



MEMORANDUM

Date: April 17, 2015

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: **Sewer User Fee Increase Continued to the April 21, 2015 Board of Supervisors Meeting – Request for Additional Information**

At the continued public hearing regarding a sewer use fee increase, the Board requested additional information regarding two subject areas.

The first was energy and energy consumption. Attachment 1 is an April 17, 2015 memorandum from the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Director addressing the energy issues associated with operating our facilities, as well as biogas.

The Board also requested information related to the Sewer Outreach Subsidy Program. Attachment 2 is an April 16, 2015 memorandum addressing this issue.

Finally, there has been an inquiry regarding connection fees. The current fee discussion relates only to sewer user fees. The Board could direct that staff initiate the process to review sewer connection fees or to increase these fees directly in proportion to the sewer user fee increase, i.e., three percent. However, such would require another ordinance and public participation process, likely requiring an additional 60 days.

Staff will do as directed by the Board with regard to any potential sewer connection fee increase that may be considered in the future.

CHH/mjk

Attachments

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Tom Burke, Deputy County Administrator for Administration
Jackson Jenkins, Director, Regional Wastewater Reclamation
Robert Johnson, Budget Manager, Finance and Risk Management
Robin Brigode, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors




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April 17, 2015

MEMO TO: C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator
FROM: Jackson Jenkins, Director - RWRD 
SUBJECT: **Additional Information for the Board of Supervisors regarding the RWRD Energy Master Plan**

At the April 14, 2015 meeting, the Board of Supervisors asked questions about additional options for the use of biogas and had related comments regarding the Department's electricity costs.

The following bullets summarize the Department's energy program:

- 1) In order to provide safe, reliable and redundant power (as required by ADEQ regulations) to the newly upgraded and expanded Tres Rios WRF (formerly Ina Road WRF) the Department prepared an Energy Master Plan with technical assistance provided by CH2MHILL. This March 2010 Master Plan was used to help determine the most efficient, safe and cost effective methods in which to provide the energy necessary to operate the facility. This Energy Master Plan report can be reviewed at:

http://webcms.pima.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/Government/Wastewater%20Reclamation/Energy%20Management/Biogas/InaRoadWRF-EnergyMasterPlan.pdf
- 2) The Energy Master Plan identified TEP commercial power to provide significant life-cycle cost savings compared to the construction of a new power generating facility. The previous power generating facility had exceeded its useful life and was determined to be too costly to rehabilitate compared to building a new modern state-of-the-art facility.
- 3) The old Ina Rd Power Generating Facility was shutdown in April 2013, after being in service for over 36 years.
- 4) The Department moved forward with installation of an approximate 2 mile extension of a looped 46.2 KVA transmission line to provide the standby source of power from two independent substations to the Tres Rios WRF.
- 5) The Department also installed two separate and independent 1 megawatt solar power generating photovoltaic cells. One is located adjacent to the new WESC and Agua Nueva WRF while the second one is located adjacent to the Tres Rios WRF.
- 6) The new upgraded treatment process utilized in the ROMP expansion and upgrade project only requires approximately 15% of the biogas produced from the on-site digestion process to satisfy all of its thermal heating requirements. The remaining 85% of the biogas is available for other uses.

- 7) The Department has evaluated utilizing the excess biogas for a multitude of options including: producing Class A biosolids, Compressed Natural biomethane gas (CNG) for vehicle fuel, fuel for the County at a downtown central energy plant and marketing to a third party willing to pay a premium for renewable energy source. Due to current market conditions, natural gas is considerably less expensive than biogas costs associated with cleaning. Thus, the only current viable option for beneficially using the biogas is to clean it and market it to firms willing to pay the premium above natural gas pricing necessary to make the project a sound and reasonable investment.
- 8) The Department continues to move forward with negotiations for a third party to purchase, clean and market the excess biogas. Once final negotiations are completed and a gas cleaning facility constructed by the 3rd party at their expense, the Department anticipates receiving approximately \$200k/year in biogas sales revenue.

Energy consumption has decreased and energy costs have decreased approximately 24%. The present cost of energy is less than it would have been by operating biogas energy generating facility and purchasing standby backup electricity from TEP. The Department continues to focus on energy optimization as part of its day to day business. The response document titled *"Responses ToThe Board of Supervisors' March 10, 2015 Questions"* recently provided to the BOS has additional energy consumption and optimization information contained on pages 31-33.

