

Minutes of the Work Session of the Syracuse City Council, held on April 12, 2022 at 6:38 p.m., in a hybrid in-person/electronic format via Zoom, meeting ID 829 0447 5867, in-person in the City Council Conference Room at 1979 W. 1900 S., and streamed on the Syracuse City YouTube Channel in accordance with House Bill 5002, Open and Public Meetings Act Amendments, signed into law on June 25, 2020.

Present: Councilmembers: Lisa W. Bingham  
 Dave Maughan  
 Jordan Savage  
 W. Seth Teague

Excused: Councilmember Paul Watson  
  
 Mayor Mike Gailey  
 City Manager Brody Bovero  
 City Recorder Cassie Z. Brown

City Employees Present:  
 Administrative Services Director Steve Marshall  
 City Attorney Paul Roberts  
 Public Works Director Robert Whiteley  
 Parks and Recreation Director Kresta Robinson  
 Fire Chief Aaron Byington  
 Police Chief Garret Atkin  
 Community and Economic Development Director Noah Steele  
 Deputy City Recorder Marisa Graham

The purpose of the Work Session was to receive public comments; discuss request for fee waiver for use of Council Chambers – Larry Kerr, Cold War Veterans Group; discuss responses to Solid Waste Services Request for Proposal (RFP); discuss secondary water supply, season begin and end dates, and conservation; discuss culinary water supply; discuss potential amendments to various land use designations for water conservation purposes; receive an update regarding 2022 Utah Legislative Session; discuss Self-initiated Discuss potential amendments to Syracuse City Code Section 10.92 pertaining to the Mixed-Use Development (MXD) Zone; accept for first read proposed updates to Emergency Operations Plan (EOP); and receive Annual Training: Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA), Municipal Officers Ethics Act, and Council Rules of Order and Procedure.

**Discussion regarding culinary water rates**

A memo from Administrative Services Director Marshall and Mayor Maughan explained at the last council meeting it was determined to look at the actual data use from the last year to see if there were any patterns during a drought year that would help us predict the water use for the coming year and how to mitigate the restrictions and possible penalties. A few principles and analysis guided the suggestions being presented to the City Council for evaluation:

- How do we prevent overreaching rate increases for those who are low water users?
- How do we serve the large majority of water wise users and continue to encourage water wise decisions?
- Can we keep water rates consistent for average households and still encourage a reduction in use?
- If the city incurs water penalty charges for going over the water restrictions, how do we cover that cost and can we recover that from those who refuse to reduce water consumption?
- With an increasingly large group of “superusers” who use more than double the average household; where is the fair water rate for those who user at the rate of multiple households?

Findings and logic behind the suggested rate changes:

- Most people prefer a consistent rate that they can budget for considering utilities. By including over 80% of our uses in a flat rate tier it lessens the impact for the majority of households and management time.
- It still holds true that over 80% of the city uses 9000 gallons a month on average or less.
- In the past water users fell into 3 distinct groupings of water use almost evenly broken up in equal thirds. Those distinctions are no longer as clearly evident. In order to encourage people to reduce water use it still appears as if a 3 standard tier group would encourage that.

<b>Flat rate billing</b>	<b>Current rate</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Total New proposed rate</b>
Tier 1	20.49	0.35	20.84
Tier 2	20.49 + 1.04	1.04+.35+.35	22.23

Tier 3	currently doesn't exist but covered by tier 2 rate	Current extra 1000-gallon rate of \$3.24 plus the tier 2 increase of 1.74 (tier 2 total)	25.47
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Most household in Syracuse even with large numbers of kids all showering and other normal uses can manage below 9000 gallons. Larger number of people usually translates to shorter showers because of the capacity of hot water heating tanks. Tasks like laundry and dishwashing doesn't go up per person but it does go up. Theoretically a single family even with a large number of family members should be able to fit one of the tiers. Water users choosing to use culinary water outside of typical household uses should be required to pay for smart water uses. Charging for every 1000-gallon use beyond 9000 gallons is meant to fund any possible penalty charges or additional water costs. Each tier of 3000 gallons of extra use adds 15% to the per gallon rate.

	rate increase per 1000	total increase if you use all 3000 gallons at this level	total bill if you use all 3K in this tier
High volume use			
9001-12000	4.66	13.98	39.45
12001-15000	5.36	16.08	55.53
15001-18000	6.16	18.48	74.01
18001-21000	8.14	24.42	98.43
21004-24000	9.36	28.08	126.51
24001-27000	10.77	32.31	158.82
27001-30000	12.38	37.14	195.96
30000 and up	14.24	per 1000 gallons over	

