

UTILITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 3, 2004

The Utility Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on June 3, 2004 at 9:31 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Janie Thom, Chairman
Kyle Jones
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Joe Padilla
Paul Wenbert

(Items on the agenda were discussed out of order, but for purposes of clarity will remain as listed on the agenda.)

1. Discuss and consider continuing conversion of alley solid waste collection service to curbside service and restoring alley service to those properties that have been converted to curbside service.

a. Staff presentation.

Environmental Management Division Director Christine Zielonka addressed the Committee and stated that Solid Waste Administrative Supervisor Willy Black was present to provide information on the current status of the alley conversion program.

Mr. Black reported that prior to March 2002, approximately 6,000 homes were converted to curbside collection service in order to address safety concerns or at the request of residents. He stated that subsequent to Council approval in April 2002 of a plan to continue converting alley collection service to curbside service, an additional 4,500 homes were converted and 1,500 homes presently remain to be converted.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office), Mr. Black outlined a number of the safety issues related to alley collection service:

- Utilization of the alley by other vehicles, such as Salt River Project (SRP) vehicles, delay or prevent collection service.

- As vehicles exit an alley, the driver experiences limited sidewalk visibility creating a dangerous situation for pedestrians, individuals in wheelchairs or children riding bicycles.
- Vehicles parked on a street obstruct the view of the Solid Waste driver when exiting an alley.
- Overgrown foliage in an alley obstructs visibility and creates the potential for damage to the vehicle.
- A vehicle can damage sagging overhead utility wires. One incident resulted in a service outage, and another caused a hot line to fall into a yard, which melted a child's toy and created the potential for serious injury to occur if a child had been present.
- Solid Waste drivers have to leave their vehicles in order to close gates that were left open in the alley.
- Vehicles have insufficient clearance to enable turns into alleys that have obstructions on the sides such as power poles, irrigation boxes, and fences.

Addressing the issues of inequity in service levels and customer accountability, Mr. Black stated that the 400 gallon barrel allotted for every four families serviced by alley collection was insufficient; that the City was required to provide additional barrels due to the fact that the 400 gallon barrels serviced only 2.6 families; and that curbside collection provides each home with a 90 gallon barrel. He further stated that bulky debris such as engine blocks, chairs, concrete, etc. placed in the alley collection barrels caused severe damage to the vehicles; that alley collection precludes accountability for overloaded barrels and inappropriate or illegal items placed in the barrels; and that the City is unable to address health and sanitary issues.

Mr. Black advised that the customer education process prior to converting an area to curbside collection included staff initiating personal contact by going door to door, distributing flyers to each home, and mailing a notification letter to each resident. He reported that during the process of converting 4,500 customers to curbside service, only ten individuals contacted the Solid Waste Division to express opposition to the conversion.

Mr. Black outlined the benefits of converting the remaining 1,500 homes to curbside collection service:

- Ensures a safer environment for children, residents and neighborhood visitors.
- Provides safer working conditions for City employees.
- Saves collection time of up to an hour per day per route.
- Reduces the amount of refuse collected by up to a half ton per route.
- Provides fewer opportunities for illegal dumping.
- Reduces the potential of damage to City and private property.
- Improves accountability for proper disposal of refuse.
- Provides equitable service levels to customers.
- Supports the "pay as you throw" concept.
- Provides an estimated savings to the City of \$1,839 per converted route.

Mr. Black stated that the staff report lists three options available for consideration by the Committee: Option 1 would maintain alley conversions to curbside service at the present level; Option 2 would restore alley service to the converted areas; and Option 3 would continue the conversion program for the remaining 1,500 residents.

Mr. Black advised that he serves as a certification course instructor for the Solid Waste Association of North America, and that representatives of Solid Waste departments from all areas of the country express concern relative to the alley collection safety issue. He expressed the hope that the Committee would recommend continuation of the conversion program.

Ms. Zielonka stated that staff requested legal advice from the City Attorney's office in response to concerns expressed by some residents that collection barrels placed on the sidewalk would be a violation of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA). She reported that the City Attorney's office reviewed the issue with the Arizona Center for Disability Law and advised that the City should conduct outreach to the neighborhoods and designate the street or the driveway apron as the barrel location in order to provide handicap access on the sidewalk. Ms. Zielonka added that the City's ordinance specifically states that the sidewalks should not be blocked.

