

**CITY OF SAN JUAN BAUTISTA
TOWN HALL MEETING WITH THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBER, SAN JUAN BUATISTA CITY HALL
AND VIA INTERNET VIDEO/AUDIO CONFERENCE SERVICE
OCTOBER 6, 2020
MINUTES**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mayor Edge called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Vice Mayor Jordan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL Present: Mayor Edge and Vice Mayor Jordan.
Council Members DeVries, Flores and Freeman were present via internet video/audio conference service.

Staff Present: City Manager Reynolds and Deputy City Clerk Paetz.
City Clerk Cent, Project Manager Bjarke, Community Liaison Turner, Public Information Officer Eagen and Public Works Supervisor Bryan were present via internet video/audio conference service.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (ONLY ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA)

Mayor Edge asked those joining by internet video/audio conference service for public comment. There was no public comment.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Town Hall meetings are for the free exchange of information of community-wide importance. The City Council desires to receive input from the public to assist in choosing the best solution to the City's water issues.

Mayor Edge gave a welcome and introduction. City Manager Reynolds gave a shared screen presentation, which began with an introduction of the staff and contractors who worked on the water and wastewater project. Mr. Reynolds continued with a history of the City's water, including expenses, problems and procedures. Mr. Reynolds then described the processing of sewage at the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) including the regulator framework and the history of actions by the California State Water Board and the Federal EPA. He concluded his remarks with actions taken by the City, including the formation of a water subcommittee with Vice Mayor Jordan and Council Member Freeman as members in April 2020, and the deadline of October 15, 2020 to select compliance projects and report to the EPA.

Steve Beck of Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. spoke regarding their preliminary engineering report. Regarding salinity, Mr. Beck spoke on the sources of water for the City and the treating of the City's wastewater. He reported an industrial permit system is being worked on at this time. He reported salt is difficult to remove and describe the sources of salt into the City's wastewater: residential self-generating softeners and wastewater from industrial customers. He listed potential methods of water-source control of salt, including a pellet plant, exchange of cartridges, another well to the north,

and water from the West Hills Water Treatment Plant. He reported cost analysis, monetary factors and scoring factors were studied for these solutions, and the best score and most cost effective was the West Hills WTP importation combined with the City's well water. For the treatment of wastewater, Mr. Beck reported three alternatives, which included onsite or offsite upgrades to the WWTP with the City of Hollister WWTP being the offsite upgrade, and onsite or offsite salt control. Based on a matrix, Mr. Beck recommended the Hollister WWTP and West Hills WTP projects. The City can apply for grant money from the USDA and compliance was estimated to be reached by the end of 2023.

City Manager Reynolds presented the next step in the process and how the costs would be covered. He also reported a rate study was currently in process. Next Mr. Reynolds opened the Town Hall to questions from the public. Vice Mayor Jordan read a question from Dan Fernandez about the West Hills WTP gaining salt in the future. Jeff Cattaneo, General Manager and District Engineer of the San Benito County Water District, answered it would not, due to the sources of the water. Cara Vonk asked about the source of the water and Mr. Cattaneo answered it is from the Central Valley Water Project. Ms. Vonk asked if Hollister's growth would be an issue and Mr. Cattaneo answered Hollister, after upgrading, has double the capacity and the City of San Juan Bautista does not have any capacity available. Ms. Vonk asked about pipes going through agricultural land and Mr. Cattaneo reported the SBC Water District already has easements in place. Jose Bernal asked with the West Hills WTP if the City would attempt to discourage the use of water softeners. Mr. Beck recommended a buy-back of softeners, and Mr. Cattaneo replied customers would be willing to remove water softeners as they would be unnecessary. Zooey Diggory appreciated the clear presentation and asked what Hollister does with their wastewater and what about alternatives to salt in softeners. Mr. Cattaneo answered the SBC Water District worked with Hollister on the urban area in their master plan. Mr. Beck reported speaking with Culligan and frequent replacement of cartridges, working with homeowners and responsibility were concerns. David Medeiros asked what would happen to the City's plants. Mr. Beck replied the City's WWTP would need new pumps and it would have the ability to temporarily store wastewater if needed. City Manager Reynolds replied the West Hills WTP water would be blended with the City's well water so the wells would be kept up but they would not be as busy. Cara Vonk asked if the water would be somewhat hard when mixed with the well water. Mr. Beck replied a blend acceptable to customers would be determined. Zooey Diggory asked how the onsite removal of salt would be done. Mr. Beck replied it would be done by reverse osmosis (RO) and that would lead to costly brine disposal and more property for evaporation ponds. Mayor Edge read a letter from Rachel Ponce, which stated a need for an oversight committee of the City Council and the City Manager, which will help with support, monitor rates and the use of money. Jackie Morris-Lopez supports an oversight committee. Janell commented the survey did not go to those who are apartment residents without water accounts. City Manager Reynolds responded staff would go door to door if necessary to survey those in apartments. Vice Mayor Jordan read a question from Zooey Diggory asking what upfront funding would be needed to make the projects happen. City Manager Reynolds responded a USDA grant and loan. Irvin agreed with Jackie Morris-Lopez.

Mayor Edge asked for questions and comments from members of the Council. Council Member DeVries asked about the cost of laying pipe and the City drilling more wells in the area of San Juan Canyon. Mr. Cattaneo responded with the issues with water from new wells in the area. Council Member Freeman commented this is a difficult area to find good water and the City needs water from the West Hills WTP. Council Member Flores expressed thanks for the information on the water situation. Vice Mayor Jordan commented something needs to be done now and wells can be drilled later. Mayor Edge thanked the experts who are working on the project. Council Member DeVries agreed with Vice Mayor Jordan and Mayor Edge and asked how much had been spent to acquire Dale Coke's well. City Manager Reynolds estimated \$700,000 in all. Council Member DeVries expressed concern about being dependent on the City of Hollister for water and sewer services. Mr. Cattaneo responded the SBC Water District is not the City of Hollister, the Hollister WWTP was intended to be a regional facility, and recommended the City get out of waste water treatment.

Vice Mayor Jordan read a comment from Zooey Diggory supporting redundancy. Vice Mayor Jordan read a comment from Jackie Morris-Lopez supporting community oversight over all water issues. City Manager Reynolds responded there is a strict deadline of October 15, 2020 and the schedule needed to be kept to develop trust; plans can be changed later. Vice Mayor Jordan read a question from Jackie Morris-Lopez asking when a decision needed to be made. Mr. Reynolds responded next week. City Manager Reynolds reported the Public Information Officer would build a website just for this with reports and details. He requested those with questions to call or email City staff. Mayor Edge added to call City Manager Reynolds, Vice Mayor Jordan or Council Member Freeman with questions as they have been involved in the process. Jackie Morris-Lopez asked when and if connecting to the SBC Water District, would rates go down. City Manager Reynolds responded maybe by the end of the year and no, rates would not go down. Vice Mayor Jordan asked what the cost of the water would be from the West Hills WTP. Mr. Beck responded \$1,500 per acre-foot. Mr. Cattaneo responded pennies per gallon. Council Member Freeman responded half a cent per gallon.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Edge adjourned the meeting at 7:40 P.M.


Mary Vasquez Edge, Mayor

ATTEST:


Laura Cent, City Clerk