The Department has numerous memoranda and related documents that further track decisions made and clarify the complicating facets associated with the energy topic. Please let me know if you or any BOS member would like copies of these historic documents. I am also available to answer questions at your discretion.

cc: John M. Bernal, Deputy County Administrator – Public Works
Tom Burke, Deputy County Administrator - Administration




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April 16, 2015

TO: C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator

THRU: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator - Public Works 

FROM: Jackson Jenkins, Director – RWRD 

SUBJECT: **Outreach Work Plan: Sewer Outreach Subsidy Program**

This memorandum responds to the Board of Supervisors’ request on April 14, 2015, for an outreach work plan for the Sewer Outreach Subsidy (SOS) Program. The attached work plan period is from April 2015 through June 2016, with many tasks already in progress.

The goal of the work plan is to **expand program outreach and maximize program participation during the work plan period** with the following outcomes:

1. Increased numbers of low-income rate payers become aware of the SOS Program;
2. Pima County Community Action Agency (PCCAA) leverages relationships with community organizations and agencies to increase awareness of the SOS Program among those organizations’ clients;
3. Low-income rate payers understand the process for qualifying for the program; and
4. The eligibility determination process for the SOS Program is expedited.

RWRD and Pima County Community Action Agency (PCCAA) will face some challenges in meeting these goals; and will work both independently and collaboratively to address these challenges.

One challenge is how to reach a target audience that is dispersed throughout metropolitan Pima County, ranging from urban neighborhoods with high concentrations of low income residents to less densely populated rural areas.

Another challenge is how to inform the relatively high proportion of people with low incomes who have limited English proficiency. While it is fairly easy to meet the communication needs of monolingual Spanish speakers, there are many other ethnic minorities (especially in the refugee community) that speak languages other than English and Spanish. The key to working with such communities is creating partnerships with organizations that serve unique populations.

C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator
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Collaboration with many other entities is a key strategy in all aspects of the work plan. PCCAA will strive to continue/increase its engagement with long-time community partners, while reaching out to additional agencies that may work with under-served populations that could benefit from the SOS program in our community.

A combination of a community-wide marketing program, coupled with a robust partnering with the private non-profit sector, will lead to a more widespread knowledge of the program

Increased awareness of the SOS Program and eligibility criteria must be balanced with a streamlining of the eligibility process. Today, there is an approximate 8 week wait period from the time an applicant initiates the process of phoning the automated intake line to the time that the application is fully processed. PCCAA is considering working with selected qualified private non-profit agencies that might be willing to assist their own clients in filling out and filing SOS Program applications. This approach will only be successful if these agencies are able and willing to assist their clients in this capacity. There would be no funds available to pay the agencies to assist in this way.

The Board of Supervisors is considering modifying the re-eligibility process by allowing certain participants to be recertified via US Mail for two years after the initial certification. Approximately 60% of all applicants are not first-time SOS Program users, but are required to go through an in-person interview at the PCCAA office or in their homes if they are elderly homebound or disabled customers. These are applicants whose income sources typically include Social Security, Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income, pensions, etc. Income and other qualifying information are already documented and change insignificantly or not at all during the course of a year. If the Board of Supervisors determines that such customers can go three years before an in-person recertification is needed, PCCAA staff will be freed up to work more quickly through its backlog.

It is important to note that if widespread advertisement of the SOS Program is undertaken without a corresponding streamlining of the PCCAA recertification process, the level of frustration and dissatisfaction among those seeking assistance through the SOS Program will rise dramatically. While the attached chart does not outline how PCCAA would institute a change to its recertification protocols, if the Board of Supervisors approves such a change, PCCAA staff would work closely with the Customer Service Section of the Finance and Risk Management Department to implement those changes. (The Customer Service Section provides billing services for RWRD).

The attached document outlines the proposal for increasing awareness and participation in the SOS Program and on streamlining strategy. This is a "living document" that will be modified, deleted and added to, as RWRD and PCCAA learn which methodologies result in the highest impact.

Attachment

c: Charles Casey, Administrative Services Manager Sr., PCCAA
Rosemary CoraCruz, Program Manager, PCCAA
Laura Hagen Fairbanks, Community Relations Manager, PCRWRD

Work Plan for Sewer Outreach Subsidy (SOS) Program

Work Plan Period: April 2015 through June 2016

Goal: Increase program outreach and maximize program participation during the work plan period

Objective 1: Increased partnerships with private non-profit agencies

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	STATUS/COMMENTS
Expand messaging of SOS Program to existing private non-profit community partners Forge associations with other private non-profit agencies that could refer their clients and/or assist with intake activities	Ongoing	Old and new partnership will lead to increased knowledge of the SOS Program in communities that would be well-served by it	PCCAA staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calls Received ○ Applications Received ○ Individuals enrolled through this strategy ○ How applicants heard about the program • Maintain a list of agencies working with PCCAA 	

