

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF LAS VEGAS CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2019 AT 4:00 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**MAYOR:** Tonita Gurulé-Girón

**COUNCILORS:** David G. Romero  
Barbara A. Casey  
Vincent Howell  
David A. Ulibarri, Jr.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Ann Marie Gallegos, Interim City Manager  
Danielle Sena, Recorder  
Esther Garduno Montoya, City Attorney  
Martin Gallegos, Deputy Chief

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM

**ROLL CALL**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Councilor Romero asked for a moment of silence for all those who have passed away in the community, for those who won't be with us during the holidays and also for them to make the right decision as they go about their business tonight.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilor Casey made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilor Ulibarri, Jr., seconded the motion. Mayor Gurulé-Girón asked for roll call. Roll Call Vote was taken and reflected the following:

David G. Romero	Yes	David A. Ulibarri, Jr.	Yes
Vincent Howell	Yes	Barbara Casey	Yes

Recorder Danielle Sena re-read the motion and advised that the motion carried.

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

No one for public input

### **PRESENTATION**

1. Presentation by Stantec Project Manager Georgette Aronow on 2019 Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Utility Rate Assessment Study and feedback and direction from the Governing Body.

Utilities Director Maria Gilvarry advised giving a brief introduction and would move into the presentation. Utilities Director Gilvarry introduced Georgette, Loren and Bill from Stantec who are the City's consultants who presented on proposed rate changes for city utilities.

Utilities Director Gilvarry gave a lengthy discussion regarding customers concerned about their high utility bills, the approval of a rate study for Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste and raw water utilities and the desire to reduce the costs of utilities for customers, and bringing back the suggestions made during the November regular council meeting.

Stantec Consultants Georgette and Bill gave a lengthy discussion regarding the scenario analysis that was requested during the November regular council meeting and advised there were four scenarios they would examine.

Councilor Romero asked why for the rate plan they have up to a five year plan but for the CIP plan they have up to a ten year annual average instead of keeping it at the same five year plan.

Stantec Consultant Georgette advised it isn't significantly different and thought it would be more informative to show them long term.

Discussion took place regarding what the five year annual average would be.

Utilities Director Gilvarry spoke about the Hot Springs project from Mills to the North of the New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute is estimated to be at 1.8 million to replace that waterline and more if they have any catastrophic issues at the Water Treatment Plant.

Stantec Consultant Georgette gave a lengthy discussion regarding the Wastewater scenario analysis which differs from the Water scenario analysis.

Councilor Howell advised looking at the O&M and the CIP figures if they could give an example as to what the ninety percent means.

Stantec Consultant Georgette advised it means it's ninety percent of the proposed 2020 budget and stated they looked at the budgeted costs over time and the implementation of those costs over time and saw that on average the City uses ninety percent of the budget.

Councilor Howell asked if it was ninety percent of the O&M reserves.

Stantec Consultant Georgette advised no, it's the O&M costs which is the budget.

Discussion took place regarding the Capital Projects on average and was based off the CIP projects and the figure if they didn't go with the reduction of rates.

Stantec Consultant Georgette gave a lengthy discussion regarding the Solid Waste scenario analysis.

Councilor Romero asked if they could focus on Water and Wastewater instead of Solid Waste due to solid waste not being an issue within his constituency.

Mayor Tonita Gurulé-Girón stated, "I agree with you a hundred percent and we need to remove Solid Waste and focus on Water and Wastewater that tie into each other."

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised Solid Waste has nothing to do with the Enterprise fund and advised them to focus on the Water and Wastewater.

Discussion and questions took place regarding whether or not to focus only on lowering the Water and Wastewater rates or to lower the Solid Waste also.

Utilities Director Gilvarry advised in scenario C there is no rate increase for Solid Waste.

Discussion took place regarding what the total bill would look like for customers.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón proposed in year 1 to include the year 5 rate from scenario C to give customers a decent reduction.

Discussion took place regarding the five year rate summary plan being the best proposal with a three dollar rate cut.

Councilor Casey advised her biggest concern is to put together something to present to the public to get their input also.

