

**State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio**



**DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
City Council Special Meeting**

City Hall Complex
105 Main Plaza
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Thursday, June 14, 2018

1:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council of San Antonio convened in the "B" Room of the Municipal Plaza Building. City Clerk Leticia Vacek took the Roll Call noting the following Councilmembers present:

PRESENT: 8 - Mayor Nirenberg, Treviño, Shaw, Viagran, Gonzales, Sandoval, Pelaez, and Courage

ABSENT: 3 - Saldaña, Brockhouse, and Perry

1. A briefing by President and CEO of the San Antonio Water System on the management and operation of SAWS' diversified water portfolio to include common issues associated with summer months. [Robert R. Puente, SAWS President & CEO]

Robert Puente reviewed the project timeline for the Vista Ridge Pipeline and stated that SAWS was currently in the Construction Stage. He noted that water delivery would begin in 2020 with asset transfers in 2050. He stated that 60 miles of pipeline were in the ground, 17 out of 18 wells were complete, and all three planned pump stations were under construction. He noted that the SAWS Integration Project in Bexar County was ongoing in terms of tank construction and easement acquisition.

Steve Clouse stated that SAWS prepared for drought conditions year-round with a cross-functional Aquifer Management Team. He noted that they looked at the current status of the aquifer, made projections, and offered recommendations for future action to respond to potential drought conditions. He presented a one-month outlook from the National Weather Service indicating conditions hotter and drier than normal with drought conditions developing. He stated that SAWS had a robust set of tools to manage resources and communicate with customers in drought conditions. He noted that there was enough water to support San Antonio in the event of a multi-year drought.

Mr. Clouse reviewed the diversity of the SAWS Water Portfolio and noted that San Antonio was currently in Stage 2 Watering Restrictions. He stated that SAWS would have 15 projects delivering water from eight different sources by 2020. He reviewed the history of declared restrictions by the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) from 2009 to 2018 and noted that the level at which restrictions began was raised to 660 feet in 2009 for a more conservative approach. He stated that EAA restrictions only applied to large-scale pumpers and not the average residential customer. He noted that the City of San Antonio utilized a different method for imposing water restrictions and had never imposed Stages 3 or 4.

Mr. Clouse stated that San Antonio was a groundwater-based city. He noted that surface water was more susceptible to quality issues due to lake turnover, algae blooms, disinfection byproducts, and evaporation. He stated that surface water supply partners worked to adjust the chemistry of their water to be compatible with water from the Edwards Aquifer. He noted use of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan to protect habitats and springflow related to the survival of endangered species. He reviewed the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Operations to guarantee stored water is available in times of drought. He noted that the ASR protected against evaporation and contamination and allowed previous land uses to continue.

Mr. Clouse stated that the Trinity Aquifer was supplied primarily by contract. He noted that the largest contract included cutbacks based on the aquifer's level and voluntary cutbacks supported the Military, Fair Oaks, and multiple individual wells in Bexar County. He stated that CPS Energy cooling lakes relied on SAWS recycled water for operation and SAWS was CPS Energy's largest customer. He noted that SAWS provided CPS Energy with 50,000 acre-feet of water annually by contract and contract terms required operation of the largest water recycling system in the United States.

Karen Guz stated that customer communication was a top priority in drought conditions and SAWS maintained a strong social media presence. She noted that banners and other print media were disseminated publicly to communicate restrictions. She stated that 45% of customers shared their email addresses with SAWS and over 95% of Stage 1 email notifications were opened. She noted that all local media responded to press releases

regarding restrictions and drought conditions. She stated that the Drought Management Team met regularly and conservation staffing increased in response to increased customer volume. She noted new tools for sharing public information and reporting water waste. She stated that over 100,000 customers participated in WaterSaver Gardening Programs annually. She noted that irrigation consultations were offered free of charge. She highlighted the availability of coupons to assist customers in transforming their landscapes with more drought-resistant plants or by installing patios. She stated that SAWS was expanding the use of monthly WaterSmart Reports in 45,000 households and one third of participants lived in affordability households. She noted that SAWS had replaced 600,000 high flow fixtures since 2013 in public schools, university buildings, high occupancy office buildings, major hotels, older city buildings, and apartment complexes.

