

**Long Beach Water Department
Virtual Advisory Committee Meeting
January 24, 2022**

NOTE: The Department's December 2021 meeting was canceled due to the holiday schedule.

Water Department Advisory Committee Members Present:

Rick Blank, Laurel Kuczynski, Mary Lou McFadden, Rick Remijas

Others present: Greg Parrish, Water Superintendent; Bob LeMay, Town Council President
Several Long Beach residents were also on the zoom call.

Rick Blank brought the meeting to order at 9:01.

Approval of November 2021 minutes: Motion to approve Rick R; 2nd Laurel & Mary Lou
Roll call; All in Favor.

Approval of November & December 2021 financials: Motion to approve Laurel; 2nd Rick R.
Laurel will ask Helen to do journal entries and reclassify some items expensed to Balance
sheet that should not have been. Otherwise, all is in good order. Roll call; All in Favor.

WATER REPORT: Greg Parrish (reporting for last two months)

Water samples taken; all came back clean for both months.

In February, the first of the quarterly stage 2 disinfectants samples will also be done.

Meters were read; both months a few didn't read and repairs were made.

One customer had a freeze up this past month after leaving town without adequately winterizing. The subzero temperatures we've been having may cause frozen pipes and inside meters that can burst. Greg emphasized that residents need to take precautions during the cold months.

Greg has adjusted the LB water tank level set points to have the tank and the pump cycle more frequently to deter ice from forming inside the tank; ice can damage the interior of the tank and can cause leaks.

Greg has been working with Lynne to identify customers with sprinklers, irrigation systems, and pools with auto-fill devices. These customers will be contacted in the coming months regarding IDEM's (Indiana Department of Environmental Management) new requirement for the installation, and annual inspection of backflow preventers. This requirement will go into effect in Spring 2022 before seasonal water usage begins. (The process we will use to inform customers and contractors, record keeping required by IDEM, and troubleshooting compliance issues were discussed during New Business later in the meeting.)

Greg spoke with his rep at EJPrescott to order the Inserta valves that will be installed along Lake Shore Drive this spring when the weather breaks. Greg will also be ordering 30 more of the Storz fittings for the Town hydrants; following up with the plan that was made last year, i.e., to get the quick-connect fittings on 30 hydrants per year. The purchase of both the Inserta valves and the Storz fittings are in the 2022 budget.

There were no questions for Greg regarding his report.

OLD BUSINESS

1) Water Department 2022 budget (Laurel)

Laurel said that the budget has been completed for several months but we are waiting for Helen to work with Bill deFuniak to update the GL to include the new (more descriptive and useful) account categories identified by Greg, Austin and Laurel last year. The money has been budgeted, just not yet assigned to the new GL accounts.

Mary Lou contacted Helen to remind her of the meeting; when Helen joined the zoom call, she reiterated that she has not yet been trained by Bill to do this task. Due to his upcoming retirement, Bill has been especially busy. Rick B suggested that Laurel speak with Bill about getting this done. Helen added that she's been involved very little in the year-end process.

2) Update regarding open position for the Water Advisory Committee (Rick B)

Rick said he is not aware of any progress on this. Mary Lou said that at the recent Town Council meeting, there was discussion regarding residents who are finishing up terms with other committee responsibilities who may be interested in committee membership with the Water Department. Town Council will be reviewing who will be on the various committees. Bob LeMay asked Rick Blank if he is willing to stay on for another term as chairperson; Rick confirmed that he is. Rick B asked Lynne to indicate on next month's agenda that Mary Lou will speak to this issue with any new information coming from the Town Council.

3) Small Claims regarding non-payment of final bill by former resident (Mary Lou)

Mary Lou has not received any updates from Town attorney Chris Willoughby about this; she will contact him.

4) Payment received in full for vacant lot with tap (Lynne)

This issue from November's meeting has been resolved. At Lynne's request, Mary Lou contacted the customer again (who understood that she was both a Town Council member and also on the Water Advisory Committee). After hearing that the matter would now proceed to collections, the customer followed through with full payment and set up direct payment (ACH) going forward.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Cross Connection Control Policy/Ordinance and Backflow Preventer Inspections: (Greg)

As discussed during Greg's water report, IDEM is now requiring annual backflow preventer inspections for customers using sprinklers, irrigation systems, and pool auto-fill devices.

Laurel commented that many Long Beach residents have hired service contractors to turn their irrigation systems on and off; others do this themselves. Most of the contractors are aware of the need to inspect backflow preventers but they may need to be alerted to new requirement to test and record inspection results. Furthermore, the inspection must be done by an Indiana-certified tester who is also registered to work in Long Beach. IDEM keeps a list of certified testers for each county in Indiana. A pdf of this list will be on the

Water Department website. The results of the annual inspection are to be recorded on a specific IDEM form (which will also be posted on the website). This form, indicating passing results, must be delivered to the Water Department. The requirement states that it is the customer's responsibility to hire a certified inspector annually and to deliver the passing inspection results to the Water Department before any seasonal usage. The Water Department will be writing letters to the contractors who work in Long Beach detailing the specifics of the IDEM requirement. Mary Lou asked if Greg and Austin are certified testers; they are not, and their job responsibilities do not include inspecting backflow preventers.

The Water Department will use several avenues to contact all of our customers who will need to install backflow preventors (if they haven't already), and begin annual inspections. A complete explanation of the requirement will be posted on the Water Department website and emailed via email blast; a brief note will be made on water bills asking customers with sprinklers, irrigation systems and pools to contact us. Lynne will also track the seasonal water usage we have recorded in our data base. Bob LeMay commented that we have many customers who use water only during the summer. However, the amount of water that is typically used monthly by residents for regular household needs is significantly less than the usage needed to run sprinklers, irrigation systems and pools. Greg and Austin will be able to use the high meter reads data to drive by and confirm properties that do have these systems; letters will be mailed to these customers to explain the new IDEM requirement.

