



UTILITY ADVISORY GROUP UAG



Meeting Minutes March 3, 2021

New Members Alex Bonilla Canales, Bill Hartman, Pat Turner, John Van Naarden and Kody Tinnel attended along with David Kohli, Craig Martin, Bryan McMillan, Rod Vargo and Dan Wire. City Utilities' staff attending included Justin Brugger, Mike Kiester, Frank Suárez and Matthew Wirtz. The meeting began with introductions.

UAG History: Founding member David Kohli made a presentation about the group's history dating back to the 1990s. Dan Wire, Bryan McMillan and Rod Vargo, discussed their impressions of the group's activities. Craig Martin shared that many of his customers used to have basement back-up issues before completing the Hamilton Park area improvements.

Utility Overview: Chairman Vargo introduced Justin Brugger and Matthew Wirtz for this presentation. Pat Turner asked why consumption was down so much. Justin said it for three reasons – 1. Household sizes were smaller - more single people living alone, families having fewer children, and baby boomers becoming empty nesters. 2. Conservation – during the recession of 2008, people started using less water, and those with irrigation systems never got back to the point where they were watering as frequently as before. And residents are using more drought-tolerant plants since the drought of 2011. 3. More efficient appliances -- front-loading washers, low flow showerheads, more efficient dishwashers.

Matthew brought up that we were a regional utility. He pointed out that we have many customers in Allen County that are outside of the Fort Wayne city limits and that we have customers in the neighboring counties of Wells and Whitley. Craig Martin asked if we work closely with the Allen county health department on septic elimination. Justin stated that City Utilities works very closely with the Allen County Regional Sewer District. One of their main objectives is to get people off septic systems and connected to sewer systems.

Justin and Frank Suárez talked about interns and programs with FWCS. Pat and Alex expressed interest in helping with outreach for recruiting women and minorities to the programs.

Tunnel Update: Mike Kiester and Frank Suárez gave an update on the tunnel dig which on March 3, 2021 has less than a mile to go. Craig Martin asked if we were hiring locally for the work. Mike explained that some specialty jobs required outside expertise, but for the most part, the union halls and the local workers filled most of the construction jobs.

Craig asked about the purpose of the ponds located near commercial properties. Rod Vargo explained that they were primarily to store surface stormwater temporarily and drain later when the storm sewer system has the capacity for the additional flow.

Rod noted we were past our normal end time, so we did not have the construction projects update at this meeting.

Other Business: Frank Suárez brought up that the Molson Coors company heard about the Tours on Tap fundraiser City Utilities did for the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative. Our event partnered with local breweries, and when Molson Coors heard, they donated \$7,500 to the non-profit watershed group.

Frank also shared that a UAG member webpage would soon be available.

Next meeting June 2, 2021