While it may seem crazy to charge so much for someone who uses double and triple the use rate of 80 percent of the city; we would have no overage charge if all users stay below the 9000 gallon per month threshold. The high-rate account for the estimated \$280,000 the City would pay if we use extra 10 percent we have to cut this year. The assumption is that it isn't fair to ask average water users who stay within the maximum limit to pay the penalties if a few users simply use double and triple the average user rate. The estimated impact of this change on residential customers is roughly \$200,000 per year. For County users, a proposal to increase 35 percent would generate roughly \$6,000 per year. For Businesses, if we increase the tiered rates by \$1.00, the impact would be roughly 20,000 to 25,000. The total estimated impact of these changes is approximately \$231,000 per year. The goal of tonight's discussion is to determine if changes to the City's current water rate structure are necessary.

Mayor Maughan facilitated a discussion among the Council regarding the data included in the memo. He noted that it is necessary to further explore water rates for business users, specifically those that are high water users; Councilmember Savage stated that he has heard from residents who are concerned that the commercial water rates are lower than residential water rates. Mayor Maughan acknowledged that concern and City Manager Bovero added that the Council has made the decision in the past to keep utility rates low for commercial users in order to be business friendly. Councilmember Savage stated he would like to see a comparison of business rates in other cities before determining whether to adjust commercial water rates. The Council ultimately concluded they are comfortable with the residential rate adjustments included in the staff memo and Mayor Maughan stated that once the City has meaningful information regarding commercial water rates, it will be necessary to schedule a public hearing before acting on any rate adjustments. The Council also stressed the importance of educating residents regarding things they can use in their own homes to save water; this includes low-flow shower heads.

**Discussion of potential rain barrel program.**

A staff memo from the Public Works Director explained Utah Code 73-3-1.5 - capture and storage of precipitation – describes regulations concerning rainwater storage on individual properties. It allows for the storage of up to two containers no larger than 100 gallons total. More water can be stored if the individual registers with Utah Water Rights. There is a maximum storage limit of 2,500 gallons with the registration requirement. This does not grant a water right to the individual but allows the water to be used as a specific beneficial use. The collection and use of the water must not violate state law and

health and safety rules and regulations. A small number of cities along the Wasatch Front subsidize a portion of the cost of rain barrels (50 gal) bringing the cost from \$83 to \$55 each through Utah Rivers Council. Due to the drought, last summer was very dry. There were only two rain events over the summer that produced ½ inch or greater. Syracuse received ½ inch rain May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 2 inches of rain August. 18-21. If all downspouts from a roof were directed to no more than two containers, a 2000 SF rooftop could have collected 600 gallons in May and 2,500 gallons in August. 100 gallons of that could be stored unless they were registered for the max limit of 2,500 gallons. Average flow from a garden hose is approximately six gallons per minute., so 100 gallons would be depleted in approximately 16 minutes.

Mr. Whiteley reviewed the memo and stated the goal of this discussion is to determine if the Council has any desire to subsidize all or part of the cost of rain barrel purchases for property owners inside the City.

The Council discussed the topic and request and indicated they are not opposed to residents using rain barrels in accordance with Utah Code, but they are not willing to subsidize a rain barrel program for City residents.

**Discuss the City’s secondary water metering strategy pursuant to the Utah Legislature’s adoption of House Bill 242**

A staff memo from the Public Works Director explained Utah Code 73-10-34 Secondary water metering describes regulations concerning metering all secondary water connections. House Bill (HB) 242 made amendments to that code that shortened the timeline to convert all connections to meters, added penalties with heavy fines for any unmetered connections, and added American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant money with a \$10 million limit with a 30 percent match that is available until 2026. The match amount increases each year, so the sooner an application for grant is approved, the more grant money that is awarded. The grant allows for the match to be in-kind labor. The application period for the ARPA grant from Water Resources is April 1 to May 15. Water Board approval of grant applications is Aug 4<sup>th</sup>. The memo offered the following considerations:

- There are over 90k unmetered service connections in Davis and Weber Counties that are equally impacted by this regulation. 8,212 of those are in Syracuse.
- There is a shortage of supplies which will exacerbate as demand increases. There will also be a high demand for labor from contractors to perform the work. The cost of supplies and labor will likely increase due to the imminent demand.
- The anticipated cost in today’s market to convert all unmetered connections is \$17.5M. If the city hired four full time staff, the cost is \$13.9M (\$10.6M supplies, \$3.3M labor).
- Ancillary demands will be placed upon staff, generating plans and specs, performing inspections for quality work, blue staking, returning to each install to place the meter, and scheduling shutdowns for each connection.
- If staff were hired to perform the conversions, all the ancillary demands will be eliminated. Contractor availability would not be a concern as well as contractor’s potential for increased costs over the duration of the project.

