the City of Tucson and other parts of unincorporated Pima County.

Jeff Biggs asked why Oro Valley, Sahuarita, Marana and the City of South Tucson were not contributing funds to the program but were listed as participating in it. Ms. Petersen said that meetings had been held with these jurisdictions and that the response had been that the residents of these jurisdictions already pay the same wastewater fee and were therefore contributing in that respect. Another response was that it was late in the fiscal year and difficult to secure funds at such a late date. The only exception was the City of South Tucson who stated they would contribute their share which amounts to around \$4,000. Oro Valley made it clear that they felt their residents should pay for the program themselves, meaning that if a resident wished to use the program they would pay a fee at that time for the service. Brochures have been handed out to the residents of Oro Valley stating that the site would be closed and giving alternative sites where materials can be taken. Ms. Petersen continued by stating that one way to bridge the gap for those jurisdictions that are not contributing financially would be to charge those residents when they use the program. There are however, some issues with the concept of charging some of the residents of Pima County and not charging others.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** The minutes of the April 21 meeting were approved.

**IV. Citizens' Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) Update.** Amy McCoy reported that the Mayor and Council were due to vote on the rate increases and that a report of the results of this vote would be made at the next RWRAC meeting in June. The two proposals being considered include a heavy increase option that would occur in the first tier with minimal increases in the remaining tiers and the other proposal spreads the increases equally across all tiers. Ms. Bowen stated that she understood that the first option was more secure. Ms. McCoy agreed that by increasing the first tier more heavily than the remaining tiers would be a way to generate reasonably reliable revenues every year. Mr. Stratton asked if the base rate was increased as well. Ms. McCoy said that the base rate was increased and would be increased regardless of which proposal was chosen.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

### **A. Old Items/Updates**

**1. Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP) Update.** Jackson Jenkins gave a presentation and overview of the Regional Optimization Master Plan. The Ina Road Facility is well under construction. The plan is to take the facility from a 37.5 mgd (million gallons per day) to 50 mgd. Currently, there are about 250 construction employees on site and it is quite an impressive undertaking given that this project is being conducted on an existing and functional facility. As of today, the first four GMPs as well as the pre-construction GMP are all complete. GMP 5, 6 and 8 are underway with GMP 5 being over 50% complete. GMP 6 is the largest of the GMPs coming in at \$174 million of the total \$212 million for the entire Ina Road Facility. GMP 6 is 20% complete. GMP 8 is 10% complete and design is underway for GMP 7.

Bob Iannarino asked how the projects were lining up with the targeted schedule. Mr. Jenkins said that the GMPs are very much on schedule if not a little ahead of schedule. Mr. Jenkins continued by stating that October 31, 2013 is the targeted scheduled completion date for the Ina upgrades even though compliance is not until January of 2014 so things are in good shape.

Mr. Jenkins continued the presentation by giving a summary of the activities at the Water Reclamation

Campus. The design has exceeded 30% and there are now construction trailers on site. There will be a groundbreaking ceremony on June 28th. The lab complex is shaping up and can now be seen from Interstate 10. There is also a solar project in place at the very north of the campus.

Mr. Stratton asked is the solar project had performed to expectations. Mr. Jenkins said that it was going well and that it was most noticeable when much of the earthwork was started and a lot of dust covered the panels and the output showed a distinct decrease.

**2. Budget Update.** Sheila Bowen announced that Ron Meck would be retiring at the end of June and that Patrick McGee would replace Mr. Meck as the Pima County Finance Department representative beginning in July. Mr. Meck then gave an update on the budget. For the current year, RWRD was on track to come in on or under their expenditure path. The department is doing this while replacing some critical equipment. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) tentatively adopted the requested RWRD budget along with the County budget as a whole on Tuesday. This budget process included the financial plan.

John Carlson asked for clarification regarding the rate increases. Mr. Meck stated that the increases had been adopted a year ago and were in place until 2013 and those increases were necessary to meet bonding requirements. In addition to those requirements, the department must maintain an operating reserve of ninety days and an emergency fund of \$20 million.

