

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF NORTH LAS VEGAS
UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD**

October 7, 2014

Website – <http://www.cityofnorthlasvegas.com>

CALL TO ORDER

Travis Roundy, Chairman for the Utility Advisory Board, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm at the North Las Vegas City Hall, Room 112, 2250 Las Vegas Boulevard, North Las Vegas, NV 89030.

WELCOME

Chairman Roundy welcomed the members, staff, guests, and general public to the meeting. Introductions were made by all Board Members and CNLV Staff Members.

ROLL CALL

Travis Roundy, Chairperson	Douglas Monson, Member
Russell Collins, Vice-Chairperson	Gay Shoaff, Member
Doris Carter, Member	Walter Wilson, Member
Sheldon Bleak, Member	

ABSENT BOARD MEMBERS

STAFF PRESENT

Randall DeVaul, Utilities Deputy Director
Bethany Sanchez, Senior Deputy City Attorney
Darren Adair, Director of Finance
Will Riggs, Utilities Financial Manager
Dave Commons, WRF Administrator
Romina Wilson-Chapman, Utilities Business Services Administrator
Kirk Medina, Utilities Operations Manager
Glenda Washington, Recording Secretary

GUEST PRESENT

VERIFICATION

Glenda Washington, Recording Secretary, verified that the Agenda and Meeting Notice was properly posted on the bulletin board at City Hall, the bulletin board at the Public Safety Building, the bulletin board at the North Las Vegas Public Library, the Aliante Library, and the Alexander Library in compliance with N.R.S. 241, "The Open Meeting Law."

PUBLIC FORUM

There was no public forum.

BUSINESS

ITEM 1. Approval of Minutes of April 1, 2014

A motion was made to approve meeting minutes from April 1, 2014. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

The October 2013 meeting minutes have not been approved, to be placed on April 7, 2015 Agenda for approval.

ITEM 2. Proposed Utility Reorganization Plan (For Possible Action)

Presented by: Randy DeVaul, Director of Utilities:

- ❖ Balance Resources and Demands
 - Move Pretreatment Program from Water Operations to WRF.
 - Replace Pretreatment Supervisor with Environmental Services Supervisor to work Tuesday thru Friday.
 - Restructure Field Services from a 6-day operation to a 4-day operation (Monday-Thursday) with Environmental Services responding to emergencies on Fridays.
 - Restructure Field Customer Service from a 5-day operation to a 4-day operation (Monday-Thursday).
- ❖ Fill Critical Positions
 - Lead Office Customer Service Representative
 - Office Customer Service Representative
 - Environmental Supervisor
 - 2 WRF Maintenance Mechanics
 - 1 Electronics Technician
 - 1 Field Customer Service Representative (Reassignment)
 - 2 Field Service Technicians (for drop inlet cleaning – funded by CCRFCD)

A motion was made recommending the Proposed Utility Reorganization Plan be presented to City Council. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 3. Discussion on Modifying Current Billing Cycles (For Possible Action)

Presented by Will Riggs, Utilities Finance Manager:

- ❖ Objective
 - Quality Customer Service
 - Consistency
 - Billing flexibility
 - Meter reading flexibility
 - Increase agent availability and reduce customer wait time
- ❖ Current Billing Procedures
 - Due date 27 days
 - Due dates are pushed to business days
 - Days are added to some customers
 - Multiple cycles due same day; some cycles getting 27 or 34 days depending on Holidays & days business is closed.
 - No room for adjustments
 - Current Reading
 - CNLVMC 13.04.02 A “. . . endeavor to maintain a cycle read rate between 26-32 days”
 - Typical month is 30/31 days
 - Requires uneven workloads
 - Inflexible scheduling
 - Inconsistent with billing
 - Must read 31 days to maintain billing
 - Other Restrictions
 - One bill per month
 - One due date per month
 - Will not bill more than 32 days on a bill
 - No due dates on Fridays, holidays, or weekends (when the office is closed)
- ❖ Other Utilities Billing Cycles
 - Due dates
 - City of Henderson – 21 days
 - Las Vegas Valley Water District – 24 days
 - NV Energy – 20 days
 - SW Gas – 21 days
 - CenturyLink – 20 days

