

## Las Cruces Utilities

Minutes of the Regular Meeting on  
Thursday, October 8, 2020  
3:00 pm  
via Zoom Video Transmission

### Board Members Present

William Little, Chairman  
Edmund Archuleta, Vice-Chairman  
Johana Bencomo, Commissioner  
Jim Carmichael, Commissioner  
Dr. Harry Johnson, Commissioner  
Dr. Harry Hardee, Commissioner  
Gill Sorg, Commissioner

### Board Members Absent:

### Ex-Officio Members Present:

Ifo Pili, City Manager

### Others:

Beth Bardwell, League of Women Voters  
Cassie McClure, Public Outreach Consultant  
Rafael Leos, Deputy Director South Central  
Solid Waste Authority  
Patrick Peck, Director South Central Solid  
Waste Authority  
Gerges Scott, Agenda Global

### City Staff Present:

Waleed Abu-Issa, Senior Engineer,  
Environmental/Technical Support  
Robert Cabello, Senior Assistant City Attorney  
Carl Clark, Deputy Director Environment/  
Technical Support  
Rhonda Diaz, Water Conservation Program  
Coordinator  
Jeff Dillard, Business Systems Analyst  
Lucio Garcia, Deputy Director Natural Gas  
Adrian Guzman, Media Operations and Production  
Coordinator  
Robin Lawrence, Deputy Director Solid Waste  
Meei Montoya, Senior Engineer  
John Mrozek, Deputy Director Wastewater  
Lizeth Nanez, Senior Office Assistant  
Jose Provencio, Deputy Director Business Services  
Mario Puentes, Gas Business Analyst  
Peggy Risner, Administrative Assistant  
Domonique Rodriguez, Rate and Economic  
Analysis Manager  
Alma Ruiz, Senior Officer Manager  
Matthew Saenz, Senior Budget Analyst  
Delilah Walsh, Interim Utilities Director  
Adrienne Widmer, Deputy Director Water  
Sam Bailon, Purchasing Buyer

Chair Little called the regular meeting to order at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Chair Little: All the speakers will need to identify themselves when they speak, and all the votes will be by rollcall. If for some reason communication fails, we will have to suspend the meeting until such time the communication can be restored. I believe that this is all the preliminaries that we must attend to.

### 1. Conflict of Interest:

Chair Little: The first order of business is to inquire of the Board Members and staff present whether anyone has a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda. And I will remind everybody of Commissioner Sorg's hint, which is, if you would like to momentarily speak, just press down on the spacebar and it will momentarily unmute you, so that you can speak.

Sorg: Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work right now. I tried it several times.

Chair Little: Well, it was a good idea while it lasted.

Sorg: Yes.

Chair Little: Okay. Given that.

Sorg: Now it works.

Chair Little: Are there any Members of the Board who have any conflict of interest with any item on the agenda today?

Carmichael: None.

Hardee: None.

Johnson: None.

Chair Little: And the Chair, none. Staff?

Walsh: Mr. Chairman, no conflicts for staff.

Chair Little: Thank you so much.

**There were none.**

**2. Acceptance of Agenda:**

Chairman Little: The next item of business is to Accept the Agenda. May I have a motion to Accept the Agenda.

Carmichael: So moved.

Chair Little: Thank you. A second.

Hardee: A second.

Chair Little: Thank you. Are there any additions or corrections to the agenda? Hearing none. Ready for a vote. Commissioner Archuleta? He was on.

Ruiz: This is Alma Ruiz. He is muted.

Chair Little: Can you unmute everybody?

Ruiz: Yes. I would like to make a general statement—this is Alma Ruiz, Senior Office Manager for Utilities. With this Zoom Webinar, as the host, we cannot randomly unmute because of regulations. We can request that they unmute and then it

is up to the participant to initiate the unmuting on their end for their purpose of participating.

Chair Little: Now for the vote.

Commissioner Archuleta - Aye; Commissioner Sorg - Aye; Commissioner Hardee - Aye; Commissioner Bencomo - Aye; Commissioner Carmichael - Aye; Commissioner Johnson - Aye; and Chair Little - Aye.

**The Agenda was Accepted Unanimously 7-0.**

**3. \*Acceptance of Minutes:**

**\*a. Work Session from September 10, 2020**

**\*b. Regular Meeting from September 10, 2020**

**The Minutes were Approved Unanimously 7-0.**

**4. Public Participation:**

Chair Little: The next order of business is Public Participation. Were there any public comments by e-mail in advance of the meeting?

Walsh: Mr. Chairman. No, we have not received any comments or inquiries.

Chair Little: Okay, thank you. Now is there a means for someone to comment?

Ruiz: Chairman, this is Alma Ruiz, Senior Office Manager. There is. Those that are in attendance from the public or other, they are attendees. The way they can be recognized if they want to comment during the public participation, is they need to raise their hand and then we will request that they unmute.

**There was none.**

**5. Administrative Report**

Chair Little: The next order of business is the Administrative Report. Ms. Walsh.

Walsh: Mr. Chair. Thank you. Delilah Walsh, Interim Director of Utilities. We will get started with Mr. Provencio.

Provencio: Good afternoon, Chairman, Commissioners. Jose Provencio, Deputy Director of Business Services. I will provide you some updates in activity in Customer Central and Billing Receivables.

First off, this time of the year is at the very edge of the heating season. One of the services that we provide at no cost for our Gas service customers is a free service relight for our customers. I've provided a small checklist of what is involved with getting this. These are scheduled coming through Customer Central, Field Services is dispatched to customers requesting this service. Just

to give you a sense of the level of activity, last year we conducted 352 furnace-relight work orders for our customers.

At this point here, I'll provide the statistics and the level of activity in Billing and Receivables administering Utility Assistance Programs. As you can see the numbers are fairly consistent given the conditions that we've been under for the past several months.

The one item that we keep track of and keep you posted on from month to month—for the month of September the core activity for the Casa de Peregrinos and the initial budget that we started off with back in July of \$100,000.00. That has been fully expended, fully dispersed.

The statistics for September are listed there in terms of residential and business customers. The additional funding that was approved by City Council back on August 27<sup>th</sup> was in the amount of \$150,000.00. For the month of September, we assisted 110 residential customers at \$31,383.00 and then three business customers at \$2,557.00. On graphical presentation of the month for this one particular fund the additional \$150,000.00, 23% of it has been dispersed. We have a balance of \$116,000.00 or 77% that's available for assistance. At this point I'll standby for any questions.

Chair Little: Any questions? I have two. It would appear that the \$150,000.00 from the City Council (Council) will also be fully consumed before the end of the calendar year.

Provencio: Chairman, Commissioners. That's correct. I mean it pretty much assisting the various group of customers, it is being utilized at a very fast rate.

Chair Little: Okay. The Council I know is being kept up on the rate of running of this. Do we expect them to add more?

Provencio: Chairman, Commissioners. I will defer that question to Delilah.

Walsh: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners Delilah Walsh, Interim Director. As of yet, the Council has not indicated any further assistance through the Telshor Fund. However, we do keep them up to date, we include it with our weekly situational report to the City Manager, as well as report back—Ms. Natalie Green, she's the one that's managing the contracts for the Assistance Funds. We do let her know where we are on balances.

We anticipated when we requested the \$150,000.00 that it would only last through the end of the calendar year. We were very aware of that. As far as the Council moving forward with any further assistance, that's not known at this time, at least not by staff. If Mr. Pili or somebody from the City Manager's Office is aware, we haven't been notified on that sense.