Decisions need to be made regarding how to enforce compliance, and setting a penalty fee for non-compliance is part of that. Greg suggested that Chris Willoughby, the Town attorney, weigh in on the issue. Lynne added that the Water Department currently has a written policy regarding cross connection control and backflow preventers, but that, in light of the need to establish a significant fee for non-compliance, it will probably be necessary to do a new Town ordinance (versus just an addendum to the existing policy). Mary Lou will ask Chris Willoughby to schedule a meeting with her and Greg to discuss this. Bob agreed that it is time to get Chris involved. Knowing what Michigan City and Duneland Beach are planning to do would also be helpful; Greg has had conversations with them already.

Bob LeMay asked if non-compliant residents just getting their water shut-off is penalty enough. Greg spoke with Fawn Patterson of IDEM who did the Department's 2021 onsite audit; Fawn's recommendation was to set a significant penalty fee to increase compliance.

Further discussion, implementation, and documentation will happen over the coming months to assure that the Department has met the IDEM requirement.

2) Credit card payments for Long Beach utility bill (Lynne)

Lynne followed up with Karen Poff from Horizon Bank and met with Karen and Horizon's credit card service vendor Darren Trainer/Elavon. Darren prepared a proposal for offering services to Town; this proposal stated that any user fees would be passed on to customers. If Town wanted to allow credit card payments for other fees, the usage charges would be less. Elavon would not be able to offer real-time transactions; real-time is specifically what customers need when asking to make payment on the due date. Lynne also coordinated with Civic Systems who has an integrated pathway available for those of us who use their utility billing module to add real-time credit card transactions and other online services.

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Civic will be upgrading these services in the spring, with improvements that will make the online process more user-friendly; Lynne will be back in touch with the Civic team then.

3) Update: Human Resources committee regarding Austin (Mary Lou)

An executive zoom meeting is scheduled a week from today and Austin's salary/promotion will be discussed. Karl Cender, our outside accounting consultant, will be present. A vote will be taken at the February Town Council meeting.

4) November-December Billing/Payment Adjustments (Lynne)

-- Two billing adjustments were made to reverse the late fees that were approved at last meeting in November (\$20.37 and \$11.08). A third billing adjustment was made to reverse the nsf/ach direct payment fee also approved at the November meeting (\$15.00).

-- Two payment adjustments were made to transfer monies between a customer's two properties/accounts (\$110).

-- Current requests to reverse late fees:

USPS continues to have difficulties that have significantly slowed down delivery; they also do not always deliver bills to correct addresses. Each month, a few customers contact us with requests to reverse late fees for bills they did not receive. Lynne made the request to reverse two fees, @ \$9.66 and \$10.51. Rick B. motioned to approve; Laurel 2nd. All in favor.

ANYTHING FROM THE FLOOR

Zafar Rizvi asked if backflow inspection is required once or twice a year. Inspection is required only once, before the onset of seasonal usage. Zafar also mentioned the amount of money that is in the Water Department's bank accounts. He said he has heard talk of diverting those funds to other projects; however, the Water Department specifically bills customers for the Water Department services and improvements.

Bob LeMay asked what the upcoming Lake Shore Drive Water Department upgrades will cost. Greg and Laurel said the estimate ranged between \$300 - 500,000. The actual cost will not be known until the job goes out to bid. Bob commented that after this project is completed, future rates for monthly services billed by Town and Water could be reassessed.

At this point, Rick B. stated that, historically, the driving force behind any monetary decisions regarding charges to Long Beach Water customers was not the Water Department Board. In the past, the Water Department Board hired Karl Cender CPA, whose expertise is financial advisory services to public sector municipal and utility organizations. Karl advised the Board on fair and reasonable rates and increases for our water utility customers based on community standards. He also made specific recommendations regarding how much money needed to be kept in the Department's bank account due to requirements of the Department's SRF (State Revolving Fund) loan. Rick said that with the decision to disband the Water Board in July 2021, this Water Advisory Committee no longer makes monetary decisions. As of the decision to disband the Board, the Town Council took over all monetary decisions for the Water Department. Bob LeMay added that recommendations from the Advisory Committee are needed and welcomed. Rick B. said he recommends that Karl Cender continue to play a key role in advising the Town Council. Laurel agreed.

APPROVAL OF BUDGETED CLAIMS

Regarding 34 claims in the amount of \$124,493.32 (11/19/21 through 12/31/21, check #s 54414 - 54449 [two checks were voided]), and regarding 10 claims in the amount of \$77,565.65 (01/01/22 through 01/19/22, check #s 54450 - 54459):

Laurel commented that all claims were in good order with the exception of a duplicate payment made in December; Helen will contact the vendor and resolve the issue.

Motion to approve Laurel; Rick B 2nd / Roll call; All in favor. Town Council will review.

NEXT MEETING: February 28 @ 9:00 via zoom.

Before adjournment, Lynne thanked Greg, Austin, and Tom and Brent from Streets for the incredible job they are doing keeping Long Beach streets clear during this snowy winter. All present expressed their thanks also. Rick B added that this is not a one-off experience; Long Beach is known to always have the best road conditions in winter.

ADJOURNMENT: Rick B. motioned to adjourn at 9:58; Laurel 2nd. All in Favor.

Respectfully submitted by Lynne Conlon