

PORA Water Committees
May 6, 2014 @ 9:30 a.m. Minutes

Attendees: Merlyn Carlson/Chairman, Mel Huntspon/EPCOR, David Hunter/Briarwood Golf Course, James West, Howard Jones, and Tom Cook.

1. Introduction/ Welcome

Merlyn Carlson

2. Minutes of **March 4, 2014**, were approved

Merlyn Carlson

3. Current Updates:

Mel Huntspon EPCOR: Capital improvements we are doing:

- We are continuing our AMR automatic meter replacement program; we are about at 61% of the residents in Sun City West with the new AMR meters. Sun City West will be complete electronic meters by 2016.
- We continue replacing the butterfly valves that Del Webb originally put in with the better gate valves.
- We are doing 20% of sewer cleaning each year and should be in Sun City West by August.
- We continue to exercise fire extinguisher valves, just to make sure they do work when needed. It also increases longevity
- A new project we are starting this year is raising the buried manhole covers to grade. When they come around to clean the sewer, they have to find the manholes first. Most are behind sidewalks, some in the yards are covered with gravel.

Q: Howard Zbierski: Why aren't water rates uniform from district to district?

Regarding the Arizona Republic article in the Communities section "Water rates can vary all across the valley".

A: Mel Huntspon EPCOR: Shawn Bradford and Jim McKee will be addressing that issue directly in the near future. Let me give you my perspective on those issues; there is no way water rates will be the same across the valley or across the country. It would be hard to compare our water rates to the city of El Mirage or the city of Surprise; you have different systems, size of the population served in that district, the age of the infrastructure and the types of systems. In Sun City West we have arsenic treatment which depends on water quality. In Sun City West we also have a waste water treatment charge. It is based on the types of systems they have to bring the quality of water to their customers. It would be hard to make a fair rate comparison.

A: Howard Jones: PORA/Sun City West fought to stay out of the rate consolidation of all the Epcor water districts. The consolidation of rates would have made Sun City West water bills a lot higher. My water bill jumped one month and I received a letter from you noting abnormal usage. I followed up and found some water leaks.

A: James West: Regarding the article in the paper on water rates across the valley; you are comparing apples and oranges. Our rates are regulated by the ACC; cities can charge their customers as they want.

Regarding Anthem's higher rates: The developer did not pay for their infrastructure. Now the homeowners are paying for it, leaving them with much higher water rates in that district.

Corte Bella group: Joined the meeting wanting their water rates lowered. They are part of Agua Fria water district, which has higher water rates.

Merlyn Carlson: Mel agreed to talk with the Corte Bella group after the meeting to address their issues.

David Hunter Briarwood Golf course:

- As the weather gets hot we are trying to get the Bermuda grass to come back from being dormant; the rye grass dies out and water use goes up. We will be watering more from now on through to summer.
- The golf courses are in great shape.

Q Merlyn Carlson: Is water pressure an issue in the expansion area? Are you mandated to have a minimum and maximum pressure?

A: Mel Huntspon EPCOR: No we are not. The ACC only requires a minimum of 20 PSI and we try to maintain a minimum of 50 PSI. Different elevations in the community may change that somewhat. The expansion area seems to have more than normal pressures, and we are looking into that. The higher elevation brings some challenges.

Q: James West: if the 53 areas were developed, the developer would pay for the needed pressure pump?

A: Mel Huntspon EPCOR: Yes.

Q: Merlyn Carlson: A question that was sent to me was regarding the McMicken dam that protects us. Do you know anything about that?

A: Mel Huntspon EPCOR: I will look into it.

A: James West: It doesn't hold water, but it would be expected to hold water away from us if needed. It's an earthen dam.

C: Tom Cook: We need to inform the residents more of our common issues regarding water wells, and the amount of electricity needed to pump water. When electric rates go up it has a direct impact on water rates. Not many people understand that aspect of it.

4. Adjournment 10:19 A.M.

Next Meeting: Closed for the summer. **September 2, 2014 at 9:30 A.M.**