

**CITY OF LONG BEACH
WATER COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2020
VIA TELECONFERENCE, 9:00 AM**

Harry Saltzgaver, President
Frank Martinez, Vice President
Arthur Levine, Secretary



Robert Shannon, Commissioner
Gloria Cordero, Commissioner

Christopher J. Garner, General Manager

Richard Anthony, Deputy City Attorney

SPECIAL MEETING

FINISHED AGENDA & DRAFT MINUTES

The Water Commission minutes are prepared and ordered to correspond to the Water Commission agenda. Agenda items can be taken out of order during the meeting.

The agenda items were considered in the order presented.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Water Commission special meeting was called to order by President Saltzgaver at 9:00 A.M. This special meeting was held via teleconference pursuant to Executive Order N-25-29 issued by Governor Gavin Newsom.

ROLL CALL

Executive Assistant to the Board, Sandra Fox took the roll call and confirmed a quorum.

Also present: Christopher J. Garner, General Manager; B. Anatole Falagan, Assistant General Manager; Tai Tseng, Assistant General Manager - Operations; Sean Crumby, Deputy General Manager - Engineering; Sandra Fox, Executive Assistant to the Board.

Commissioners Harry Saltzgaver, Frank Martinez, Art Levine, Robert Shannon
Present: and Gloria Cordero

[20-076WA](#)

May 7, 2020 Board of Water Commission Special Meeting Public Comments

President Saltzgaver opened the public comment period. He announced that one written public comment had been received from Diana Lejins, and noted this public comment had been e-mailed to the Board and posted on Legistar. President Saltzgaver then inquired if there was any public on the line who would like to speak. Hearing none, he closed the public comment period.

[20-075WA](#)

FY 20 Second Quarter Financial Review and FY 21 Impacts

President Saltzgaver introduced the Second Quarter Financial Review, and FY 21 Budget impacts agenda item.

Mr. Greg Sorensen provided a report that covered the following topics: 1) Covid-19 Effects (FY 20 Revenues; Cost Cutting Measures); 2) FY 20 Water Fund Projections (Reserves; Expenditures and Revenues); 3) FY 20 Sewer Fund Projections (Reserves; Expenditures and Revenues); 4) FY 21 Budget Impacts; 5) Next Steps.

Commissioner Shannon requested historical background information regarding the Long Beach Water Department policy regarding department reserves.

Mr. Falagan provided an explanation, which also included information regarding the current written adopted Board reserve policy.

Commissioner Cordero requested information regarding projects that would need to be funded through rate revenue rather than the Line of Credit.

Mr. Sorensen responded.

President Saltzgaver requested a description of the projects that would be included in the CIP, and also inquired about CIP projects that might be deferred.

Mr. Sorensen and Mr. Crumby responded to this inquiry.

Mr. Garner commented that staff had chosen CIP projects that would have a

financial benefit to the customers.

Commissioner Cordero made additional comments regarding deferred CIP projects.

Mr. Garner commented about the planned deferral of the joint project with Public Works and Parks and Recreation regarding the El Dorado Park duck pond project.

President Saltzgaver inquired about developer project fees.

Mr. Sorensen responded.

President Saltzgaver inquired about unpaid/non-collectable bills revenue due to the Corona virus affecting ratepayer's ability to make payments.

Mr. Garner responded that this situation is still an unknown at this point in the pandemic. He advised meetings are being held with the other utilities (Gas & Refuse) to develop programs to assist customers with these unpaid bills.

At this point in the meeting an unknown public participant took what appeared to be a phone call during the meeting.

President Saltzgaver asked the Board at this point in the presentation if they had any questions or comments before moving on to discussions regarding the FY 20 Sewer Fund Projections.

President Saltzgaver requested information regarding sewer sales.

Mr. Sorensen responded.

Commissioner Levine requested information regarding Sewer Capacity fees.

Mr. Sorensen responded.

President Saltzgaver requested that staff take a good look at deferral decisions regarding increased well capacity projects. Commissioner Shannon advised he agreed with this comment.

Mr. Sorensen then reviewed the next steps in the budget process, noting that Engineering would be making a presentation regarding the CIP at an

upcoming workshop; a budget workshop would be held to review rate scenarios, and an additional workshop would review the final proposed budget and rates. He then advised the budget and rates were scheduled to be adopted at a June board meeting. He then outlined possible dates for the upcoming workshops and requested input from the Board.