Chairman Thom thanked staff for the presentation.

In response to questions from Chairman Thom, Ms. Zielonka advised that restoring alley collection service for the residents previously converted to curbside service would require replacement of 500 containers. She also clarified that the City of Scottsdale has a Solid Waste Department that provides collection service for their residents.

b. Public comments.

The following individuals spoke in opposition to the conversion of alley solid waste collection service to curbside service.

Lee Tobey, 1063 East 3rd Street
Marilyn Balthasar, 2242 East Hale Street
Max Perkins, 1050 East Jarvis
Irene Pine-Field, 744 South Morris
* Ed Field, 744 South Morris
Norma L. Riggs, 645 East Draper Street
**Anne Mollica, 865 East 8th Place
Nick Coleman, 1023 East 3rd Street
John D. Autore, 1013 East 3rd Street
Gary J. Brown, 2237 East Hale

*Copies of photographs provided by Mr. Field are available for review in the City Clerk's Office.

**A petition submitted by Ms. Mollica is available for review in the City Clerk's Office.

Comments made by those in opposition to the conversion included:

- Garbage barrels on the street are an eyesore to the neighborhood.
- Garbage barrels that are placed out at night for morning pickup obstruct the sidewalks, and both evening and morning walkers must utilize the street.
- Alley collection is more efficient.
- Overgrowth in alleys should be addressed by issuing citations.
- Barrels placed on the sidewalk are obstructions to handicapped residents and require individuals in wheelchairs to utilize the street, which constitutes a violation of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.
- Violations by Solid Waste vehicles include driving through intersections without stopping, making U turns and backing up on City streets.
- Curbside service is not cost-effective, particularly for multi-family units.
- Consumer education regarding solid waste has been inadequate.
- Curbside collection for apartment buildings would require additional barrels, and some apartment complexes do not have sufficient space for the barrels.
- The majority of the residents in the proposed alley conversion area oppose the action.
- Solid Waste truck drivers are not properly supervised.
- The size of the "green barrels" is not adequate.
- Blue barrel materials are scattered throughout the neighborhood during the collection process.
- Curbside placement of barrels is an indication to criminal elements that residents may not be at home.
- Residents have not been properly notified of the proposed alley conversion.

The following residents completed speaker/comment cards expressing their opposition to the alley conversion, but indicated that they did not wish to address the Committee:

Dorothy Woolsey, 1107 East 3rd Street
Walter Woolsey, 1107 East 3rd Street

Tim Mahon, 1928 East June Circle, former City of Mesa Solid Waste Director, addressed the Committee in support of the alley conversion. He stated that the program was initiated while he served as Director, and he expressed the opinion that the original decision to convert alleys to curbside collection was appropriate. Mr. Mahon requested that the Committee continue to support the alley conversion program.

Linda & Vince Nagy, 2324 East Glencove Circle, new residents in an area that was converted to curbside service, advised that curbside collection has resolved their problems related to illegal dumping. They stated that children walking to school seldom stop to check for traffic in the alley, and therefore locating the trucks on the street is much safer for the neighborhood.

Chairman Thom thanked everyone for providing information to the Committee. She advised that the residents would have another opportunity to speak regarding the issue when the full Council considers the item at a future meeting.

c. Committee recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Zielonka stated that the issue of safety is one of her primary concerns in the operation of the Division. She advised that Solid Waste has a Safety Coordinator, and that she has personally met with the drivers to emphasize the importance of safety issues, particularly in residential neighborhoods.

Ms. Zielonka also addressed the issue of the larger barrels in the alleys and noted that accountability was a major problem in the "pay as you throw" program. She advised that the City's cost to service the overloaded barrels in alleys is subsidized by the other customers, and that curbside collection promotes the same service levels for all customers in addition to supporting the "pay as you throw" personal accountability factor.

