



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

FROM: PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT WITH WESTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT AND THE DESIGNATION OF AN ADDITIONAL DESIGNATED/AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL TO THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK INLAND EMPIRE, AND THE CALIFORNIA WATER/WASTEWATER AGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK FOR THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE

ISSUE:

Approve the Mutual Aid Agreement with Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) and designate an additional Designated/Authorized Official to the Emergency Response Network Inland Empire (ERNIE) and the California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN) for the City of Riverside.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Approve the Mutual Aid Agreement with Western Municipal Water District (WMWD);
2. Designate the Public Utilities Assistant General Manager/Water and the Public Works Director, or designees as the primary Agreement Administrator for the Mutual Aid Agreement with Western Municipal Water District (WMWD);
3. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute contract document for the Mutual Aid Agreement with Western Municipal Water District (WMWD); and
4. Designate the Public Utilities Assistant General Manager/Water, or designee, as an additional Designated Official to Emergency Response Network Inland Empire (ERNIE) and an additional Authorized Official to California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN) for the City of Riverside.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On July 10, 2023, the Board of Public Utilities, with seven members present, unanimously voted to recommend that the City Council approve Recommendations 1 through 4 above.

BACKGROUND:

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, or severe high wind events can cause significant damage or impacts to RPU's water system. These events can affect the utility's ability to provide water to its customers. A large-scale event could cause significant damage to the water system and require extensive resources beyond RPU's ability to promptly repair and restore water service to our customers. RPU may need outside assistance from neighboring water utilities to protect life, property, and the environment.

For years, mutual aid and assistance agreements between water utilities have been used to quickly obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services. The main objective of these agreements is to facilitate short-term deployment of support before, during, and after an incident or emergency. A signed agreement does not obligate the provision or receipt of aid but rather provides the understanding of how parties will assist, receive reimbursement for assistance, and assign liability. RPU may also assist member agencies who are part of the Mutual Aid network if resources are available, however, there is no obligation to assist.

DISCUSSION:

On December 15, 2009, the City Council approved agreements with Emergency Response Network Inland Empire (ERNIE), Public Works Mutual Aid, and California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN) to provide mutual aid and assistance in an emergency. The Council designated the Public Works Director as the Mutual Aid Coordinator and authorized the City Manager, or his designee, to execute necessary contract documents. In addition, RPU and Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) desire to enter into a mutually exclusive mutual aid agreement and, separate from the other contracts listed above, to provide direct assistance, given the proximity and connection of our systems. Since WMWD provides both water and wastewater services, mutual aid benefits accrue to both the Public Utilities as well as Public Works departments. An agreement between WMWD and RPU would be advantageous in providing faster emergency assistance by creating direct access to each other's resources in case of a service disruption or emergency that impacts either agency's ability to provide water service to its customers.

RPU also requests that the Public Utilities Assistant General Manager/Water be designated as an additional Designated/Authorized Official to the ERNIE and CalWARN mutual aid agreements to expedite and streamline assistance on water-related emergencies. Under these agreements, the Designated/Authorized Officials are authorized to request, offer, or refuse to provide or withdraw assistance. As ERNIE and CalWARN assist with water- and wastewater-related emergencies, this would allow RPU/Water and Public Works to administer requests in their respective areas. Having a second Designated/Authorized Official also provides additional redundancy for the City to authorize mutual aid requests or responses.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being and Goal 2.6 – Strengthen community preparedness for emergencies and disruptive events to ensure effective response and recovery;** and **Strategic Priority 6 - Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity**

and **Goal 6.2** – Maintain, protect, and improve assets and infrastructure within the City's built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – RPU is working with agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions to enhance the reliability and resiliency of the overall water system, demonstrating RPU's commitment to its customers and building community trust.
2. **Equity** – RPU endeavors to provide safe and reliable water service to its customers. Improving RPU's resiliency against natural and manmade incidents improves the overall safety and reliability of the water system, providing an equitable benefit to all customers.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Mutual aid agreements offer the safety net of accessing additional resources other agencies provide when needs overwhelm existing RPU resources. In addition, mutual aid can provide a financial hedge against competing with other entities for limited resources during a significant emergency or regional disaster. Riverside is a prudent steward of public funds and ensures responsible management of the City's financial resources while providing quality public services.
4. **Innovation** – Riverside is inventive and timely in meeting the community's and the environment's changing needs and prepares for the unexpected through collaborative partnerships and adaptive processes.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Having mutual aid agreements in place helps to improve RPU's resiliency and ability to respond and restore water service to its customers after an emergency or natural disaster.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to entering into the Mutual Aid Agreement with Western Municipal Water District or with the RPU Assistant General Manager/Water designation as an additional Designated/Authorized Official to ERNIE or CalWARN. If RPU were to respond to a request for mutual aid under any of these agreements, personnel, equipment, and material and supply costs would be reimbursed by the requesting agency under the terms of the mutual aid agreements.

Prepared by:	Todd M. Corbin, Utilities General Manager
Certified as to availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by:	Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. WMWD Mutual Aid Agreement
2. ERNIE Mutual Assistance Agreement
3. CalWARN Mutual Assistance Agreement
4. Presentation