Chair Little: Okay, thank you. Second thing, in November the federally mandated moratorium on heating cutoffs will take effect.

Provencio: Chairman, Commissioners. That's correct. Mostly applications start about this time. Billing and Receivables has noted that there's the usual number of applicants that are registering their accounts for the LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program). We'll have that that set of numbers in the next month's presentation.

Chair Little: All right. Thank you. Anything else?

Walsh: Mr. Chair. If I might add to that. The City has also applied for CARES Act funding and the Utility Systems funding and other funding that they provided during COVID aid and COVID relief have been part of that application. I will say there was an indication through the Mayor and other Councilors when they were discussing assistant funds, that it is possible once we are reimbursed by CARES Act funding, that we may offer additional funding. I want to make that clarification and correction.

In addition, I will share now, though you will receive it in my weekly report on our situational report, we were concerned because delinquencies. The percentage was rising, but we're starting to see that come back down. We've had a really great effort from our Billing and Receivable staff working with customers.

Chair Little: All right. Thank you. Go ahead.

Walsh: Mr. Chair, Commissioners, again Delilah Walsh, Interim Utilities Director. As you can see from the reports, our total vacancies by month for the month of September, we did drop down to 47. That's actually closer to 46 or 45 because we had some changes right at the beginning of October. We're doing great. Human Resources (HR) is working with us to get those positions posted and filled. I know they're starting some more onboarding efforts. Honestly, it's been a really big effort from that department considering what they're having to deal with on FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) claims. I believe the HR director in one report—there is something like four or five times more FMLA claims today than what they've ever had to deal with. We are seeing some progress there.

Our vacancies by line of business are consistent. Again, our highly specialized positions are difficult to fill, such as Gas and Water technicians. I can tell you right now we're nowhere near our goal to fill vacancies within six weeks. It's taking an average of 35 to 40 weeks to fill one position and I don't see that changing until we get through this COVID environment and start to return to normal, or at least the new normal in the new calendar year. Weeks in process hasn't really budged. You can see by March, that's when we had a peak and it's starting to just take longer since March. I expect that to happen until we return to that new normal.

As you can see by the chart, when it comes to work stoppage or next step in the hiring process, 83% of that is at HR, 15% is within the Utility staff and our hiring managers, and 2% is inflow. Inflow process simply means that the job is still posted and open, or we've already hired somebody and we're waiting for them to onboard.

On our Activity Report, progress since October, we have filled 54 positions, that's pretty significant when you think about it. In just a year we've had 54 new positions. That's pretty much one a week. From HR, we're still awaiting the five reclassification requests, four new job descriptions remitted via PAQs. We have three positions that were awaiting release of candidates, meaning that candidates have applied and we're just waiting for the potential releases for review. Four positions are waiting posting to NeoGov.

I am happy to report that the Hiring Review Committee, that was the extra step that was added during the COVID and budget review process this year, is no longer functioning or it's functioning. It's no longer necessary, so they're temporarily disbanded. Meaning that that extra step of positions going through the Hiring Review Committee has now been eliminated. Based on revenues and budget projections that may happen again, but for now our processes are working well, our budget looks good as a City, and the Hiring Review Committee is no longer necessary.

I still owe you a lot. nothing's changed since last month. The Staffing Specialist position was posted, and it closed yesterday; we had 96 applicants. I'll be working with Adrienne Widmer and John Mrozek to come up with the selection process for that staffing specialist and hopefully we can get that move forward. With hiring of that position, we will be able to get out the overtime reports, longevity reports, and temporary staff analysis.

I will let you know that right now, all we're focusing on is staffing while complying with COVID policies. In other words, we're allowing staff out for FMLA requirements or whether they qualify as children are still out in remote learning. You have those pending items of the overtime report, longevity, and temporary staff analysis. All those are very much impacted by COVID. For example, we are going to have overtime as some of our staff members use their leave before the end of the year.

Our Intern and Journeymen Program outlook—I'm very confident that we will be able to get that kick-started in January 2021. I've got a really big list for our Staffing Specialist to get those started, and I think we're going to be in a great place next year. Are there any questions on the HR report?

Carmichael: Mr. Chairman.

Chair Little: Go ahead.

Carmichael: I just wanted to compliment Cassie and everyone on the great article that was produced recently about the Intern Program. That's going to go a long way the more we can advertise and support that in the community. Thanks.

Walsh: Absolutely. Thank you.

Chair Little: Very good. Anything else? Okay, go ahead.

Walsh: This is regarding our COVID Incident Management. Our Continuity of Operations Plan, we're still moving forward. We are 100% operational just as we've been at the start of the pandemic. Las Cruces Utilities (LCU) continues to provide 100% services with no interruptions.

Our Return-to-Work Plan is in effect through Phase 1 in the State of New Mexico, which is through October 15, 2020. The Governor has not extended her public health orders yet, but I anticipate we will see something at next week's press conference. What this means is our building remains at current staffing levels, meaning we're not having shared offices and we're trying to keep as few people reporting in as possible, which is difficult with the Utility, and we have most of our staff here. Ten or less individuals are allowed to gather with masks and social distancing, which is helping us move on with our training.

We continue the weekly Situational Reports, what I refer to as the SitReps to the Board as well as the City Manager's office. Our PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) is adequate. Gary Byrum's done a great job in the Warehouse to make sure we stay sufficient with our needs and to increase those sanitization efforts. We no longer need supervisors to ask me whether or not they can checkout PPE or issue PPE.

I will say we're using a lot less masks now that we've issued washable masks to all staff members. That's helped them in comfort levels, but also reduce the use of some of our disposable masks. Everybody's doing great and the Warehouse has done a great job making sure we're taking care of.

Regarding staffing, we're complying with the Family First Coronavirus Respond Act, meaning we're still working with staff members who need to be home with kids or home with the people who have been sick because of the virus. We are averaging about three associates per week out for quarantine. Remember, we have about 250 employees right now, so that's not bad, only three employees a week. It's either Extraordinary Leave or the Emergency Paid Sick Leave, or COVID related FMLA.

Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) students do remain virtual students through the first semester, so we're still we're working with staff on that. I would like to commend the City of Las Cruces; they're offering a teen tutoring and youth tutoring program for those parents who can't stay home or educate kids. I don't know about the rest of the parents out there, but I give thanks every

day that my husband's great at calculus. I got through differential equations all through struggles; he's able to actually help the kids, and I know that's not the case for everyone. The City's done a great job to offer that support not only to employees, but to our citizens.

Any COVID positive cases are quarantined. We've been fortunate, knock on wood, we haven't had any recently. We are continuing sanitization of our common areas. I'm going to continue that probably through the rest of the fiscal year. We've seen a real low case incident here, it's very, very clean. I haven't had a cold since the start. We have a very clean work area. Just based on current numbers, I anticipate us continuing those efforts through the end of the fiscal year.

We are hiring temps to cover staff taking leave, as well as those complying with the Family First Act. The City Council did approve, as I reported last month, an extra \$500,000.00 for extraordinary pay, those lists have been under review at the City Manager's office. We were able to review those again on our side as far as the employees who had to report during the pandemic. We anticipate seeing a policy, I believe the Assistant City Manager mentioned sometime this week or the beginning of next week. That will be issued fairly soon or at least in the next two payroll cycles, and Las Cruces Utilities employees are included. Are there any questions?

