



White City Water Improvement District

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GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Utah Legislature To Consider Water Bills

The 2022 General Session of the Utah Legislature started on January 18, 2022 and will run through March 4, 2022. During that time, hundreds of bills (proposed changes to the law) will be presented, discussed, and debated. Many of those bills will have a direct impact upon the White City Water Improvement District ("WCWID") and the residents we serve. Therefore, this year, as in the past, I will be spending a significant amount of time working with other members of the water community and the Utah Association of Special Districts in reviewing and analyzing the bills filed.

As with so many things in life: "The Devil's in the Details," and bills that seek to advance a good cause, such as encouraging water conservation, can have negative unforeseen consequences.

For example: some bills seek to eliminate local government's ability to require a certain percentage of turf or lawn on properties within their municipal boundaries. The theory behind the bills is that property owners will then "switch over" to low water use plants and rocks. What can happen, however, is some property owners will simply let their properties "go" to weeds which, in long run, will require more water in the future to rehabilitate so as to not be a blight to the neighborhood.

Part of my job as WCWID's General Manager/General Counsel is to make sure bills that ultimately pass by the Legislature do not intentionally (or as a result of "unintended consequences") harm the district and its future viability. In addition to my legal review of proposed bills, citizen input to the Legislative process is very important.

WCWID Continues to Evaluate and Upgrade the Water System

The winter is usually the time when WCWID's staff, engineers and Board of Trustees discuss what future projects are necessary to ensure the water system's continuing viability and efficiency into the future.

Each year WCWID undertakes a pipeline replacement project to remove from service aged out water mains that have developed excessive leaks or breaks. Water mains in our area generally have a useful lifetime between 60 to 80 years. It is economically in the best interest of the system to replace water mains as needed. In addition, new water mains may need to be added to create loops and increase fire flows. Water mains may also be placed to create additional redundancy to the water system in case some event,

such as an earthquake, causes disruption to the system. One such main will be a new water main from WCWID's Harston Water storage tank above 2600 East, down 10000 S to 2000 East and from there to 9800 South. The new main will ensure access to the tank in case the main in 9800 South is unavailable due to maintenance or earthquake. WCWID is also examining whether it would be wise to add an additional 2 million Gallon water storage tank next to Harston Tank.

Inflation, Supply Chain Disruptions and Conservation Are Negatively Impacting WCWID

As many of you are aware inflation has returned with a vengeance this past year with an increase in the consumer price index of approximately 7%. Ductile iron pipe, meter setters and meters have all increased in price, as well as gasoline for District vehicles, office supplies and contracts for services such as for engineering and repair and maintenance contractor services.

Even when funds are available and budgeted for items, not everything is readily available and WCWID finds itself waiting for supplies that normally would have been immediately available. This means, WCWID more aggressively pre-order inventory so we have what is needed in case of emergency.

WCWID's budget due to water conservation (see our newsletter of October 2021) as well as pressures placed upon the district due to inflation, the Board of Trustees has determined it is appropriate to appoint a committee of water users and two Board members to look at WCWID's water rates to meet revenue needs (hereafter "Rate Committee").

WCWID has not increased its residential water rates for over 14 years (2007). Although the consumer price index has increased over 35% in the intervening years, WCWID has managed to run the water system with **ZERO property tax** and **NO RATE INCREASE** by careful and conservative budgeting and wise use of low interest bonds for major capital projects and taking advantage of bond refunding opportunities.

The Board of Trustees is committed to "No Property Tax Pledge" and desires to continue its use of "Cost Based Rates" as noted in WCWID's mission statement. The Board is seeking the assistance of its Rate Committee to advise it on how best to keep that pledge and commitment, while ensuring the future financial viability of the water system.

If you are interested in serving on the Rate Committee, please contact Elaine Christensen, Office Manager, at 999 E Galena Drive, Sandy, UT 84094 or via email at echristensen@wcid.org. Applications will be taken to close of business on February 11, 2022. Thank you.