



**CITY OF BUCKEYE  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
JANUARY 16, 2018  
MINUTES**

**City Council Chambers  
530 E. Monroe Ave.  
Buckeye, AZ 85326  
3:15 p.m.**

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Mayor Meck called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

Members Present: Councilmember Youngker, Councilmember HagEstad (arrived at 3:58 p.m.), Councilmember Orsborn (excused at 4:33 p.m.; returned at 4:35 p.m.; excused at 5:43 p.m.), Councilmember Hess (arrived at 3:48 p.m.), Councilmember Guy, Vice Mayor Heustis, and Mayor Meck.

Members Absent: None.

Departments Present: City Manager Roger Klingler, City Attorney Shiela Schmidt, City Clerk Lucinda Aja, Deputy City Clerk Summer Stewart, Assistant to Mayor and Council Christine Grundy, Finance Director Larry Price, Community Services Director Cheryl Sedig, Interim Water Resources Director Mark Seamans, Information Technology Director Greg Platacz, Human Resources Director Nancy Love, Development Services Director George Flores, and Communications Manager Annie DeChance.

**2. Presentation and Discussion of the AMI project (meter upgrades) and the new Customer Service Web Portal.**

Staff Liaison: Mark Seamans, Interim Water Resources Director  
Greg Platacz, Information Technology Director

Mr. Seamans opened the presentation and provided an overview of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project and new Customer Service Web Portal. Through utility customer outreach, it was determined customers were interested in transparency, improved customer service, increased credibility, customer training, and the ability to make payments online. New technology was purchased and the AMI program was initiated, which provides accurate web-based water metering. All meters were converted to the new program as of October, 2017. Councilmember Guy requested clarification regarding use of City vehicles to collect meter reads. Mr. Seamans clarified City vehicles will be used to collect meter information only when issues occur and/or reads appear to be inaccurate. Aerial views of the City's service area were displayed and discussed. Mayor Meck requested further information regarding reports that generate a zero read. Mr. Seamans stated reports are generated using a monthly billing cycle, although additional reports will be generated as needed and may be viewed by staff daily. Discussion was held regarding Encoder Receiver Transmitters (ERT) which are located in the meter boxes, connected to the meter, and transmit meter data directly to the City. Councilmember Orsborn requested further

information related to costs. Mr. Seamans provided information related to costs; staff performs the labor to install and replace components of the system. The Customer Self Service (CSS) Portal was discussed, which provides customers with consumption reports and will include information related to issues or discrepancies; the meters and reads are 98 percent accurate. If issues or discrepancies are identified, staff will contact the customer in order to determine if a potential leak exists and to provide additional information and training regarding leaks and water conservation. Customer feedback has been positive. Moving forward, further adjusting and testing of equipment will take place, meters that read in the thousands will be replaced, customer care and outreach programs will continue, and tracking and reporting will consistently be evaluated to determine necessary changes. Councilmember Orsborn requested further information related to additional costs with the updated system. Mr. Seamans stated costs have been incurred and staffing changes have taken place in order to facilitate the new equipment and processes. Mayor Meck requested information related to reports and identifying issues with approximately 20,000 customers. Mr. Seamans stated customers that either call in or walk in to utility billing are provided customer care immediately; reports are generated by staff based on billing cycles and issues are addressed as necessary.

Mr. Platacz provided an overview of the Munis Utility Billing module which is a component of the City's overall Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) initiative. Current utility billing challenges were addressed and include delayed payment processing, delayed data entry, manual work orders process, and limited quality assurance and quality control tools. These challenges will be alleviated with the implementation of the CSS portal. Benefits of the portal include real time visibility of customer statements, an electronic process for service orders, enhanced system performance and stability, and more flexible and powerful quality assurance tools for processing bills. An overview of customer outreach was provided; letters regarding the upcoming changes have been provided to customers along with bill inserts, electronic newsletters, and social media notices. In order for customers to utilize the CSS portal, they will be required to create a profile. All customers will receive a paper bill with their account number and customer identification number so they may properly set-up their CSS account. Customers may then pay their bills through the CSS and will also have the ability to set-up automatic bill payments. Once a customer profile is initiated, customers will have the ability view bills and daily usage. General discussion was held regarding capabilities of the system and further actions related to program implementation, including customer outreach.

**3. Presentation and Discussion of the Fiscal Year 2018/2019 City Budget.**  
Staff Liaison: Larry Price, Finance Director

Mr. Price provided an overview of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/2018 budget along with a comparison between the FY 2017/2018 and the FY 2016/2017 budget. General discussion was held regarding budget policies. General Fund projections through FY 2022/2023 were presented and include operating revenues, operating expenditures, capital sources, capital expenditures, total expenditures, and fund balances. Staff requested direction related to the FY 2018/2019 budget and budget preparations. Council requested further information related to staffing levels and expectations, wage and benefit projections, current capital improvement project obligations, unfunded high-priority projects from previous years, potential sales tax rate reduction projections, and investment in infrastructure. Further workshops will be held regarding budget policies and budget preparation for FY 2018/2019.

**4. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Heustis and seconded by Councilmember Youngker to adjourn the meeting at 5:46 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

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Jackie A. Meck, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Lucinda J. Aja, City Clerk

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Council Workshop held on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2018. I further certify that a quorum was present.

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Lucinda J. Aja, City Clerk