<b>Summary of Total Cost to Have Contractor Convert Secondary Meters</b>	
Meter Cost	\$ 3,811,857.61
Cost To Retrofit Existing Meters	\$ 13,710,355.12
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$ 17,522,212.73</b>

<b>Summary of Total Cost to Have 4 New FT Workers Convert Secondary Meters</b>	
Meter Cost	\$ 3,811,857.61
Material Cost Only To Retrofit	\$ 6,748,700.00
Cost of 4 New FT Employees	\$ 3,330,000.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$ 13,890,557.61</b>

The memo concluded the goals of this discussion are to determine if the Council have any desire to apply for the \$10 million grant; if the Council prefers hiring employees to perform the conversion or contract the work out; determine if there any other strategies the Council has in mind to accomplish this regulation; and determine if the Council prefers to pay cash for the work, with a rate increase, or bond for the work.

Mr. Whiteley reviewed his staff memo and facilitated discussion among the Council regarding their level of support for the options included in the summary above. The Council indicated they are supportive of hiring employees to complete the work in-house and Mayor Maughan stated that matter as well as general funding considerations will be discussed further in the upcoming budget retreat meeting.

**Discussion of ongoing “Flip the Strip” turf removal program**

A staff memo from the Public Works Director explained that with the Council's support, beginning July 2021, Syracuse Public Works began providing assistance to residents in eliminating turf in their park-strip as an effort to reduce overwatering the surrounding concrete and asphalt surfaces. This effort involves excavation of turf in park-strips for residents who choose to have it done. Since then, public works has excavated 141 properties park-strips, which has amounted to two acres of grass eliminated. The average is 20 resident park-strips/month. There remain 63 residents on the list and 135 residents interested in getting added to the list. This service is a new service to the residents and began without adding staff while determining the level of interest among the residents. This service takes lower priority to the operation and maintenance of both water systems. The interest has become much larger than expected. The backlog on the list and those waiting to be added will take a year to complete at the current rate. The goal if this discussion is to determine if the Council desires to continue the operation as is, if there is any desire to contract the service out to catch up with the high demand, and solicit additional input from the Council regarding this new service.

Mr. Whiteley reviewed his staff memo and asked for direction from the Council regarding the future of the flip-the-strip program. Councilmember Teague stated that he feels the goals of the program have been accomplished; the City had a desire to motivate residents to consider opportunities to conserve water on their own property and the flip-the-strip program was one of those opportunities. After learning that the City could not respond to all property owners, some have undertaken the project on their own or by hiring a private contractor. He suggested completing the projects that can be completed this year, but phasing the program out in future years.

Councilmember Bingham declared a conflict of interest; she is launching a 'strip-flipping' business in the next few weeks, and she will not be involved in the conversation about a City program with which she would be competing.

General Council discussion then centered on the cost to the City to perform the work, and the burden on Public Works staff; Councilmember Savage suggested maintaining the program, but determining the maximum number of jobs that can be completed in a year and once those spots are filled, the program will be closed for the year. He stated that the program has been very successful, and he hates to eliminate it. The Council debated the suggestions made by Councilmember Teague and Councilmember Savage and ultimately concluded to continue discussion of the matter during the upcoming budget retreat meeting before making a final decision.

### **Discussion regarding proposed amendments to Syracuse City Recruitment and Retention Policy.**

A staff memo from the City Manager explained the City adopted a recruitment and retention policy in 2016, and later revised it in 2020. Since then, changes in the labor market have created a need to revise the policy to help ensure the City can remain competitive. Over the last couple of months, the Administration has been working together to put forth a draft for the City Council to review and consider. Mayor Maughan requested the first draft to be developed through a collaborative effort with all departments giving input. Rather than making minor edits to the existing policy, the Administration felt it was best to take a fresh look at how the City functions on a policy level, as it relates to recruitment and retention of quality employees. The memo discussed key sections of the policy:

- **Purpose:** This section of the policy outlines the end goals of the City as it relates to recruitment and retention of employees.
- **3 Main Components of the Policy:** This section lays out the three main components that function as the pillars of the policy, including:
  - **Leadership & Responsibility:** Outlines the various roles and responsibilities of the council, administration, and employee.
  - **Employee Compensation Policy:** A simple statement that outlines the City's overall policy as it relates to compensation.
  - **Administration of the Policy:** The most lengthy and detailed section, it outlines the methods, timing, and execution of the overall policy.