In response to questions from Chairman Thom, Ms. Zielonka advised that citizens have two options for disposing of large, bulky refuse: 1) Citizens may dispose of the refuse at the landfill and receive a special rate by presenting a copy of their utility bill, and 2) Citizens may contact Solid Waste to arrange for the item to be picked up at the curb on a specific day for a fee of approximately \$15.

Ms. Zielonka stated that illegal dumping continues to be a difficult issue to address. She noted that the license plate number of an offender would be helpful to the Police Department, and that Code Compliance and the Police Department cooperate in addressing the issue. Ms. Zielonka added that Neighborhood Outreach continues their efforts to educate citizens and to identify problem areas.

In response to a question from Committeemember Whalen, Development Services Manager Jack Friedline advised that removal of an illegally dumped large, bulky item is usually the responsibility of the property owner, but in cases where a neighborhood alley is littered, the City will assist the neighborhood with the clean up.

Committeemember Whalen stated that the average homeowner is probably not aware of the fact that residents are now responsible for cleaning the alleys behind their property. He expressed the opinion that improved citizen education is required, and that the City should partner with the residents in this effort. Committeemember Whalen also stated that certain situations, such as collection for multi-family housing units, should be addressed on an individual basis. He emphasized that the appearance of older neighborhoods was critical to maintaining property values. Committeemember Whalen added that budget constraints limit the availability of staff to address these issues.

It was moved by Committeemember Whalen that the program to continue conversion of alley solid waste collection service to curbside service be moved forward to the full Council with a recommendation for approval.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the conversion would be a gradual process for a period of several months, and that the process would include neighborhood outreach and notification letters to the residents.

Committeemember Whalen amended his motion to include the provision that staff be directed to conduct outreach to multi-family locations to determine the most efficient and effective method of solid waste collection.

Committeemember Jones stated that the initial alley conversion to curbside collection required a 75 percent concurrence of the residents within each area. He asked if that requirement was still in place.

Ms. Zielonka explained that the 75 percent concurrence was required for the initial conversions. She said that when Council directed staff to proceed with the full conversion process, it was her understanding that the 75 percent consensus was no longer required.

Committeemember Jones stated that he understood the reasons for the conversion and that he supported the program, but he was reluctant to force the change in neighborhoods that were united in their opposition. He expressed the opinion that the curbside collection barrels should be placed in the street rather than on the sidewalk. Committeemember Jones further stated that conversion should not be mandated for every neighborhood, but considered on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Zielonka reported that of the original 12,000 residents serviced by alley collection, only 1,500 remain to be converted to curbside collection.

Committeemember Jones stated that he was not in favor of neighborhoods being converted back to alley collection, but he did support addressing the issue on a case-by-case basis if a neighborhood organization made the request.

In response to a question from Chairman Thom, Mr. Friedline advised that the City provides solid waste collection services to all residential units, and that the utilization of barrels or metal bins by multi-family units depends on the physical space available and other factors of that nature. He stated that staff has considered collection alternatives for certain multi-family units, and staff will continue to work with property owners; that routing collection vehicles is an important consideration due to the fact that one alley in an area may be sufficiently wide and have no obstructions, but the other alleys in the area may not be accessible; that a continuing problem regarding alley collection is the lack of customer accountability; that residents tend to throw many items into larger barrels, but smaller barrels encourage customers to recycle; and that staff would review the difficult situations and cooperate with the residents, Neighborhood Outreach and the Police Department to address the various issues.

Committeemember Jones expressed the opinion that neighborhoods should be provided the option to retain alley collection service if the residents are willing to assume the responsibility for maintaining access in the alleys.

Chairman Thom stated the opinion that a satisfactory resolution could be achieved regarding the proposed alley conversion for the remaining 1,500 homes. She seconded Committeemember Whalen's motion that staff's proposal to continue the conversion program (Option 3), be amended to include a provision that staff be directed to conduct outreach to multi-family locations in order to determine the most efficient and effective

method of solid waste collection, and that this item be forwarded to the full Council with a recommendation for approval.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES - Thom-Whalen
NAYS - Jones

Chairman Thom declared the motion carried by a majority vote.