Chair Little: Okay. Questions? I'm glad to see that the Hiring Specialist is in the works. Seeing no other questions. Go ahead.

Walsh: All right., for Water Litigation, I'm going to turn that over to Adrienne.

Widmer: Thank you, Delilah. Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. Adrienne Widmer, Deputy Director for Water. All of you just finished with the Executive Closed Session on the Texas v. New Mexico and Colorado update, so there's no need for me to update you on that.

On the Federal Litigation with Griggs Walnut. We have completed the Consent Decree as we had discussed before in August. The Joint Super Fund Project has paid the \$1.6 million over to the Feds for their past costs, and they've turned around and paid us the \$6.4 million, so that is moving forward.

On the West Griggs property, an application has been turned in for a Soil Vapor Analysis. We are just waiting for the New Mexico Environment Department to come back and give the okay so that we can go ahead and get started with our consultants. I will stand for any questions.

Chair Little: Okay. Any questions? See none. Go ahead.

Widmer: Thank you.

Walsh: All right. For our next demonstration Mr. Chair, Commissioners, I would like to introduce Jeff Dillard. Jeff.

Dillard: Good afternoon Chairman, Commissioners. Jeff Dillard, Business Systems Analyst. What I'm here today is to give you the demonstration of the UtilityHawk Customer Portal that we talked about last month.

You should now be seeing the view of the UtilityHawk portal. This is as somebody would see it on a mobile device such as their iPhone or their Android device. Just like any regular device, it will allow rotation to change the view. It is extremely easy to use, but it does give you a lot of quick information without a lot of clutter. You can swipe or tap on the screen to make it do different things. We'll go through that in a moment.

Up here the Hawk (top left) actually opens up a main menu which will allow you to also access different parts of the application, including setting thresholds, looking at your alerts history, or going to settings to adjust how you would like things to display. Click outside of that, it will close back up.

Over here on the right hand corner, the Settings Gear also allows you to come into your settings. Under the User Settings you can at any time update your contact information and change how you'd like to receive contact preferences. If I suddenly decided I don't want to get texts anymore, all I have to do is come in and click on this and I can choose to take e-mail as my preferred contact method, and then save my new method. It will come back and set me as e-mail.

The other nice thing about this is, the portal itself is actually Web based and so it reads browser information, whether your language is set for English or Spanish, it will automatically adjust for you. Now, in the case you're working on a computer, say in an office that has an English language operating system, you can easily switch it over to Spanish. On the mobile phone, you would just click here and click Spanish. You do have to actually close the application and reopen it, but I can simulate that by saving it and then reloading it really quickly for you. Now you can see everything is translating into Spanish. We do offer that convenience to customers who are more comfortable in Spanish.

And if you'll pardon me, I don't speak and read Spanish all that well, so I'm going to put it back to English. I do know most of this by heart, but at the same time, it's always a little easier if I can read what I'm trying to figure out.

On the screen itself, the next area, it shows that it recognizes who I am because of my Login; it'll show here my account information. If I had more than one account, it would show that in this section, and then I can just go ahead and close that.

Underneath that we have our Alerts, anything green means that the Alert is closed, or has been resolved in one form or another whether the computer

automatically resolved that or whether I've worked with Customer Central and it's been corrected that way. If this alert is red and has a number on it, it means that there are that many active open alerts on the account. This is really important because the alerts come from the My Thresholds setting.

What I did, I went into here, the Thresholds, and said I want to go ahead and set a couple of alerts so that throughout the month if my bill goes over \$90 it's going to tell me when I actually exceed that. I will then get a text, or an e-mail based on my preference. It will also give me the option down here to say, if the projected amount is likely to exceed my threshold; it'll give me a separate notice. These you will only get one a month. If you have both turned on, you'll only get one for when your projected hits that, and then the other will be when you actually pass it.

This is different than the Water in the fact that with Water, I can set it to say if I use more than 6,000 gallons a month, I get an alert. If I'm projected to use that I'll get an alert. Where the real difference comes in is enter the Advanced Thresholds. That allows me to come in here and say, I want to know if I'm using water continuously for a time period. I can say I want to know if I use one gallon, two gallons, five, ten, whatever that number is, I can put it in here. I can also come in here with my dropdown list and say, for what time period I'm worried about.

If I'm a single person, four hours is great because if I leave the house, go to work, and I left the water on, I want to know by lunch so I can go home and turn it off to keep from running up hundreds of dollars on my water bill. If I have a family and they're doing things throughout the day where they're washing clothes, dishes, doing laundry, or showering, or any of those activities, I can say maybe I don't need to know unless I have more usage than 16 hours continually. Whatever I set this to, it's going to send me an alert. I currently have it on four for the purpose of this demonstration.

I can also say, I want to know if my teenager is using a lot of water. If I set a 100 gallons per hour, and they go to shower and they're in there for the whole hour, I'll get an alert right away that something's going on. I can then call them and discuss it. Same thing with the one day, the one week, and the one month settings. Then anytime you make a change, you just come in here and save it to your new Threshold. You have these same options with the Gas Threshold, which I have not set. You come back out, we just click back up here and close the Settings, and now we're back on our screen.

Right here, the first thing that pops up to everybody when you start looking at it is my estimated bill; I am two days into my billing cycle of 31 days. The nice thing is it takes all of our 19 charge codes that encompass all of our rates, the flat rates, as well as the Utility Consumption Rates, the tiered rates, and all the taxes. It estimates the bill based on those charges of the flat rates and the current usage I have on my water and my gas. It also takes it one step further and says, based on analytical algorithms, we as a software, expect you to use

this much more by the end of the billing cycle based on what I've done so far in the billing cycle.

You see right now, because I haven't used much water, it's only two days in. I have a really close dollar amount between my estimate and my projected. As I'm move through and I'm in day 20, day 25, this will go up because I've been using more water. When I hit the weekend, I may wash the truck, that takes extra. I may do whatever these things are, but I'm able to watch it through this App no matter what I do, so I can constantly keep track of what I'm actually working with.

To do that, I would just swipe and come over here, here's my water screen. The default view is daily, but I can also come in and look at it as an hourly breakdown. Whether it's on the hourly or daily I can come in and click on any one of these bars or I would touch it with my finger on the phone, and it's going to tell me whatever that date is with that bar. To close that up, I just click outside the graph area.

Gas, the same thing. If I look at my hourly, which for some reason is not refreshing right now, it will show that I've got the gas usage for when we cooked dinner last night. I can click on that and I can see exactly how many cubic feet I've used. Click back out of that, I have my summaries at the bottom that tell me my total use in the billing cycle so far, what my minimum per hour has been, what my maximum per hour has been, and what my average is. It's a really handy thing to be able to go through.

There is one other nice advantage to this is I can set this to have another account where I have the ability to view. This comes in handy for landlords or for people who have multiple properties, or even for people like me.

My mother's elderly, so I could link to her account, view, and get alerts on her account in case the water starts running continually for four plus hours. It could be she went out and had watered her plants in the backyard and forgot to turn off the water. I don't have to wait until the end of the month to find out she's developing a problem with her water usage.

UtilityHawk does offer a great amount of benefits. We expect once it is made available to our customer base that it is going to be a great tool. It's going to allow them to better manage their usage and become more aware of how little changes throughout the day and throughout the month can benefit them by reducing their overall bill. With that I'll stand for questions.

Chair Little: Okay. Thank you. Questions? This is not yet rolled out?