**3. Treatment Operational Update.** John Sherlock gave a treatment update presentation. On an annual basis, the Compliance Regulatory Affairs Office will receive in the neighborhood of 20,000 samples. Not all samples are for compliance. Some of them are for assessment and process control. The facilities throughout Pima County are consistently awarded for high standards and have maintained or improved their standing over the last year. There are certain metrics in the treatment division with which successes are measured and areas in need of improvement are identified. Environmental compliance is just one of those metrics. The multi-skilled program is another vital component as the people that work in treatment are considered the most important asset. The top three areas where funding is used are people, energy and chemicals. Through this multi-skilled program, the treatment division is redefining itself because of the large build-out at both Roger and Ina where there are very sophisticated processes and equipment and a higher skill set will be required.

Mr. Stratton asked how much of the budget had been appropriated for the training of staff. Mr. Jenkins stated that RWRD has its own training department which is part of the budget. Mr. Stratton asked if RWRD brought people in to provide instruction or whether there was staff available to provide that training. Mr. Jenkins said that it was primarily staff who provided the training but there are special training sessions where instructors are brought in. Mr. Stratton continued by asking if the department received DEQ approval for operator licensing. Mr. Jenkins said that this was correct.

Mr. Carlson asked if RWRD thought that labor costs would go up considering the emphasis on the multi-skilled program. Mr. Jenkins said that the labor costs are actually expected to drop. Most of this is due to job reclassifications and the new staffing structure expected at the DBO.

Mr. Iannarino asked if there would be an anticipated reduction in testing frequencies given the DBO will now be privately run. Mr. Jenkins said that compliance frequencies would remain the same with a very few exceptions.

Mr. Stratton asked if RWRD had considered that this new skill set needed for the industry was more technical and that salaries would need to match this new knowledge and that these individuals might be harder to find. Mr. Sherlock stated that at this point it was understood that the department would need to train its own unless individuals from an engineering or technical school that have knowledge of the business were found elsewhere.

Mr. Carlson asked if all the information provided in the treatment update included Marana. Mr. Sherlock said that it did.

John Lynch asked what role the DBO would play in sampling and testing once it had been turned over to

private control. Mr. Sherlock said that the DBO would use the Pima County ADHS certified lab facilities once they had collected the samples and this is indicated in the service contract. Mr. Stratton asked if it would be Pima County's staff that would be running the lab. Mr. Prevatt said that this was correct but that it was Pima County who would actually hold the permit. Pima County was basically going to be providing oversight of the contractor to make sure they were providing the type of service expected. Mr. Lynch continued by asking if the DBO would have technicians that would be running tests as well. Mr. Sherlock said that the DBO would do their own process control but the compliance samples will be analyzed by Pima County.

**3. Pima County RWRD Public Outreach Program.** Laura Fairbanks gave a presentation on the RWRD Public Outreach Program. One of the most important things that Community Relations does is constituent outreach and advocacy. This is done mainly by taking requests for information and responding to those requests in a timely and efficient manner. Most of the concerns involve odors, roaches and sewer fees and these issues are handled on a case by case basis. There is also a big effort to communicate with communities when they might be affected by construction and this helps to alleviate any undue stress or concern should there be an interruption of service or roadway access, etc. There are also public service announcements and public education events that are used to inform the public of topics such as grease collection and drought. Internal communication is another service provided by Community Relations in the form of a newsletter called the Pipeline which is distributed to all RWRD employees and twice yearly executive team presentations where employees are given the opportunity to ask questions. External communication includes a monthly column in the Tucson Water newsletter. There are also brochures and a public website.

Ms. Wolf asked how much activity they received from the web page. Ms. Fairbanks said that they received about two or three questions a week and sometimes more.

Mr. Lynch asked if there was ever an opportunity for the RWRD Community Relations group to sit down with other groups from other jurisdictions and talk about lessons learned or exchange information. Ms. Fairbanks said that there was a group called the Community Relations Group and it consists mostly of people from other Public Works departments as well as the library and health department and this group meets once a month to talk about different construction projects, outreach events and other challenges that are being faced.

**B. New Items.** Ms. Bowen asked for members of the committee to volunteer for the nominating committee. Members of the nominating committee are Sheila Bowen, Mark Stratton, Armando Membrilla and Bob Iannarino.

**VI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.** Budget recap and how does RWRD categorize and identify system needs, Marana 208 Plan Amendment, the Conservation Effluent Pool.

**VII. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE.** There were no comments from the audience.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 a.m.