2. Hear a status report on arsenic remediation of City wells.

Water Division Director Bill Haney advised that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the 1940's standard of 50 parts per billion as an allowable level of arsenic in drinking water and established a final rule, to be effective in January 2006, limiting the arsenic level in drinking water to ten parts per billion. He utilized a PowerPoint presentation (a copy is available for review in the City Clerk's Office) and provided the following information:

- Federal law requires that consumers be notified of the arsenic levels present in the drinking water. The consumer would not be told the water is unsafe to drink, but that the presence of arsenic could cause potential health concerns.
- The cost to comply with the EPA regulation is estimated to be higher than the benefits derived.
- The Southwestern states have the highest levels of arsenic in water, but treatment technologies have not been well tested in this part of the country.
- Arsenic levels in drinking water became an issue five years ago, and the technology addressing the problem is rapidly changing.
- The City of Mesa established a target level of eight parts per billion to provide a margin of error relative to the EPA requirement of ten parts per billion. 23 City wells have an arsenic level below eight parts per billion, and 15 wells have a level above eight parts per billion.
- Two consultants have been hired: one with the expertise to address the issue of arsenic, and the other to develop the Master Plan.
- To meet the 2006 requirement, two wells would be treated, two wells would be partially treated or blended, 23 wells are presently in compliance, and ten wells would be designated as "out of service" and not used.
- Transfer station upgrades are being considered to address the lost capacity of the ten wells as well as groundwater facilities that would be utilized for blending water. Staff is also investigating low-cost geophysical solutions, including the possibility of abandoning a small number of the poor wells and drilling new wells.
- Transfer stations will impact both the Master Plan and the arsenic issue.
- The future demand for water at buildout will impact the growth areas in northeast and southeast Mesa.
- The Salt River Project (SRP) Dry-up currently requires the transfer of 13 million gallons per day and at buildout, that amount will be 17 million gallons per day. These transfers are possible utilizing the existing system, but pressure-reducing valves may be required at the transfer stations.
- Future Central Arizona Project (CAP) Dry-ups will require moving 39 million gallons per day from "on project" to "off project" in 2006, and at buildout the amount is estimated at 57 million gallons per day, which will require substantial improvements in the transfer stations.

- Traditionally wells were connected directly to the distribution system, but the 2004 Master Plan recommends blending water from new wells and existing wells in a centralized groundwater facility.
- Staff is searching for 27 new well sites to meet the projected future water demand in East Mesa; and 8 of the 27 new wells would replace high arsenic wells that staff recommends be taken out of service.

Mr. Haney also provided the following cost information:

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| • Cost to drill and equip a new well: | \$0.53/per gallon capacity per day |
| • Cost of well-head treatment facility: | \$1.48/per gallon capacity per day |
| • Cost of new well with treatment: | \$2.01/per gallon capacity per day |
| • Cost of groundwater facility:
(assuming no treatment costs) | \$0.69/per gallon capacity per day |

Mr. Haney estimated that Mesa's cost to address arsenic issues is in the range of \$10 to 15 million. He advised that the addition of blending facilities would increase the total cost to approximately \$20 million, which is substantially less than staff's original projection of \$35 million.

In response to a series of questions from Committeemember Whalen, Mr. Haney advised that as a result of the City's utilization of surface water, the average depth of the water table is actually two to three hundred feet higher than it was a decade earlier; that in a shallow well, the water table is at approximately 450 feet, and the water table of the deeper wells is 750 to 800 feet below the surface; that typically a well is drilled to 1,400 or 1,500 feet in order to locate the best quality water with the lowest temperature; that geologically there are three units of aquifers, the lower unit that dissolves solids, the middle unit that has the best water, and the upper unit that contains the groundwater contamination; that the wells along the north side of the City are heavily impacted by the Salt River; and that there is a difference between operations and maintenance (O & M) costs and capital costs.

Mr. Haney responded to comments from Committeemember Jones by noting that several years ago arsenic was the single largest issue facing the Southwest; that the drought has now become the major concern for the Southwest; that well water is cheaper than CAP water, but it is not a sustainable source; and that the initial dry up of the CAP is planned for a period of five to six weeks to identify problem areas which would be addressed during a second dry up of the CAP at a later date.