The memo also discussed key changes to the policy:

- **Benchmark Cities:** In order to streamline the comparison process, and make it more relevant to the local market, we narrowed the comparison cities down to those that are primarily competing for our employees. This seemed to keep the same competitive nature of the policy, while streamlining the administrative process.
- **Review the Market and Adjust Wages:** The current policy is on a 4-yr schedule for a comprehensive review of wages. This draft changes it to every 2 years to ensure we stay competitive in the current fast-paced market. The adjustment would be made to half of the departments each year, so they are covered every two years. The Council would still have the discretion to make any special adjustments if the market is changing too quickly.
- **Level of Compensation:** Instead of paying at the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile, the new draft outlines a compensation level that is different for entry level positions than subsequent positions. This was changed for two reasons, first to remain competitive through the 2-year cycles, and to help employees better understand the policy.

- Entry-level positions would be paid equal to the top-paying city. We felt this would be best for the City in order to attract the best talent in the area where the service is being provided directly, which is also the area where we've had the most turnover or difficulty attracting applicants.
- Subsequent positions would be paid equal to the average of the top three cities in the benchmark, but at least 10% higher than the position below them. This allows the City to remain competitive with the market, without needlessly paying the highest wages, but also keeps higher positions from being equal to or less than lower positions.
- **Career Progression Opportunities:** Changes were made to Advancements and Promotions to address retention and incentive for employees to seek promotion.
  - Frontline (non-supervisory) staff would be eligible for a maximum of two advancements. An Advancement is defined as an extra pay increase that recognizes an employee's improved skill, knowledge, or capability. Employees who meet the requirements for an advancement established in each department will receive an automatic 5% wage increase.
  - Promotions are defined as a movement to a higher position that significantly increases the employee's responsibilities and/or supervisory duties. Under the draft policy, an employee who is promoted would receive an increase to the minimum wage of the entering wage scale, but at least a 10% increase. Previously it was only 5%, which for some was not incentive enough to take on the additional responsibilities.
- **Periodic Review of the Effectiveness of the Policy:** A section was added to ensure employee input was gathered, and a periodic review by the Council to see if changes to the policy are needed. This keeps the policy updated with the changing environment over time.
- **Communication of the Policy:** A section was added that gives direction to the Administration on communicating the policy to the staff and potential candidates. This helps address some of the misunderstanding of the policy that has occurred.

While the Administration believes the revised policy would better achieve the goals of the City, the estimated price tag is approximately \$760,000 which the Administration recognizes is an issue that would need to be addressed with the City Council. The memo concluded the goals of the discussion are to introduce the draft policy to the Council as a first read, walk through the main points, and discuss issues.

Mayor Maughan introduced the item, after which Councilmember Carver expressed opposition to the manner in which the City conducts its benchmark analysis for City employees; she does not like the concept of comparing Syracuse wages with the wages in surrounding cities. She suggested, instead, that the City consider whether full-time career employees are being offered a living wage. She stated it is disgusting of the City to expect some employees to work for such low pay. This led to debate among the Council regarding the positions that can be defined as 'career positions', with Councilmember Carver noting the State of Utah has indicated that a family of four needs to earn \$54,000 just for their basic needs. Mayor Maughan stated that entry level positions should not be considered as a means of support for a family of four. Councilmember Carver stated that she has reviewed the wages for all employees, and she is only considering the positions that she feels are 'career positions', not entry level positions. Other Councilmembers stated that they feel that the only way to determine the market pay for City employees is to compare with other government agencies; adjusting wages based on other data may be artificial and arbitrary.

Mr. Bovero then reviewed his staff memo and summarized the proposed amendments to the policy. Council discussion centered mainly on the fiscal implications of the proposed amendments; the Council concluded they need additional time to review and consider the proposed amendments, with Mayor Maughan indicating that this was intended to be a first reading of the policy and more discussion will take place in the upcoming budget retreat and future work session meetings.

### **Parks and Recreation Department Biennial Review**

Parks and Recreation Director Robinson and Assistant Director Smout used the aid of a PowerPoint presentation to facilitate the quadrennial review for their Department. The presentation focused on efforts to comply with Department vision statements; programming additions; fiscal analysis of programming; future considerations relating to personnel and organization, parkland acquisition, cemetery expansion, and irrigation needs; and staffing requests. The Council thanked Ms. Robinson and Mr. Smout for the valuable information provided and indicated they look forward to continued discussion of those requests for which there is a fiscal impact in the upcoming budget development process.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

City Council Work Session  
April 12, 2022

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Dave Maughan  
Mayor

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Cassie Z. Brown, MMC  
City Recorder

Date approved: May 10, 2022