Dillard: No, not yet. We are in the last month of testing the last two parts of this and getting some data transfers straightened out. We're not quite there, but it's much, much closer than we've been since we've been giving you updates on

this. I do apologize. There's one other thing I meant to show you and I forgot to include.

I've spent all my time talking about the mobile approximately, but you can look at this on a computer too. If you go onto a desktop you would see all the same information just laid out slightly differently to take advantage of the landscape. Over here it's still has your alert information. Down here it's still has your grid information; you just hover over it and you can see all of this. Whether you're on a computer or on a phone, this is going to be a great tool for everyone in the Utility system.

Chair Little: Thank you. Commissioner Bencomo.

Bencomo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you so much Mr. Dillard. Honestly, I'm really impressed. This is really, really amazing. I apologize if you had presented it before while I've been on the Council. I don't think so, I feel like I would have remembered. As you started presenting, I went to my App Store to look for it, and then realized it probably wasn't live. I'm really excited about it. I think it's just such a good upgrade for customers. It's easy and it's really important. I'm glad to hear the timeline and that it's moving quickly. I'm curious about will this then replace what currently exists? I get my bill on my e-mail, and then I click on the link and then it takes me to that page. Is this going to replace that?

Dillard: Not in that sense. I want to back up just a moment where you were talking about looking on the App Store, website. It's not a true App even though I used that term kind of loosely during the demonstration. You don't have to download anything to be able to take advantage of it. And no, it's not going to replace anything.

This is a new tool that we're offering to better assist our customer base. You'll still get your bill via e-mail if that's how you have it set up, or in the mail. You will still be able to go in and pay your bill on the telephone or over the Internet through our current Online Bill Pay System. This is just another way to manage your usage, and that's the big thing.

And no, we have not actually shown this to you or Council or anyone before. You are in on the ground level on this. That's because we spent six plus months getting the data transfers tested, working between our Munis billing system, the Itron Metering System, and the UtilityHawk portal, and making sure all the numbers that come in are being processed correctly so that you get as accurate information as you can have at the time.

Bencomo: Got it. That's impressive. Can I pay my bill through this or do I still have to go through...?

Dillard: Soon. When we actually release it, it will have that functionality. That's one of the last two things we're working on. We're working with our credit card

processor. It's in testing right now to make sure that it does the real time updating just like if you were to go on our current website to make the payment. You will have a button that will allow you to jump straight to there, which will be a much quicker process than the path you have to go through right now with our current online portals. It will save you about a half dozen button clicks once that's up and running.

Bencomo: That's great. What's your plan for the launch? Are you going to do press releases, social media; what will that look like?

Dillard: All of that. We plan to have Customer Service talking it up to people as they are in the office helping them sign up for it. They will be able to talk to people on the phone and explain it to them and offer to help them learn more about it. We're going to have articles in the newspaper; we're going to have a huge outreach on this just like we did with our Las Cruces Alerts Messaging System.

We'll be going to the Farmers Market and places where hopefully we could gather more than 10 people at that time. If not, we will have recordings on the Website doing short demos so people can see it at whatever time that is convenient for them.

The nice thing about this is once we make it available, you can sign up at any time. You can manage it yourself; you can reset your password yourself. It will eventually start reducing the calls down at Customer Central because people will be able to look up the information themselves and not have to wait for somebody to come in the office Monday morning when they're wondering what's going on, let's say on a Saturday.

Bencomo: Yes, that is great. Well congratulations. This is really amazing. Let us know however, so we can support in that community outreach. Thank you.

Dillard: Thank you.

Chair Little: Okay. Thank you. We've been talking about this for several years. Now Commissioner Sorg.

Sorg: Okay. Did you mention social media, Mr. Dillard?

Dillard: Yes. I may not have mentioned, I meant to. We will be posting it through the City Facebook page and encouraging people to repost that on their own.

Sorg: Of course. Yes. You'll probably get more people to see it that way than you will any other single source of messaging. Now, I want to know one other thing and Mr. Dillard may not be the right person to ask. When we get our e-mail bills, what is the name of the sender on that now? Because I haven't seen one for about two or three months and you changed the name on it so when I go to search for my e-mail bill, I never find it. So what is the name on it today.

Dillard: Commissioner Sorg. I do apologize for that. We did try and let people know about that change. It is now coming from the e-mail address of operations@postalpros.com. We did that because a lot of spam filters on e-mail systems, including the Gmail account was blocking it just because it said, 'no reply,' so we did that.

Sorg: Reply doesn't work. Yes. Right.

Dillard: People have a better access to it.

Sorg: Absolutely. It might be why I lost one or two. Okay. Very good. Thank you so much. Bye, bye.

Chair Little: Okay. Thank you. Any other comments? Thank you, Mr. Dillard. Let's go on.

Abu-Issa: Good afternoon Chairman and Commissioners. My name is Waleed Abu-Issa. I'm the Senior Engineer here at the Utilities Technical Support section. I am here today to update you on some of the projects that the Utilities Department and staff are currently working on. I plan to update you on three projects. One design project and two construction. They are Jacob Hands Wastewater Treatment Plant Primary Clarifier Rehabilitation Design Project No. 19-20-095, the Talavera Low Pressure Gas Distribution Network Phase 3A, Project No. 19-20-124, and Stern Drive Waterline Project No. 19-20-125.

The first project, Jacob Hand Wastewater Treatment Facility East Primary Clarifier Rehabilitation Design Project No. 19-20-095. The consultant on this project is Bohannan Huston, Inc., and the contract cost is \$287,061.16. Contract time 352 working days, this includes the design, bidding process, construction, administration, and the inspection.

The start date of this project was April 7, 2020. The estimated completion is August 30, 2021. That's when we are expecting the construction to be completed with this project. Remember this contract includes the construction administration as well.

Now the percent completion on this project 95% on the design; we just received the 95% design on it. The payment, we are at 20%. Description of the project consists of a bypass plan; develop bypass plan to isolate Splitter Box #1 and East Primary Clarifier. Primary Clarifier Structure: replace lining of interior concrete structure and outer waterproofing. Primary Clarifier Equipment: replacement of clarifier wetted components including center column, rake assembly, support structure, replacement of related electrical controls on power distribution components. Finally, Splitter Box #1, which is replace three splitter box influent control valves, piping, and replacing existing concrete liner. Any questions on this project?

Chair Little: Any questions? Seeing none. Go ahead.

Abu-Issa: Okay this overview map shows you the Jacob Hands Wastewater Treatment Plant components and it shows right there the East Primary Clarifier to the east of the map. We recently in 2018, we did the West one, which is next to it. We completed the rehabilitation of this one in 2018.

The next project is the Talavera Low Pressure Gas Distribution Network - Phase 3A, Project No. 19-20-124. This is the overview of the map of the project. It shows the area.

Chair Little: I'm being told we need to hold the presentation.

Ruiz: I think it's okay now.

Walsh: Waleed, can you go back to the map?

Abu-Issa: Yes, this is the overview map for the project area. It's on the Talavera area between Dripping Springs north to the Soledad Canyon South. It's part of multiphase projects that the City is currently working on. We recently completed the Soledad Canyon and high pressure gas line on Dripping Springs and now we are providing the low pressure services to the Talavera area.

This project consists of two phases. Phase 3A, which is under construction right now and 3B, which is in design. The contractor on this project is SmithCo Construction Incorporated. Contract cost is \$3,060,433.00. Contract time 207 working days. This project started on August 10, 2020 and expected to be completed by June 8, 2021. Currently they are at 5% completion on construction and 11% payment. The reason the payment is higher than construction is due to stored material charges in the first the application the contractor asked for stored material, and we verified that.