- Reading
 - City of Henderson – “Meters shall be read monthly or as reasonably possible”
 - Las Vegas Valley Water District – “Meters will be read or estimated monthly”
- ❖ Recommendations
 - Modify current Municipal Code
 - **From:** “The City will endeavor to maintain a cycle read rate between 26-32 days”
 - **To:** “The City will endeavor to maintain a monthly ready cycle.”
 - **From:** “. . . monthly bill within twenty-seven (27) days. . .”
 - **To:** “. . . monthly bill by the established due date. . .”
 - Read between 28-24 days
 - Typical month
 - Improves read to bill time
 - Flexibility
 - Workload and staffing/scheduling. One cycle will be due a day. Eleven billing cycles overall (commercial/residential).
 - Change due date to 21 days
 - Due 3 weeks from billed date
 - Provides customers with a consistent due date
 - Eliminates weekend due dates and Friday reads
 - Balance workload for improved customer service
 - Allows flexibility in scheduling
 - Notify Customers of the changes
 - Bill inserts
 - Bill messages
 - Email & IVR
 - Posters
 - Social media
- ❖ Questions/Comments
 - Ms. Carter expressed concern with senior citizens with regards to their social security schedule and fixed income. Mr. Riggs stated that the City has a “Senior Citizen” clause which allows for late fees to be removed.
 - Ms. Carter suggested the possibility of equal payment plans. Mr. Riggs stated this would be an issue due to the seasonality of water usage. Mr. Collins stated that NV Energy has some of the same issues and this may be something to look into and City should compare notes on how they handle their plan. Staff will look into and report at the next meeting. Romina Wilson-Chapman stated that this issue has come up at the Multi-Agency meetings in the past and she will ask for feedback at the next meeting.

A motion was made in support of modifying the current billing cycle. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 4. Discussion on Finance/Utility Relationship *(For Information Only)*

Darren Adair, Director of Finance, stated that two City Council meetings ago there was an agenda item that should have come to the Utility Advisory Board before going to Council. He offered his apologies to the Board. City Council also wanted to know why they hadn’t received any feedback from the UAB regarding this item. This item is the “Municipal Water Rate”, (details listed in Item 7 - Director’s Report).

He also stated that he will continue to attend the meetings to provide financial background as needed, and keep the Board informed on decisions that are made on the City’s side that will have an impact on Utilities.

ITEM 5. Discussion on expanding locations to pay Utility Bills using PayNearMe (For Possible Action)

Presented by Will Riggs, Utilities Finance Manager:

- ❖ What is PayNearMe?
 - Electronic cash only transaction network
 - Quick
 - Easy
 - Safe
 - Convenient
- ❖ 17,000+ payment locations across the country; no cost to customers
 - Family Dollar
 - 7-Eleven
 - Ace Cash Express
- ❖ How does it work?
 - Barcode
 - On customer's Bill
 - E-mailed to customer
 - Sent via text message to customer
 - Cashier
 - Scans barcode (from bill or cellphone)
 - Accepts cash only (Cash only network, would eliminate returned checks)
 - Gives receipt
 - City is notified
 - Nightly batch
 - Daily report
 - Real time. Payment is updated to account immediately. Customer Service can access online to verify payments to avoid shut-offs.
 - Payments sent by ACH
- ❖ Network is already established
- ❖ Businesses in CNLV that currently use PayNearMe
 - Greyhound
 - Caldwell Banker
 - Appfolio Property Manager
 - H&R Block
 - Prime Acceptance Corp.
- ❖ Questions/Comments
 - CNLV would be added to existing system, the usual fee is \$3.00, negotiated this fee to \$2.00 per transaction.
 - City tried Western Union, not pushed due to a \$25 fee. Kiosk transaction fees can cost over \$2.00 easily with credit card and check transactions.

A motion was made in support of utilizing the PayNearMe cash-only network. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 6. LEAPmbr Aeration Retrofit for WRF (For Possible Action)

Presented by Dave Commons, WRF Administrator:

- ❖ Update the existing membrane air scour to a larger air bubble size to reduce fouling and lengthen cleaning intervals. This process was not available 3 ½ years ago.
- ❖ Increased production
- ❖ Improvement will lower operational and maintenance costs
- ❖ Reduce energy costs by 28 – 30%
- ❖ Extends the operational life of the membranes from 10 years to 12 years
 - 144 membranes, cost to replace approximately \$18.5 to 23.5 million. Will delay this cost out for two years and a \$48,000/year savings on chemical, power and maintenance.
 - Energy and maintenance alone is a 7.5% payback.

- ❖ Estimated cost: \$1,005,080 lump sum or \$1,100,376 (\$18,000/month) if financed over 5 years through GE Capital
 - Would likely be the lump sum payment and would be installed Fall of next year.
- ❖ 5 year full replacement warranty will be extended to 8 years

Mr. Collins recommended a cost analysis be done to show actual numbers of the savings to present to City Council.