In response to a series of questions from Chairman Thom, Mr. Haney confirmed that groundwater was a renewable resource due to the fact that rain would recharge the well. He also advised that the consulting firm utilized by the City for arsenic issues is Damon S. Williams Associates; that Black and Veatch is the City's consultant relative to the Master Plan; that Williams Gateway has three wells, one that was capped by the Air Force, one that was in a standby mode, and a third that was utilized for the base's water supply; that Williams Gateway is designated as a Super Fund site as a result of the jet fuel issues, and the base is presently served by City water; that the land targeted for the South Water Plant is scheduled to be released for auction by the State Land Department in the near future; and that the City may compete with developers for the State land, but the area is generally considered to be an undesirable development site.

Chairman Thom reported that the City of Scottsdale is in the process of building an arsenic treatment plant for four of their wells; that a consultant to the City of Scottsdale has developed an arsenic remediation technology that has EPA approval; and that Mr. Haney was welcome to attend a meeting that she and Utilities Manager Dave Plumb were planning to hold with the consultant.

Chairman Thom advised that staff's presentation was merely a status report and does not require any action by the Committee.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and consider implementation schedule for Customer Information System.

Assistant Financial Services Manager Jenny Sheppard advised that she was present to update the Committee on the status of the Customer Information System (CIS) that was implemented in December 2003. She stated that the CIS consists of multiple components that are required to interface with each other in order to perform correctly. Ms. Sheppard advised that the City contracted with the following firms: INDUS for the Banner CIS software; Oracle Corporation for the database; and DocuCorp, a sub-contractor of INDUS, for the bill production and distribution software. She provided an overview of Phase I, staff resources, the Phase II implementation process, and the prioritization of Phase II features:

- CIS is a complex project that involves several different contractors and many components that are required to interface in order to achieve the complete system. Phase I was implemented on December 1st and all but one of the "priority 1" issues have been addressed and 36 "priority 2" issues remain. There are several hundred "priority 3" and "priority 4" items, which are minor system failures that are considered to be "cosmetic" issues.
- Phase II is being maintained by ten core City employees, five "technical" staff members from Information Technology and five "user-functional" staff from the Financial Services Division. The employees also provide support for "day to day" activities in their respective areas, and the competition between support activities and CIS development activities make it difficult to provide firm implementation dates.
- Phase II implementation, which has already begun, requires the following process for each item:
 - Development of application/functional specifications.
 - Definition of business process.
 - Item installation.
 - Testing.
 - Training.
 - Marketing/go live.
 - Follow up issues as a result of implementation.
- The Phase II Functionality List (see Attachment 1) indicates the process and the target completion date.

Ms. Sheppard noted that Chairman Thom had inquired via email if a benefit of web access would be a reduction in the City's bank fees. She advised that CIS would not reduce the cost of bank fees to the City, and that banks would continue to impose fees for credit card payments, Intelli-Check and the SurePay Program. Ms. Sheppard also confirmed that barring any maintenance or staffing issues, the target date for completion of the CIS project is the first quarter of 2005.

Chairman Thom thanked staff for the update and stated that the Committee appreciates their efforts relative to this project.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Utility Committee Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Utility Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 3rd day of June 2004. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

baa

Attachment 1

PHASE II FUNCTIONALITY LIST

<u>Seq</u>		<u>Items</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
1		CWA Customer Web Access	8/2/2004
2	*	Select a due date	9/1/2004
3	*	Pledge/Roundup	10/1/2004
4	*	Expanded Service Order Functionality	11/1/2004
5	*	Budget billing	1/2/2005
6	*	Spanish Bills	3/1/2005
7	*	Large Print Bills	3/1/2005
9	*	Intelli-Check-Interface to Revenue Collectors	8/2/2004
8	*	Route Smart	8/2/2004
10	*	Mapview	10/2/2004
11	*	BCS/CIS Interface	9/2/2005
12		EWQ Electronic Work Que	TBD
13		Customer Contact	TBD
14	*	Target Plus	TBD