Description of project, installation of 61,500 linear feet of 2-inch polyethylene (PE) gas line and 14,000 linear feet of 4-inch PE gas line, appurtenances, pipe bedding, pavement patch, driveway removal and replacement, landscaping removal, and replacement.

Currently the summary of the project, the contractor already installed approximately 3,535 linear feet of 4-inch pipeline on Dripping Springs Road and its already pressure tested. They are working on purging the line this week and by early next week are planning to activate this line. Any questions on this project?

Chair Little: Any questions? Seeing none. Go ahead.

Abu-Issa: Okay, next project is Stern Drive Waterline Project No. 19-20-125. The contractor J29 Enterprises, LLC. Contract cost \$116,089.00. Contract time 45 working days. This project started on August 24, 2020. And it's nearly to the end, submitted completion date is October 27, 2020. The percent completed on construction 85%. We still did not receive any payment to process for this

project. I think he wants to get paid for it once and for all. We'll process the payment once we complete the project. The summary of project: contractor has installed already 570 linear feet of 10-inch C-900 PVC waterline and 158 linear feet of 10-inch Ductile Iron Pipe on bridge crossing the Tortugas Arroyo. The pressure test was done the week of September 28, 2020. Recently, we did the bacteria test on the line. It's expected to be completed sometime next week, hopefully ahead of the schedule. Any questions on this project?

Chair Little: Seeing none. Go ahead.

Abu-Issa: This concludes my presentation to the Projects Update. I will turn the microphone to Mr. Carl Clark, to talk about the Resolution.

**6. Resolutions for Consent Agenda:**

**6a. \*Resolution 16-17-088C:**

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 7-0.***

**6b. \*Resolution 19-20-057A:**

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 7-0.***

**7. Resolutions for Discussion:**

**7a. Resolution 20-21-033:**

Chair Little: First resolution for discussion: Resolution 20-21-033: A Resolution Awarding a Construction Contract for the Water Main Rehabilitation at Carreon Place and Alley North of Picacho, Project No. 20-21-033, to Diamond Construction Company Inc., of Las Cruces, New Mexico, for a Total Contract Award Amount of \$852,527.71. Move to Approve.

Carmichael: Moved to approve.

Archuleta: Second.

Chair Little: Okay. Discussion.

Clark: Chairman and Commissioners. Thank you. This is Carl Clark, Deputy Director Environmental and Technical Support. This project I have in front of you is a rehab project. This has been in design for a little bit now. The two areas that are identified in these slides were areas where we had water line breaks. These water lines are AC pipe. These breaks had caused damage to private property in which the City had to compensate the owners to repair the damages. We've been trying to push this along as fast as we can. This is ready to go now. That way we can replace these aged AC pipe water lines.

The two locations, one of them that you see, this first slide, Carreon Place. It's in the highlighted blue. In Carreon Place, we're replacing that AC waterline with an 8-inch C-900 waterline. Then, we're also looping the system from

Carreon Place over to Old Farm Road. That'll help provide better fire flows in the area, also keep the water a little cleaner. Like I said, we had a large break in Carreon Place that was repaired a couple years ago. This project was desperately needed.

The other project is an alleyway that's north of Picacho Avenue. You can see it goes from North Valley Drive to North Mesilla Street. On the very far right there, North Mesilla Street or to the east is going to be a large bore that we need to go across the railroad tracks and Elephant Irrigation District.

Once again, we're replacing an AC waterline with a C-900 waterline. It's a 12-inch waterline. That line broke, I believe it may have been on Third Street or in the alleyway. It caused severe flooding in that area. We know that's a low spot in the City. We had some damage that happened to some private property. We're going to get in there and replace that AC waterline with the new C-900 waterline and that should alleviate the issue that we have in that area.

Diamond Construction's a local contractor. He's done several projects for us before in the past. We don't believe we'll have any issue. Any questions in regard to this project?

Chair Little: Any questions? Seeing none. Ready for a vote.

Bencomo: I have a question.

Chair Little: Go ahead.

Bencomo: Thank you Mr. Chair. This is Commissioner Bencomo. Honestly, my question is just regarding the damage to the private properties. How is that being taken care of, just their home insurance?

Clark: Yes, Chairman, Commissioners. Yes. We worked with Risk Management and they are the ones that went against the insurance and the City paid to repair the water damage that was caused.

Bencomo: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Clark: You're welcome.

Chair Little: Okay. Commissioner Hardee.

Hardee: Yes. I just had a question or two. I presume we have a lot of this kind of pipe left around, this AC pipe. Is this going to be a continuing problem? And is this mostly in the older part of town?

Clark: Chairman, Commissioners. You're correct. We do have a lot of AC pipe. It was identified in our Transite Pipe Master Plan that we had put together; I believe

with Jacobs Engineering. We've identified areas all over the City that have AC pipe. In fact, we have monies this year to address AC pipe issues that we have throughout the City. Yes, there's quite a bit of it. It is old. It will be replaced as part of this program. I believe we have around \$2 million that we're applying this year for AC pipe replacement or transite pipe replacement. This is one area. There'll be some other areas. I think we've identified off of Madrid, and then I believe some other areas on the southern end of town, I don't know exactly which streets. I can't tell you off the top my head, but it was presented in the CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) back in March.

Hardee: Yes. Thank you.

Clark: You're welcome.

Chair Little: Okay. Anything else? As far as the damage to private property is concerned, this is routinely handled by going to Risk Management and insurance?

Clark: Chairman, Commissioners. That's correct.

Chair Little: Okay. No other comments. Ready for a vote.

Commissioner Archuleta - Aye; Commissioner Sorg - Aye; Commissioner Hardee - Aye; Commissioner Bencomo - Aye; Commissioner Carmichael - Aye; Commissioner Johnson - Aye; and Chair Little - Aye.

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 7-0.***

**7b. Resolution 20-21-040:**

Chair Little: Next resolution is Resolution 20-21-040: A Resolution Approving a Sole Source Price Agreement for Magnesium Hydroxide-Thioguard from Hill Brothers Chemical Company of Orange, California for One (1) Year in the Amount Not to Exceed \$150,000.00, with Three (3) One-Year Renewals Subject to Approved Budget Appropriations at Annual Renewals for the Use in Controlling Corrosion and Odor in the City of Las Cruces Wastewater Collection System. Motion to approve.

Sorg: Move to approve.

Chair Little: Thank you. And a second.

Johnson: Commissioner Johnson, second.

Chair Little: Thank you. Discussion.

Mrozek: Good afternoon Chair and Commissioners. John Mrozek, Department Deputy Director Wastewater. This resolution is a renewal of the price agreement for magnesium hydroxide with Hill Brothers for corrosion and odor control in the collection system, and for treatment enhancement at Jacob Hands Wastewater

Facility. The first price agreement was a pilot study to determine the efficacy of magnesium hydroxide for the previously stated purposes. We were satisfied with the performance. You can see the prices on the presentation. I'll stand for your questions.

Chair Little: Questions. Commissioner Johnson. Go ahead.

Johnson: Okay. Yes. Just a chemistry question. What does magnesium hydroxide do to help with the corrosion? I'm not familiar with that.

Mrozek: The way it works is it supplies an oxygen source for the H<sub>2</sub>S so that the hydrogen sulfide is converted to a sulfate ion and then it is no longer available as H<sub>2</sub>S so that reduces corrosion and odor.