A motion was made in support of LEAPmbr Aeration Retrofit for WRF. The motion was seconded and a vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 7. Director's Report (For Information Only)

- ❖ Smart Water Meter Initiative. Presented by Romina Chapman-Wilson, Business Services Manager:
 - History
 - 2003-2012: All older non-automatic meter reading (AMR) meters/radios were replaced with automatic AMR type meters/radios.
 - Eliminated need for staff to walk and read meters.
 - Meters were read electronically by a drive-by van.
 - Reduced meter readers from 12 to 3 (moved to Customer Service)
 - 2011: Testing and implementation of INNOV8s
 - One unit replaced both the register and the radio.
 - It contains no external wires which minimized tampering.
 - More reliable – electronic device with no mechanical moving parts.
 - Decreased the possibility of water intrusion.
 - Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI)
 - Next generation meter –Smart Meter
 - More accurate billing & reading
 - Admin portal – data immediately available for staff
 - Option for customer portal – more information and custom alerts
 - Eliminate staff performing reads – focus on maintenance & repairs
 - Reduce amount of usage disputes
 - 2013: Began Virtual Network Pilot Program
 - 105 test units installed throughout the service area – Apex/Kapex to Shooting Complex
 - Eliminates drive-by reading completely
 - Maintenance only
 - Web-based reading & data
 - Next Steps
 - Prepare a Request for Proposal to select a smart meter and begin conversion of 87,000 accounts
 - Estimated cost \$12 – 22 million
 - Focus on new developments first to eliminate the need to read meters
 - Develop financing plan to convert the balance of the service area

Mr. Collins stated his concern that Utilities is churning through meter replacements. He would like to know that this is a bonafide cost for replacement; is this a well thought out investment and requested to see more numbers.

This item will be placed on the next meeting's agenda for possible action by the Board.

Presented by Randy DeVaul, Director of Utilities:

- ❖ FY 13-14 Accomplishments (See attached handout)
- ❖ FY 14-14 Goals (See attached handout)
- ❖ Municipal Water Rate Approved by City Council
 - City Council approved a municipal water rate for City Facilities of \$1.04 per 1,000 gallons on September 3, 2014.

- The City of North Las Vegas currently has 285 municipal water accounts for City-owned facilities that were being charged the same rate as commercial customers.
- This proposed rate is based on using less expensive groundwater for City accounts. As City owned facilities benefit all citizens of the City, the City should benefit from reduced water rates.
- The proposed rate will reduce general fund expenses by an estimated \$1.1 million.
- Although there will be an associated loss in water revenue, the reduction will be offset by savings of budgeted surface water costs.
- ❖ Infrastructure Initiatives
 - Apex/Kapex
 - Provide both water and sewer infrastructure for interim and final use in this 20 Square Mile area. There is potentially 30 businesses for the cultivation of marijuana in this area.
 - Interim improvements will include use of septic systems and small package treatment plants.
 - Final improvements will include major water and sewer infrastructure to serve the entire area.
 - NE Interceptor Sewer
 - Extend sewer lines to serve the area east of I-15 and south of the Speedway.
 - Some of the most attractive undeveloped land in the City.
 - Include mandated connections to Nellis AFB.
 - Estimated cost \$18 - \$22 million. Working on how this will be paid.
- ❖ SNWA Drought Update
 - The Drought Monitor indicates Moderate to Extreme Drought conditions within the basin.
 - August precipitation within the basin is 180% of average.
 - August inflows to Lake Powell are 103% of average. Water Year 2014 precipitation is 102% of average and the forecasted inflow to Lake Powell is 95% of average.
 - Lake Mead is currently at elevation of 1,081 feet, which approximately 39% of capacity. Based on current conditions and projections, it is expected to rise to the elevation of 1,083 by the end of the year.
- ❖ Sloan Channel Update
 - On target for April 2015 completion
 - Pipeline between the WRF and Owens is complete
 - Authorized the County to divert the plant discharge to Owens, eliminating the open channel flow between the WRF and Owens
 - Most of the midge problems will be eliminated
 - Diversion scheduled for October 2014.

BOARD SCHEDULE

The next scheduled regular meeting is Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

Mr. Collins commented that meeting twice a year does not meet the needs of the Utilities Department with regards to issues that are coming before the Council. Need to take a serious look at the frequency of holding meetings. Director DeVaul indicated that he would rather call a special meeting for items that need to come before City Council. Bethany Sanchez-Rudd, Senior Deputy City Attorney, stated that the Ordinance can be changed as requested by the Director, but suggested to schedule special meetings as needed for a year or so to see how it goes.

PUBLIC FORUM

Steve Shoaff, 5622 Midnight Breeze St., requested to change the color of the print on the bills that refer to the alerts for the meeting schedule. He stated that the pale blue color is hard to see and asked if another color can be used. Mr. Riggs stated Billing would look into using another color.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.