Discussion and questions took place regarding going through the public input process, what percentage amount to give to the constituents and if a customer were to use under or over the 2000 gallons per month what rate would they pay.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón discussed cash reserves, completed projects, future projects and past rates that were too high for customers.

Utilities Director Gilvarry advised considering improving the low income assistance program.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised Utilities Director Gilvarry needs direction from Council.

Councilor Romero asked if they could go over the scenarios once more and in his opinion wants to leave the Solid Waste rates as is.

Utilities Director Gilvarry advised it would be a 15% discount on water.

Discussion and questions took place regarding the difference between Water and Wastewater rates not being the same and scenarios to fit the needs of the constituents.

Councilor Howell questioned the total bill amounts if they go with scenario C.

Utilities Director Gilvarry advised it sounded like Council was agreeing on a 15% discount which would come out to a three dollar reduction and in the second year it would be taken back to council for approval to continue with the same discount or change it.

Discussion and questions took place regarding how much Wastewater customers actually use which is not equivalent to the amount of Water.

Stantec Consultant Georgette advised in year 1 a decrease in Water by 15%, allowing for a 3% increase for cost of living in Wastewater and no change in Solid Waste.

Discussion and questions took place regarding when customers ask why their water bill is high if they are talking about their total bill, how customers will see the 15% decrease on their overall bill, how many trash trucks aren't working properly and how many they need and ICIP projects such as the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Councilor Howell advised elections are coming up in March and the new administration should be the ones to make the decision about the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste rates.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised, "Actually I do not agree with you on that Councilor, this should have been on the table a year ago."

Councilor Howell advised the new administration should be the ones to make this decision and advised the Consultants could give them a final draft.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised, "I'm not going to agree with you on that so I'm going to call for a consensus today that we move forward with the actual reduction because it was you Councilor who increased the rates."

Councilor Howell advised that it isn't relevant to what they were discussing.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised, "It's a fact and I'm stating a fact, and you of all people want to level the playing field for the residents."

Discussion took place regarding who voted for and against the rate increase.

Councilor Romero clarified the 15% decrease in Water, no increase for Solid Waste and 3% increase in Wastewater but agrees with Councilor Howell regarding the overall decrease and advised the presentation should have been focused on only Water.

Councilor Romero advised he would like to see a 1.5% increase in Wastewater versus the 3% increase.

Interim City Manager Ann Marie Gallegos advised that Council was wanting to work with the 15% decrease in Water, the Wastewater would be a 1.5% increase versus the 3% increase and Solid Waste would be left alone.

Interim City Manager Gallegos clarified going through the process would take through the end of February and the rates would not go into effect until after March.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised at least they did their job.

Interim City Manager Gallegos clarified that Council would possibly be voting on the rates in January and by then the billing would have been sent out, so they would wait until they could impose the new rates for all billing cycles at the same time.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised she likes the 1.5% increase.

Councilor Casey advised they need to keep in mind that they have to make decisions based on what's good for the people and not what's good for the politics and also advised Councilor Howell, the Mayor and herself are up for re-election and don't know who's going to run for what.

Councilor Casey advised they need to take that out of the picture completely and focus on what they are doing for the people of Las Vegas and move forward with their decision.

Councilor Howell advised the constituents should know what they are doing.

Mayor Gurulé-Girón advised she needs a consensus.

Stantec Consultant Georgette clarified the 15% decrease is not a 15% decrease overall.

Discussion took place regarding the amount of gallons used for Water, clarity of the rates when presenting to the public and bringing back the rate study to Council for a final look at it.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Interim City Manager Ann Marie Gallegos advised there was no need for executive session.

**ADJOURN**

Councilor Casey made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Ulibarri Jr., seconded the motion. Mayor Gurulé-Girón asked for a roll call. Roll Call Vote was taken and reflected the following:

Vincent Howell	Yes	David A. Ulibarri, Jr.	Yes
David G. Romero	Yes	Barbara Casey	Yes

Recorder Danielle Sena re-read the motion and advised that the motion carried.

  
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Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Casandra Fresquez, City Clerk