Johnson: Then certainly reduces odor?

Mrozek: Yes.

Johnson: Okay. Thank you.

Mrozek: You're welcome.

Chair Little: Anything else? This is a replacement for ferric chloride, is that right?

Mrozek: This is in addition to. We've recently started treating with ferric chloride directly at the plant, directly to the anaerobic digesters to reduce H<sub>2</sub>S in the digester gas. As the fiscal year moves along, we'll be removing ferric from the odor control in the collection system and replacing with bi-oxide.

Chair Little: Okay. Thank you. Other comments or questions? Ready for a vote.

Commissioner Archuleta - Aye; Commissioner Sorg - Aye; Commissioner Hardee - Aye; Commissioner Bencomo - Aye; Commissioner Carmichael - Aye; Commissioner Johnson - Aye; and Chair Little - Aye.

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 7-0.***

**7c. Resolution 20-21-LCU012:**

Chair Little: Okay, the next resolution is Resolution 20-21-LCU012: A Resolution Implementing a Revised Water Litigation Cost Recovery Rate Rider for Fiscal Year 2021. A motion to approve.

Archuleta: Yes.

Chair Little: Thank you. And a second.

Johnson: Second.

Chair Little: Thank you. Discussion.

Provencio: Chairman, Commissioners. Jose Provencio, Deputy Director of Business Services. Resolution 20-21-LCU012 is seeking the approval of the Board to implement Litigation Rate Rider in the amount of \$0.09 per thousand gallons. This is to cover the increased expenses that have accumulated over the past year involving recent expenses that have been ongoing.

The last Water Rate Review that we had—we took all Rate Riders that were in effect, both the Development Rate Rider and the Litigation Rate Rider. We included those ongoing recurring expenses as part of the Revenue Requirement to set the new base rates for service in the Water Utility.

The level that is included, the threshold, is a little over \$318,000.00. That's currently what customers are paying, or current rates are covering. Now over the past year or so, the increases have increased to a level that we do have to, number one pay for those expenses and let me back up a little bit here.

When we got the new Water, rates approved two years ago the Rate Riders were set to zero. There was no increase, there were no charges being recovered in any of the Riders for either Litigation or Development Riders. You fast forward to today, an accumulated expense level of \$896,000.00 has been booked and we have to recover that to pay those level of expenses. That equates to nine cents per thousand gallons to collect that revenue to pay those expenses.

This will be going into effect November 1st. Just as a primer. Rate Rider is used very often in utility rate settings, but it's an interim adjustment, it's a mechanism to recover or refund unanticipated expenses or revenues that are not embedded in base rate charges. With that I'll standby for any questions you may have.

Chair Little: Okay. Are there questions? Commissioner Johnson.

Johnson: Yes. What particularly has driven this expense as far as legal expenditures?

Provencio: Chairman, Commissioners. The big driver there would be the ongoing litigation involving Texas' claim against Colorado and New Mexico.

Johnson: Okay. That's what I suspected, but I wanted to get that out.

Walsh: Mr. Chair, Delilah Walsh Interim Director. If I could also add, we had a lot of depositions in this fiscal year as well as witness statements. And of course, when you have expert witnesses in addition to the attorney's fees, that's what's really driving it now is getting in those experts.

Johnson: Okay. Thank you. Commissioner Carmichael.

- Carmichael: Jose. Does the electric rate case part of that? Is that just the Utility Department's portion as opposed to the full City of Las Cruces?
- Provencio: Chairman, Commissioners. When it comes to intervention involving El Paso Electric, the prime driver there is the overall intervention is split between the County and the City. Some of those expenses are what we see and what we pay for. I don't believe that any of those expenses are included in this recovery. I can certainly check. My understanding looking at some of the work papers is that the main driver is the litigation with the Texas v. Colorado and New Mexico. As Delilah pointed out, we have depositions, we have very specialized attorneys and experts, and that really becomes expensive.
- Walsh: Mr. Chair. Again, if I could clarify. Joe is correct. We do not include the El Paso intervention costs with the Water Litigation Rate Riders. These are only water related issues.
- Carmichael: I just thought the details where part of it was recovering some costs relating to the El Paso Electric case. I guess I misread that.
- Walsh: Mr. Chairman. We'll go through and verify, but that should be coming out of a separate line item.
- Archuleta: Mr. Chairman. I have a question.
- Chair Little: Go ahead.
- Archuleta: How much will the \$0.09 recover?
- Provencio: It is based on an expenditure level of a little over \$886,000.00.
- Archuleta: Okay. All right. Thank you.
- Walsh: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chair. That is to recover last fiscal year's costs that went above the \$300,000.00-plus, I think it's \$357,000.00, as well as what we anticipate for this fiscal year. When we come back to you again, we should be lowering that Rate Rider if it's even necessary.
- Archuleta: Okay. Appreciate it.
- Chair Little: Any other comments or questions? Since Commissioner Carmichael raised the issue, who is paying for the El Paso Electric intervention?
- Provencio: Chairman, Commissioner. The intervention with El Paso Electric as it relates to the City of El Paso, as in certain expenses budgeted and currently expanding, and we're teaming up with the county, they've brought in consultants that are covering certain areas with the litigation that El Paso files. That's part of it. Then, between the general fund and Utilities, we also share those expenses that are apportioned to the City of Las Cruces.

Chair Little: Okay. Thank you. Anything else?

Commissioner Archuleta - Aye; Commissioner Sorg - Aye; Commissioner Hardee - Aye; Commissioner Bencomo - Aye; Commissioner Carmichael - Aye; Commissioner Johnson - Aye; and Chair Little - Aye.

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 7-0.***

**7d. Resolution 20-21-LCU014:**

Chair Little: Now this next one has got a lot of acronyms in it so forgive me for skipping them. Resolution 20-21-LCU014: A Resolution Awarding a Sole Source Procurement of TD Williamson 660TM, Power Unit with Accessories for the Gas Transmission Pipeline and TD Williamson SSII Equipment for the Gas Distribution High-Pressure Pipeline for Emergency Repairs, to TDW (US), Inc., of Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the amount of \$591,630.82. Move to approve.

Sorg: Move to approve.

Chair Little: Thank you. And a second?

Carmichael: Second.

Chair Little: Thank you. Discussion.

Garcia: Good afternoon Chairman, Commissioners. Lucio Garcia, Natural Gas Operations and Maintenance Deputy Director. Resolution 20-21-LCU014 is resolution for sole source procurement of equipment. Since you brought it up, a lot of these, if they were acronyms, I would outline what they were. These are actually titles or model numbers and names. TD Williamson is just TD Williamson. TD doesn't stand for anything and 660TM is actually model number for the equipment. The purpose of this purchase is for purchase of equipment for our transmission and gas distribution high-pressure pipelines. I mentioned that this is for the equipment only. As you recall, last fiscal year we purchased some fittings for our pipeline on the transmission high-pressure gas line, the TD Williamson 660TM power unit and accessories for the transmission line is for an 8-inch and a 12-inch of the wall thickness noted there and that is for our transmission line which there are two taps from the City gate which is Kinder Morgan that supply our system. The TD Williamson SSII equipment for the distribution high-pressure is only for the 2- and the 4-inch. We currently have the equipment for the 2-, 4-, 6-, and 8-inch, however the 2-inch and the 4-inch is what is most utilized throughout the course of the year. The 2- and the 4- is replacement for existing equipment. The total cost for this is \$588,623.38 cents plus freight charges of \$3,007.44. With that, I put together a little video that we found that pretty much outlines how the equipment is used out in the field when we're making emergency repairs either on our distribution high-pressure or on the transmission.

