

**ASHLAND WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**CALL TO ORDER**

John Williams called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM

**Committee Members Present:** Darrell Boldt, Joe Graf, Rich Miller, Pat Acklin, Alex Amarotico, Kate Jackson, John Williams (chair), Don Morris, Michael Morris (Council liaison)

**Committee Members Absent:** Donna Rhee

**Staff present:** Tami De Mille-Campos, Scott Fleury, Steve Walker, Michael Morrison, Greg Hunter, Kevin Caldwell, Julie Smitherman, Paula Brown

**Staff absent:** None

**Consultants:** Jeff Ballard (RH2)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Paula Brown gave background on herself and the committee then gave around the room introductions.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

June 27, 2017

Boldt/Graf m/s to approve minutes. Approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**NEW 2.5 MGD WATER TREATMENT PLANT/CROWSON II RESERVOIR PROJECT UPDATE**

Brown shared with the committee that she has been back as Public Works Director for three weeks and one of the things she asked about when she became Director was where are we and what has been happening. In the past three weeks a few things have happened which brings her to recommend taking a pause and allow time to finish the siting study which should be finalized before the next meeting. Keller and Associates lost an intricate member of the group and because of this staff felt it was appropriate to part ways with Keller and look at what phase II brings. With phase II we need to look closer at what problem the committee is looking to solve and why we would want to build a new plant while continuing to operate the old plant. She is a bit perplexed as to why we would operate two plants for a town of our size. She is proposing a phase II for the committee which would be a much deeper review and would include hiring a new consultant to evaluate our existing plant from the standpoint of what lifespan does that plant have left and what risks currently exist and look at what is fiscally responsible.

Brown said a lot has changed since the committee re-formed, one of the biggest things is we now have TAP (Talent Ashland Phoenix Intertie). Brown would like the committee to look at what the policy is for using TAP and what is the realistic expectation for TAP. She wonders how we should best use it, if we are "paying for it" maybe we should be using it more than we are. She feels there should be a more detailed analysis and doesn't feel we have the necessary information right now to move forward with a new

plant. Brown questions if the old plant won't last longer than ten years, should we decide to scrap it and just build a new one or if it turns out that the existing plant will last twenty years, then it may be a good deal to keep the old plant and not build a new plant. If the old plant will last between ten and twenty years for a reasonable price then that is a debate we may need to have. She suggests that we spend roughly fifty to seventy five thousand to do a detailed study of a fifty year time period and what the costs of retrofitting the old plant would be versus building a new plant. This study could take three to six months with a new consultant. She is going to put together an RFP (request for proposal) before the next meeting.

There was discussion amongst the committee regarding what has transpired since the committee began its work and Brown said she had a pretty good handle on what this committee has been looking at and in her discussions with support staff she has looked at risk versus affordability and she doesn't feel comfortable moving forward without taking a deeper look at what is best for the community. Acklin shared when they came up with the plan they didn't think there was a good enough solution to the flooding, landscape, seismic issue and they felt like that was a precarious place for the sole treatment plant to be, the thinking was that we have to find another location at some point because it is susceptible. She agreed that several things have changed since they made their original recommendations, including TAP. She also feels if we do not know more about what citizens are willing to conserve we will know a lot more in the future as a result of the computer modeling which is currently underway. While this committee has discussed TAP, they have been circular discussions and the committee hasn't necessarily arrived at a conclusion for how often we use it. She feels it would be foolish to not stop and look more carefully. Graf shared he thought the vision of this committee always was that there would be one plant (the new plant) and the recommendation that came out was a compromise because there was a lot of difficulty amongst the committee in regards to TAP and other things. They landed on 2.5mgd largely because that was the average winter consumption. He doesn't think anyone had any desire in operating two plants long term. Williams shared that for him the idea of a new treatment plant came out of an economic analysis and when looking at the cost of continuing to use the old treatment plant, given the information that was available at that time, it was so close to the cost of building a new treatment plant with the additional advantages of a new treatment plant that was a no brainer for him and that is why he supported that recommendation. Brown said she would love to have a new 7.5mgd treatment plant that does everything we want it to but she would be remiss in not taking these options and the various cost options to City Council. Jackson shared as a continuing member of this committee she feels we need to understand how the decision was made, she can't recall how they decided, other than what Graf eluded to which was there was a lot of disagreement. She's wondering how the committee should reopen the discussion without revisiting all of the old arguments. Councilor Morris recalled at the Council level the discussion was all about the redundancy of running two plants. He shared that he never saw enough of the technical side. His personal opinion is he has always felt that Ashland's problem isn't the impoundment of treated water but it is more the impoundment of untreated water (reservoir) but he never saw real numbers on that at the council level. Boldt shared that when the committee started this process there were

two key factors they were keeping in mind were reliability and redundancy and based on the information they spent a lot of time looking at different options for conservation and with climate change coming along we know that is going to be even more critical. The information they got on the existing plant all weighed into the fact that it has a limited life span that won't be easily extended which then made a lot more sense to phasing the old one out and building a new plant. The redundancy part of the equation was TAP and now that TAP is in place this changes the equation. He is never opposed to going back and revisiting something just to verify that we are going in the right direction. He agrees with Brown's recommendation to step back and make sure the right decision is being made and it is justifiable.