Mayor Nirenberg asked how growth projections related to availability of water supplies in the future. Mr. Puente replied the SAWS portfolio was robust enough to support projected growth. Donovan Burton added that the Water Management Plan was aligned with the projected population of the city. Mayor Nirenberg asked of the status of the acquisition of easements for the Vista Ridge Pipeline. Mr. Puente replied that all easements north of Bexar County had been acquired under the jurisdiction of the Central Texas Water Supply Corporation. Mayor Nirenberg asked of the potential sale of unused water with jurisdictions along the I-35 Corridor. Mr. Puente replied that SAWS had not yet decided whether to pursue wholesale water sales. Mayor Nirenberg asked of the projected duration of current Stage 2 Restrictions. Mr. Puente replied that the six-month projection anticipated hotter and drier conditions than normal but supplies were adequate to keep up with demand. Mayor Nirenberg noted the potential to adopt Stage 1 Restrictions year-round to encourage better conservation regardless of conditions.

Councilmember Viagran asked of SAWS' ability to keep up with growth and development in San Antonio. Mr. Puente replied that supply projections accounted for the worst case scenario of a combination of the longest and most severe droughts in San Antonio and they were still able to keep pace with development. Councilmember Viagran expressed concern with odors from sewer lines affecting quality of life on the South Side and asked SAWS Staff to investigate.

Councilmember Pelaez asked of restrictions for customers under Stages 3 and 4. Mr. Puente replied that Stage 3 reduced watering to every other week and Stage 4 added surcharges to customers that utilized more than a set amount of water. Councilmember Pelaez expressed concern that SAWS did not sufficiently explain to customers the importance of water conservation.

Councilmember Courage asked of the progress and cost of the Vista Ridge Receiving Center. Mr. Puente replied that it was on schedule and the project totaled \$180 million.

Councilmember Courage asked of the projected completion date. Mr. Puente replied that the construction was anticipated to be completed at the end of 2018. Councilmember Courage asked of the process to obtain water delivery rights. Mr. Puente replied that rights had already been leased from landowners and the Post Oak Savannah Groundwater Conservation District had already issued permits for 50,000 acre-feet with potential restrictions. Councilmember Courage asked of the progress on the Federal Consent Agreement to regulate sewer overflow. Mr. Puente replied that all requirements to date had been met and SAWS was on the fifth year of the 10-year term. Councilmember Courage asked of additional funds needed for SAWS to complete the term. Doug Evanson replied that \$500 million had already been funded but additional funding would likely be needed via rate increases. Councilmember Courage asked if watering restrictions applied to drip irrigation. Ms. Guz replied that Stage 2 allowed drip irrigation any day of the week between 7 and 11 am and 7 and 11 pm.

Councilmember Gonzales expressed concern that SAWS would halt service to non-paying constituents in hot conditions. Mr. Puente replied that customer communication would prevent interruptions in service.

Councilmember Sandoval asked of the Capital Improvements Advisory Committee. Mr. Puente replied that their role was to recommend the level of Impact Fees to the SAWS Board. Councilmember Sandoval asked of the composition of the Committee. Mr. Puente replied that City Council appointed the Committee and State Law required 40% of the overall membership to be from the Real Estate or Development Community. Councilmember Sandoval asked of the requirements to implement year-round watering restrictions and of community support for same. Mr. Puente replied that City Council would need to adopt an Ordinance and community opinion was evenly split. Councilmember Sandoval requested a SAWS Representative to speak to the Community Health and Equity Council Committee about future water conservation options.

Councilmember Treviño asked of partnerships to develop innovative approaches to conservation. Ms. Guz replied that SAWS had agreements with several organizations as part of the Customer Rebate Program when businesses demonstrated water savings with innovative programs or upgrades. Councilmember Treviño asked a SAWS Representative to present to the Innovation and Technology Council Committee regarding conservation technologies and potential code requirements.

Councilmember Sandoval suggested incorporating conservation technologies during the City Hall and Frost Bank Tower Renovation Projects.

Mayor Nirenberg thanked SAWS Representatives for the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 2:34 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
MAYOR

ATTEST:

LETICIA M. VACEK, TRMC/CMC/MMC
CITY CLERK