Walsh: Mr. Chair, Commissioners. As the video comes up, keep in mind that without this equipment we could actually be delayed in repair by several months.

Garcia: With the video outlined here is there's a damaged line or a line that needs to be repaired. First part of it, is to excavate it, and there the fittings are being placed on the pipeline. These are the fittings that we currently have in the warehouse that were purchased last fiscal year from TD Williamson. There's two done on either side to isolate, one is to isolate and the other one is to provide a bypass to continue to provide service to customers. The equipment we're buying there that there also is a fitting is the sandwich valve that you just saw go in there. That is also in the warehouse. Then the pipe being installed here is one to relieve the pressure of the line that's going to be repaired and going to be purged. Now this is the equipment, this is the 660TM, so you can see there it's comprised of a cutter, so it'll go in and cut into the pipe and a remove a coupon, and then the sandwich valve goes in and seals the element. Then you're able to run a bypass to continue service. Now with the second one closest to the line that's being repaired is a plug. That's why we refer to it as hot tapping and plugging. It'll plug and reduce the flow. Once that's done, we'll go in and purge and relieve the pressure, remove the line that needs to be replaced, put in the new one, make the repair. Then once that's done, we'll remove all the equipment. Then we'll come in, we'll put in what's referred to as the sandwich valve, it pulls back that element that's being placed there will be a permanent fixture on pipeline, that's a sealing element. Once that sealing element is in place, the equipment's removed and the sandwich valve and capped and line is placed back on service.

Now where we would use this equipment, most of our system, high percentage of it has to two way feeds. However, some of our system and I'll give you some examples is our transmission lines that come from La Mesa off of Afton Road that come to the industrial park and the other one goes to Carver, that's a one way feed, so if we have problems air or load during winter which we cannot replace. Also going up Highway 70. Highway 70 we have a high-pressure gas line in our distribution and that is a one way feed that heads that way. If we ever have damage to a line, something that happens to it, this will help us repair that quickly without interrupting service to all the customers in the East Mesa. With that I'll stand for questions.

Chair Little: Okay. Are there questions? That's pretty slick.

Archuleta: Yes, that is a great deal.

Garcia: Yes sir. It's similar to the InstaValve that our water section here uses that Adrienne has presented to the Board previously.

Chair Little: Okay. Seeing no questions. Commissioner Hardee go ahead.

Hardee: Yes. Very amazing. Yes, very, very impressive. Are you anticipating you'd use this for someone running a backhoe through the pipe or is this a common problem with corrosion where you have to replace part of it?

Garcia: Yes sir. It would be all the above. Out on our distribution as I mentioned, the 2-inch and the 4-inch are continually used. It's because somebody put a backhoe through it, or they're doing a rehab project we need to connect to a line, and the only way you can tap into it is cut it, so we bypass it. Our 2-inch and our 4-inch have a lot of use. This resolution here replaces the ones that are worn which is the 2- and the 4-inch. Then of course, if there's corrosion. We haven't had problem with corrosion. We have a corrosion department that monitors that continually, but it could happen. It could be damage, or something gets in the line from the external source that damages our line that requires it to be repaired. Then along with the equipment that we're currently purchasing, our team is trained to use this equipment. They've used everything up to the 6-inch and the 8-inch on high-pressure distribution. We'll have training with this, and we'll have annual training continually for an emergency. This is one of those one that needs continual refreshing, so we can respond to emergency in an appropriate time.

Hardee: Very impressive. Yes, it looks like that is a good thing to have. Thank you.

Garcia: Yes sir. You're welcome.

Chair Little: Okay. Any other comments? All right. Now ready for a vote.

Commissioner Archuleta - Aye; Commissioner Sorg - Aye; Commissioner Hardee - Aye; Commissioner Bencomo - Aye; Commissioner Carmichael - Aye; Commissioner Johnson - Aye; and Chair Little - Aye.

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 7-0.***

**8. Old Business:**

Chair Little: The next item of business is Old Business.

Walsh: Thank you, Mr. Chair Delilah Walsh Interim Utilities Director. First of all, I do want to let you know that Alma did share with you the information on the USGS Groundwater Model Report, as well as the Holly and Kennedy's work. We've looked at continuing with that. We're possibly going to be scheduling another work session around November 5th, we're working with the consultant. However, is it something we want to do now, or do you all want to wait for the next ASR to be done? Also, do you have any other input that you would like us to pursue whether it be desalinization or any other options that we should be pursuing with our consultant?

Chair Little: Well, what's an ASR?

Walsh: That's the injection model where we are injecting the potable water into the aquifer.

Chair Little: Okay.

Walsh: I think its aquifer storage and recovery is the technical term.

Chair Little: Okay. Good. Thank you. Commissioners, what do you say?

Archuleta: I think we ought to pursue the ASR and desalination.

Walsh: What I would like to do is perhaps delay the next meeting with our consultants and give them those tasks to complete in order to give you a work plan.

Archuleta: Okay.

Walsh: If that is okay with the Board.

Chair Little: Okay.

Carmichael: How long do we (*inaudible 1:22:39*) do you think?

Walsh: Adrienne. Could you answer that on the how long?

Widmer: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. Adrienne Widmer, Water Deputy Director. The ASR, we are re-reviewing a second submittal from them. I can go back to them and have them start looking at the desalinization portion and find out how long that is going to take. When we do another work session, we would just like to be able for you all to have all of the information in case there are other issues that end up coming up as part of a work session. We just make sure that we cover all the bases. We just don't want to overly piecemeal you, and then something gets forgotten, but we'll do it however you all would like. Thank you.

Walsh: Mr. Chair. Adrienne, are you saying by the end of the calendar year?

Widmer: Mr. Chairman, Ms. Walsh. I do believe that that could be taken care of by the end of the calendar year.

Chair Little: Okay. Other Commissioners chime in here. I would like to see us convene sooner rather than later. There are a lot of almost you would say odds and ends that we really haven't had a chance to discuss even among ourselves. I know Commissioner Carmichael sent out an e-mail with a laundry list of 'what about this' and 'what about that,' most of which were really pertinent. We owe staff and our consultant, our values, and ASR in particular can be studied but we'll be really dependent on legislative action. I have no idea whether the 60 day session is going to get it or not. There are a lot of things for us to talk about, issues that we raised during the last presentation, issues that have been

raised by e-mail since then, and it would appear profitable to have so to speak a general discussion, whether or not Dr. Shomaker and his firm are available. It may well be worth our while for us, seven plus staff, to talk for an hour or an hour and a half and see if there is a sense of how to move forward. So, I would suggest that we try and meet sooner rather than later. We can't really vote on it because it wasn't an agenda item so to speak, but I would like to get the sense of the Commission as to whether this sounds at all profitable or we really should wait until January when we have more reports.

Walsh: Okay. In that case Mr. Chair, we will pursue a work session and it may just look like that exploratory discussion in looking at what the Commission wants us to pursue with Dr. Shomaker. We'll continue to work forward to a November 5th work session.

Chair Little: Okay. Is that acceptable to the seven of us?

Carmichael: I agree.

Sorg: I'm okay.

Hardee: I agree.

Johnson: Yes. I do too.