Brown estimated this cost analysis would probably take three to six months and cost maybe fifty to seventy-five thousand. Ballard said a seismic evaluation creates a whole different level of evaluation. Williams said there was a lot of talk about how much money was going to need to be spent on keeping the old plant going and it was adding up and they just want to make sure that even if it does have some lifespan left that it makes financial sense. Brown doesn't believe we have spent bad money at the existing plant and this plant has served the city well through three floods in recent history, there is capacity that may be untapped and there are risk issues that haven't been fully addressed but we owe it to the community to spend the money wisely. Graf said he expected this committee would have to wrestle with the notion of a 2.5mgd plant and it sounds like this is the data staff feels they need in order to make a recommendation and he is fully supportive of moving ahead with this study. He also indicated he has always thought operating two plants is a bad idea. Acklin said as she remembers the process, Pieter Smeenk was instrumental in helping us get what we needed out of Carollo. Brown said the information we have from Carollo and Keller is great information and not something you throw out but she isn't sure if it went deep enough, but we can go deeper. Brown will draft the phase II RFP and hopefully get it out for publishing before the next committee meeting. If there are things that she missed we will bring it back and get those added. She will give an update to the City Administrator and then the plan would be to take it to the November 6, 2017 Council Study Session for their input. The committee voiced unanimous agreement for Brown to draft the phase II RFP.

### **WATER MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

Jeff Ballard, Rh2 Engineering passed around a handout (see attached) and Brown passed around the original committee charter (see attached).

Ballard shared they have all the information they need and the modeling is going through the final steps of calibration and then they will move on to the system evaluation. They are in the process of working with the conservation consultant and should be able to bring that information to the October meeting. He is continuing to build the Water Master Plan Update document itself, but the conservation element will be a big part of it. Thus far there haven't been many surprises, there could be some zone change recommendations made but other than that the system is fairly simplistic with the water all flowing downhill.

Ballard presented the Level of Service Goal recommendations (see attached), those shown in red are his recommendations.

Walker shared that cross-connection (backflow) is really important to make sure we don't have a user who infects the entire supply. Currently we satisfy the Oregon Health Authority regulations requirement which is that we have a database that tracks the testing of the backflow devices that we know of in town. One of the areas that this community hasn't gotten to is going around property by property and identifying hazards on that property and ensuring the homeowner has the proper level of protection installed. That is a huge task and politically it is a hot topic if not handled properly, there is a lot of public outreach to be done to ensure it is handled properly. He said that is a pretty simplistic explanation of it but he hopes this is something we can take a look at in the future. Brown said in addition to the water plant having cross connections, the waste water plant also has cross connection issues. She thinks we will at some point be asking Council to update the ordinances to give the City permission to monitor, check and report on every residential backflow situation, along with the public outreach component which the water conservation division has already been trying to do when they are out with property owners doing irrigation audits.

Acklin asked what the potential is to have power generated with all of our gravity flow. Ballard answered that we started to go down that path as part of the water master plan update, he isn't against evaluating it but where they landed is that within the existing system we have limited locations where there is steady flow which is needed to generate good power. The City's system operates on pressure reducing valves (PRV's) so it allows water to come through as there is demand, you need a large volume of water at a consistent flow rate. There are places where you could generate power but it comes down to cost effectiveness. Graf said with the Climate Energy Action Plan (CEAP) we are going to desperately being looking for ways to save energy and this may come up again because we may come up against a limit as to where we are going to save. Brown said she would like to explore that but that would be a future phase to the plan. Williams said we spent a lot of time talking about a fifty year climate prediction study for our watershed and staff may want to research and see if they did a more recent study during the CEAP process. Ballard said they are using updated climate data for the supply model and so we will want to make sure to have that conversation at the end of next month to make sure we are consistent with what Williams is talking about.

Brown asked the committee to review the original committee charter (year 2010 estimate) handout between now and the next meeting and come back to the next meeting with any questions or comments.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm  
Respectfully submitted,  
Tami De Mille-Campos  
Public Works Administrative Supervisor