



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE:** MARCH 29, 2018

**ITEM NO:** 9

**SUBJECT:** FORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL WATER RATES TASK FORCE

### **ISSUES:**

Establish the Agricultural Water Rates Task Force per City Council direction, and determine membership composition, guidelines and participation rules, work plan, and meeting schedule.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Board of Public Utilities:

1. Appoint the Agricultural Water Rates Task Force and nominate and appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair;
2. Approve the Agricultural Water Rates Task Force guidelines and participation rules;
3. Approve the Agricultural Water Rates Task Force work plan; and
4. Approve the Agricultural Water Rates Task Force schedule and purpose of meetings.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On November 28, 2017, City Council recommended the establishment of an Agricultural Water Rates Task Force (Task Force), subject to the Brown Act, for one year while freezing WA-3 and WA-9 agricultural water rates at current levels. The Task Force composed of community members and stakeholders will work with Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) staff to develop rate alternative recommendations for the Board of Public Utilities (Board) and City Council that address proposed WA-3 and WA-9 rate revisions. Councilmember MacArthur suggested that Boardmember Walcker, and Seth Wilson of the Riverside Food Systems Alliance, lead the Task Force. City Council further directed the Board to provide quarterly updates on Task Force activities to the Utility Services/Land Use/Energy Development Committee and a final rate alternative recommendations to the City Council by July 1, 2019.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### Composition of the Task Force

City Council tasked Boardmember Walcker to prepare a list of potential Task Force members. During the Board meeting of March 12, 2018, the Board discussed the Task Force interest list developed by Boardmember Walcker. The list contained 16 individuals, representing various perspectives and interests on the matter, who expressed interest and willingness to serve on the Task Force. The Board determined that the size of the Task Force needed to be limited with each City Council ward being

represented by two residents. Attached is the current list of potential Task Force members (Attachment 1) for Board's consideration. At the time this Board Memorandum was prepared, two potential Task Force members, one from Ward 6 and one from Ward 7, were still needed. Staff prepared a list of Other Interested Residents, who have expressed interest and willingness to serve, and who have been vetted through input and consensus from each respective Councilmember. Staff recommends that the Board appoint all interested Task Force members, and fill the second Ward 6 and Ward 7 positions from individuals on the Other Interested Residents list, and appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair to lead the Task Force.

### Guidelines and Participation Rules

To ensure an organized, efficient, and productive forum for the Task Force resulting in meaningful contribution and a successful outcome, staff recommends that the Board establish a set of guidelines and participation rules. Attached is a set of draft guidelines and participation rules (Attachment 2) for the Board to consider and approve. The draft guidelines include portions of the Board's Standing Rules and guiding principles from other Brown Act committees.

### Work Plan

Staff also recommends that the Board establish a work plan for the Task Force that will be the framework for topics of discussion and consideration during the development of options and rate alternatives. This framework should include policy, legal, and City initiative considerations, the City's historical agricultural and citrus heritage, the Gage canal, existing rate structures, and the Water Utility Cost of Service Study. The Board and Task Force must consider fair and equitable distribution of water resources and water pricing to promote agricultural uses and land use policies consistent with Prop R, Measure C, and GrowRIVERSIDE. Staff recommends that Task Force discussions include rate-setting cost of service legal requirements under Proposition 218, City policies to promote local agriculture, and the prioritization of Gage Canal water for agricultural use under the WA-8 rate structure. Infrastructure conditions, capacities and limitations in the Greenbelt agricultural region should also be evaluated. RPU staff will assist in providing all the information required by the Task Force to complete the Council-directed mission. Staff has developed the attached draft work plan (Attachment 3) as a basic framework for the Board to consider and approve.

### Meeting Schedule and Details

The Task Force will meet in the Mayor's Ceremonial Room on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall. Meetings will be recorded and available on the City's website. Meeting agendas will be posted prior to the meeting date, as required by the Brown Act. The frequency, duration, agenda and time of each meeting may vary based on the topics of discussion and Task Force member and meeting room availability. Staff recommends that the Task Force initially meet monthly with each meeting being two hours in length. Topics of discussion will be dynamic based upon Task Force member participation, contribution, and questions. Details of the Task Force meetings will be presented to the Board monthly via the General Manager's Report. Staff has developed the attached draft tentative meeting schedule and topics of discussion (Attachment 4) for the Board to consider and approve.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to establish the Agricultural Water Rates Task Force.

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Approved by: John A. Russo, City Manager  
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Certifies availability of funds: Laura M. Nomura, Utilities Assistant General Manager/Finance & Administration

Attachments:

1. Potential Agricultural Water Rates Task Force Members
2. Draft guidelines and participation rules
3. Draft work plan
4. Draft tentative meeting schedule and topics