Chair Little: All right. Then the Board would like to have staff convene up a work session at an early convenient time. We will just talk.

Walsh: We can do that. Thank you, sir.

Chair Little: Once it's scheduled, feel free to send comments to Alma, who will then flip them to the whole Board; ideas, issues that you think are worth planning on bringing up, but send them to Alma. I know that I got my hand slapped, so that's how we'll do it. Okay. Other Old Business.

Walsh: Thank you sir. Also, regarding the Water and Wastewater Development Impact Fees, we plan to bring those to you in November. Jose Provencio and his staff are working currently on the new tariff sheets based on the meter sizes. We plan to bring those to you in November, they'd likely be addressed.

Joe and his team are working on the rate sheets. We'll have that to you in November. We're looking at an implementation date of December, however, we are going to do a public presentation for the allocation portion. I'll be working with the Assistant City Manager and the City Manager, and when the Council wants to see that. We anticipate January. What we'll be doing is an informational session that will go on the City's website. We're learning how to record a video onto PowerPoint in order to make that happen. We have a public outreach on the allocation discussion because that's what Council needs to decide moving forward, is how the impact fees will be allocated. The fees

themselves are what they are, that's what the consultant determined. There's no changing that. We'll be bringing those to the LCU Board for review. Then the allocation discussion will take place in City Council. We need to do some public outreach first.

Chair Little: Good enough.

Walsh: Okay. Also, we have our City Manager tours, our first session with Mr. Pili will take place on October 30th, to start with our operations, and then we'll be scheduling a second tour, as you know it takes two days to get through the entire Utility operations coming up in November. I think that's all we have for Old Business.

### **9. New Business:**

Chair Little: Okay, now New Business.

Walsh: On New Business. Actually, I'd like to turn it over to Robin Lawrence, our Solid Waste Deputy Director to talk a little bit about the recycling container grants.

Lawrence: Good afternoon Chairman, Commissioners. Robin Lawrence, Deputy Director for Solid Waste. Today I wanted to bring your attention to a grant we are working on in partnership with South Central Solid Waste Authority. The grant is through the recycling partnership and it is for the first time purchases of residential curbside recycling containers. As you know, we work closely with South Central Solid Waste and in early 2021, they will be going out to bid for the recycling collection contract. In preparation for that, we are going to be purchasing new recycling containers that will have a joint LCU/South Central logo reinforcing our partnership. Another reason behind this, is to allow other local haulers the opportunity to place a fair bid on the collection contract without having to purchase 36,500 containers. The current hauler owns the containers now, so moving forward, the City's actually going to own the containers.

The recycling partnership offers communities the chance to apply for this grant funding to support the acquisition of recycling carts. The grant funding is available to support publicly sponsored Curbside Recycling Programs, but the applicant must be a local government, Solid Waste Authority, or a federally recognized tribe. The grant program offers funding to support the purchase of recycling carts to implement recycling education and outreach efforts. The grant allows up to \$15.00 per container for first time purchase containers with an additional \$1.00 going to education and outreach. We're looking at purchasing 36,500 containers. There's no match required in order to obtain the grant; however, the cost of a single container is about \$43.00. Having said that, we're also working on an NMFA loan application that you will likely see in the near future in the form of a resolution recommending to Council for approval so we can actually purchase the containers. If you recall, this was considered and included in the recent Solid Waste Rate Review process and was part of the \$2.00 rate increase. If the grant is awarded, the funds would

be on a reimbursement basis and would be used to pay back a portion of the debt. If there's any questions, I know Patrick Peck is also online, if you have any questions for either one of us.

Chair Little: Okay. Questions? Seeing none. I guess we will await developments. Thank you.

Lawrence: Yes, sir.

Chair Little: Okay. Other New Business.

Walsh: Mr. Chair. Additionally, the City Council on Monday did approve the new Climate Action Plan. I will send the final draft to Alma so she can share that with you. We've already started scheduling meetings with the Sustainability Officer Lisa Larocque, so we can start pursuing options and do some planning on how the Utility can be proactive to start implementing some of the strategies in the Climate Action Plan. We're pretty excited. We've been having brainstorming sessions. We're excited to meet with Lisa to see what we can do. Councilor Gandara actually had an excellent suggestion that we changed the name of the Utility from a gas utility to possibly an energy utility. What's exciting about that is remember we still have an ordinance in the City of Las Cruces that allows Las Cruces Utilities to be a power provider. Should we have community solar go through our legislature, should we have those opportunities in the future, the Utility will be in a good place to promote that, support that, and actually be a transmission authority. We're excited to meet with Lisa and start pursuing that. We'll send you the final plan so you all can take a look on what we're doing.

We've got some great ideas coming from staff on the transportation issue, how we can do emission reductions, emissions mitigation. We'll be coming back to you. I know we gave you an initial energy transition presentation, but as I mentioned, we're going to be coming back to you with some next steps and suggestions, but we need to involve our Sustainability Officer with those efforts.

Chair Little: Okay. Thank you. We will look forward to further reports.

Walsh: That's all I have for New Business.

**10. Vote for Chair and Vice-Chair:**

Chair Little: All right. The next item of business is it says voting but it's appointment of a Chair and Vice-Chair which we do each year. I'm going to inquire of the Commissioners whether there is anyone who would care to volunteer to serve as Chair of the Commission for the coming year. Seeing no hands raised. I will in fact volunteer to serve for another year, and would ask the commission to vote on that appointment.

Commissioner Archuleta - Aye; Commissioner Sorg - Aye; Commissioner Hardee - Aye; Commissioner Bencomo - Aye; Commissioner Carmichael - Aye; Commissioner Johnson - Aye.

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 6-0.***

Chair Little: Thank all six of you. One of these years we're going to do something different. Now, the same set of questions concerning the Vice-Chair. Mr. Archuleta has served well, and I want to know if there are any members of the Board who would care to continue to serve or would care to serve as Vice-Chair for the coming year.

Sorg: I'll move to appoint Mr. Archuleta as the Vice-Chair.

Chair Little: Okay. Mr. Archuleta will you volunteer to serve for another year?

Archuleta: I would be happy to. Thank you.

Chair Little: Thank you. All right. Let us vote on that appointment.

Commissioner Sorg - Aye; Commissioner Hardee - Aye; Commissioner Bencomo - Aye; Commissioner Carmichael - Aye; Commissioner Johnson - Aye; and Chair Little - Aye.

***The motion was Unanimously Approved 6-0.***

**11. Board's General Discussion:**

Chair Little: Now, the next order of business is the Board's General Discussion. Anyone have anything to share with us?

**12. Next meeting Date:**  
**a. November 12, 2020**

Chair Little: Okay, the Next Meeting Date is scheduled for November 12th. Ms. Walsh, do we have any work sessions on the horizon for that day?

Walsh: Mr. Chair, Commissioners. No, thus far we don't have a planned work session. However, we may have that November 5th brainstorming session prior to the regular meeting, but thus far no work session.

Chair Little: Okay, fine. But that is the week before.

Walsh: Correct.

Chair Little: Okay. The next meeting will be on November 12th at 3:00 p.m., a Regular Board Meeting with no work session in advance.

**12. Adjournment:**

Chair Little: Next item is adjournment. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

Johnson: So moved.

Chair Little: Thank you. And a second.

Carmichael: Second.

Chair Little: Thank you those in favor say aye. By acclim we are adjourned. See you all on the 12th. Thank you all.

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William M. Little  
Las Cruces Utilities Board Chair

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Date

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