Objective 2: Development and Distribution of Informational Materials April 2015 through June 2016

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	STATUS/COMMENTS
Create four bill inserts providing information about the SOS Program	Ensure quarterly placement of SOS materials in bill inserts in FY 2015/2016	Ratepayers will learn about the SOS Program and will contact PCCAA	Laura Fairbanks	Track how applicants learned about the SOS program (See Objective 1 – page 1)	In Progress
Draft bilingual informational brochure	April 2015	Distribution of brochure at community events, neighborhood meetings, etc.	Laura Fairbanks	Track materials distributed	Completed

Objective 3: Outreach to Community Organizations and Agencies that Represent or Serve People with Low Incomes

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	STATUS/COMMENTS
Provide Informational brochures to private non-profit agencies/community centers/public libraries	Ongoing	Increased knowledge about the SOS Program in the community	PCCAA and RWRD Community Relations	Track number and locations of brochures distributed	

Objective 4: Marketing Campaign

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	STATUS/COMMENTS
Create a comprehensive list of outreach events and approximate attendee count	Ongoing	Documentation of events	RWRD Community Relations staff	Track attendance and number of people exposed to the SOS message	
Use poster boards at outreach event booths that read "Do you think you or someone you know might qualify for a low-income-based reduction on a monthly sewer bill? Ask us about the Sewer Outreach Subsidy Program."	Ongoing	SOS- eligible residents or their family members/friends/neighbors would learn about the program	RWRD Community Relations staff	Track number of brochures distributed	
Contact and request brochure placement in local libraries, community centers, other public locations, etc.	Ongoing	Build partnerships with organizations People will learn about SOS Program and contact PCCAA	RWRD Community Relations staff	Track number of brochures distributed Track how SOS participants learned about the program during the intake process	
Host a table at local events geared toward low-income individuals and families Provide information about the SOS Program	Ongoing	Provide information to potentially-eligible individuals and families	PCCAA staff	Track number of events held, participants at event, and materials distributed at the event Track how SOS participants learned about the program during the intake process	
Placement of posters at libraries and community organizations serving low income populations	Ongoing	SOS- eligible residents or their family members would learn about the program	PCCAA and RWRD Community Relations staff	Track number of posters distributed Track how SOS participants learned about the program during the intake process	
Place notices in County newsletters, blogs, and websites	Ongoing	Broader distribution of information	Laura Fairbanks Jeff Nordensson	Track number of notices posted	
Referral and information sharing via social media	Ongoing	Broader distribution of information	Laura Fairbanks Jeff Nordensson	Track social media "hits"	

Objective 5: Expand Use of Technology

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	STATUS/COMMENTS
Update website to highlight SOS Program	Completed	Easier to find SOS info on RWRD website	Laura Fairbanks ITD staff	Measure number on "hits" of SOS Program tab	
Coordinate with Pima County Communications	Ongoing	Greater use of social media to spread the word about the SOS Program	Laura Fairbanks	Increase collaboration and partnership with the Communications Department	
Quarterly Pima County Facebook Page updates throughout FY 15/16	Quarterly during 15/16	Broader distribution of information about the SOS Program	Communications Staff/RWRD Community Relations staff	Presence of the SOS Program on County's Facebook page	
Provide analysis of social media efforts	Ongoing	Analysis of social media presence	Communications Department RWRD Community Relations staff	Ability to modify social media efforts to better reach our target audience	
Quarterly reports from Information Technology Department on webpage analysis and visits	Quarterly during 15/16	Understanding of how many people use RWRD website to learn about the SOS program	ITD staff	Generation of data	
Replace hold music for RWRD and Finance & Risk Management Customer Service with Department announcements highlighting the SOS program	July 1, 2015	Broader distribution of information about the SOS Program	Bob Meredith - ITD	Questions to staff about the SOS Program from those who were on hold	

Objective 6: Evaluate complexity of application and enrollment process

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	EXPECTED OUTCOME	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	STATUS/COMMENTS
Outreach to private non-profit organizations that may qualify to complete SOS applications on behalf of Pima County	Ongoing	Timely completion of applications	PCCAA	Increased numbers of completed applications	This needs to be explored further to determine the feasibility of this approach
Determine wait times between call to SOS automated line, and staff contact with constituent	FY 2015/2016	Reduction of wait times as streamlining methods are instituted	PCCAA	Reduction in numbers of people waiting for intake interviews	Improved response time will be largely based on potential changes to recertification requirements