

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Board Memorandum

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

DATE: MARCH 12, 2018

ITEM NO: 6

SUBJECT: FORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL WATER RATES TASK FORCE

ISSUE:

Form an Agricultural Water Rates Task Force based on the City Council direction, and provide guidance to the Water Committee on the development of a work plan and participation rules for the Task Force.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Public Utilities form an Agricultural Water Rates Task Force based on the City Council direction, and provide guidance to the Water Committee on the development of a work plan and participation rules for the Task Force.

BACKGROUND:

On November 28, 2017, the Riverside City Council approved in concept the establishment of an Agricultural Water Rates Task Force (Ag Task Force), subject to the Brown Act, for one year while freezing agricultural rates at current levels. The role of the Ag Task Force, composed of community members and stakeholders, will be to work with Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) staff to develop rate alternative recommendations for the Board that address WA-3 and WA-9 rate revisions. The City Council further directed the Board to provide quarterly updates on Ag Task Force activities and final rate recommendations to the City Council Utility Services/Land Use/Energy Development Committee by July 1, 2019.

DISCUSSION:

Composition of the Task Force

At the November 28, 2017 joint meeting with the RPU Board, the City Council directed staff to work with the Board to create the Ad Hoc Agricultural Water Rates Task Force, subject to the Brown Act, to address WA-3 and WA-9 rate revisions, with quarterly updates to the City Council Utility Services / Land Use / Energy Development Committee. No direction had been given to staff on the size of the Task Force, and RPU Board member Andrew Walcker had been tasked with the selection of potential Task Force members.

Mr. Walcker had developed a list of over 20 potential Task Force members, representative of various perspectives and interests on the matter, and reached out to all potential members to assess interest in serving on the Task Force. As of this report's publication, 13 individuals had expressed interest and willingness to serve. The list of all 24 potential members is attached, highlighting the 13 members willing and able to serve.

Scope of Work

The purpose of the Ag Task Force is to advise the Board on policy considerations to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of water resources and water pricing to promote agricultural uses and land use policies consistent with Measure R, Measure C, GrowRIVERSIDE and California law. The Ag Task Force will review rate-setting cost of service legal requirements under Proposition 218, city policies to promote local agriculture and prioritize Gage Canal water for agricultural use under Measures R and C, the WA-8 rate, infrastructure conditions and capacities in the Greenbelt agricultural region and elsewhere within the RPU water service area. RPU staff will assist in providing all the information required by the Ag Task Force to complete their Council-directed mission.

Work Plan and Participation Rules

At the April 23 meeting, the Water Committee will develop a Work Plan for the Task Force, clarifying the number and purpose of each meeting during the course of the next year (through July 2019). In addition, the Committee will establish participation rules for the Task Force members, to ensure meaningful contribution from all. The Task Force will start meeting in April, following the Water Committee action. Updates will be provided to the Board and the City Council Utility Services/Land Use/Energy Development Committee quarterly.

Meeting Location and Details

The Ag Task Force will meet in the Mayor's Ceremonial Room on the 7th floor of City Hall. Meetings will be recorded and available on the City's website. Meeting agendas will be noticed prior to the meeting date, as required by the Brown Act.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact for this item.

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Attachment: Potential List of Ad Hoc Agricultural Water Rates Task Force Committee Members