President Saltzgaver then requested the Commissioners to provide final comments regarding the presentation and thoughts on scheduling the upcoming budget workshops.

Commissioner Martinez advised the budget workshops should be scheduled soon. He also inquired if staff had looked into the possible availability of grant funds for the Duck Pond project that may be available under the CARES Act.

Mr. Garner responded.

Commissioner Levine asked if the Line of Credit could be increased beyond the \$60,000,000.

Mr. Garner advised this Line of Credit was capped at the \$60,000,000 level.

President Saltzgaver suggested a workshop be scheduled for the May 11th date and asked the Board about this suggestion.

Commissioner Shannon agreed that the workshops needed to be scheduled quickly. He expressed his opinion that these meetings should be held face-to-face if possible, as he advised it was difficult to have back and forth conversations via teleconference. He asked Mr. Garner to comment on the legality of holding a face-to-face meeting.

Mr. Garner advised that the current directives forbid large group meetings. But he advised there was some discussions of allowing meetings of up to ten people to take place with proper social distancing in place. He advised the Board he would keep them updated regarding this matter.

Commissioner Shannon requested President Saltzgaver to comment on this matter.

President Saltzgaver advised that any change would have to come from the Mayor as all Commissions had been directed to not meet in person due to the Covid virus issue. He inquired if the budget workshop were to be held

off for two weeks did Mr. Garner think that that meeting could be held in person.

Mr. Garner noted that things are changing daily regarding directives related to the Corona virus. He noted that May 15th is the current benchmark being used for some planning decisions within the City and state. He said there was a possibility that by May 21st that guideline might be changed.

Commissioner Cordero advised she would like to see a more conservative position held, noting that some people who might have underlying conditions or might live with someone who has underlying conditions might be reluctant to be in a meeting with others during the current Corona virus conditions. She advised she feels that as many workshops and meetings that are necessary should be immediately scheduled.

Commissioner Cordero then commented on the Water Replenishment District Replenishment Assessment Fee being increased by 4.7% and then projected to be increased by 5% in subsequent years. She also noted that Metropolitan Water District would also be raising their rates. She advised these are the kinds of rates and fees that should be brought to the attention of the public since these are fees that are passed onto Long Beach Water thus affecting the department's costs.

Commissioner Martinez inquired that if there were Commissioners or staff who had concerns regarding meeting in person, could an accommodation be made for them to participate by telephone.

President Saltzgaver responded. He asked staff if the department had the technical capability for some of the Board and staff to attend in person, but that others could call into the meeting.

Mr. Garner advised that the meetings could be held under this type of scenario.

President Saltzgaver advised these meetings could be held via phone and teleconference by using the Zoom platform or some other virtual meeting platform.

Commissioner Shannon noted the Brown Act does allow for Board members or Council members to phone in from a different location if necessary.

Commissioner Martinez suggested the possibility of moving budget

workshops to the Treatment Plant assembly room where there is more room to allow for social distancing.

Commissioner Shannon suggested scheduling the next workshop to the date of May 21st which would allow more time to pass where a decision might be made regarding face-to-face meetings.

President Saltzgaver recommended scheduling a budget workshop and CIP review for a special meeting on May 21st and a tentative budget workshop for May 28th. He confirmed the next regular meeting was scheduled for May 14th.

President Saltzgaver then called for any other comments.

An unidentified caller spoke up (later identified as Diana Lejins) and asked if that would include public comment. President Saltzgaver responded yes.

Ms. Lejins commented on her difficulty phoning into the meeting. She expressed her concern for accommodations that needed to be made for hearing impaired individuals who could not listen in to telephonic meetings. She also noted at times during the call she found it difficult to hear the presenter and Commissioners. She advised that closed captioning as used at the Council meetings is very helpful. She suggested using a video conference would be better so the public participants would be able to see who is speaking. She also commented on the public comment that she had e-mailed earlier. Her last comment was her concern regarding the monies being sent to the General Fund when the department is expressing their need for these funds.

President Saltzgaver called for any additional public comment. Hearing none he moved on to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

President Saltzgaver called for any new business. Hearing none he moved onto adjournment of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

President Saltzgaver adjourned the meeting at 10:06 A.M. to the May 14, 2020 teleconference regular meeting to be held at 9:00 A.M.

Note:

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