





changes to larger events to make them more sustainable and easier access for residents to dispose of items on a regular basis. They are also looking at making some changes at the State level to bring in different markets for recyclables. Ms. Davis stated it was not looking good for plastics at the moment and there is a need to figure out how to make a change. Acting Chair Lopez stated it occurred to him that the Colorado Recycling Association was coming this summer and questioned the coordination and outreach promotions from the PDPHE. Ms. Davis stated that she needed to contact the Association to finalize things. Ms. Davis stated that PDPHE would not be doing very much, noting the Association would have a keynote speaker and handle the event. Ms. Davis stated that Ms. Susan Finzel-Aldred and Ms. Joy Marauski were working on a couple of tours for participants. The executive committee that meets through Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) are determining all of the speakers. Ms. Davis has not seen any promotional material from them, noting she would reach out to them. Acting Chair Lopez asked if there was one contact person in Pueblo for them to interact or act as a liaison to coordinate the event. Ms. Davis stated she would be the closest to that contact; however, the Association was taking responsibility for their own planning. Ms. Davis stated she did have volunteer sign-up sheets for anyone interested in helping with the event.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 6, 2018 MEETING

After the arrival of Ms. Keller, there was a quorum and action was taken.

Ms. Keller moved to approve the minutes from the December 6, 2018 meeting as mailed. Ms. Conners seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

#### WATER QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE - NANCY KELLER

Ms. Keller stated she was not sure how many members received The Pueblo Chieftain and asked if anyone saw the "Pinky the Elf" publication. She passed out the story that was intended to get people to think about grease disposal. (Note: the publication was too large to attach to the minutes.)

Ms. Keller distributed information about a program that the State was developing relative to nutrient standards, which was entered into the record as Exhibit A. The State has low-level Regulation 85 limits for nitrogen and phosphorus. The Arkansas River in this segment has a total nitrogen level of 15 mg/L and a total phosphorus of 1.0 mg/L. This will be in place until they develop new low limits, which are proposed to be done in 2027. Colorado adopted the low interim standards; however, the EPA did not approve them. It will go to hearing in 2027 to re-evaluate what those numbers should be. Obviously, they want them lower even though they were pretty low as it was. Technology has become a problem with meeting the low numbers and there are some issues as to whether it has benefits in the stream. If a stream had a lot of algae growth, then you should be looking at nutrients and doing something to fix it. In our area, we have found that we have enough sediment that the stream is not clear enough or does not have the right conditions to have an algae problem. The question is whether or not the numbers need to be that low. There will be many discussions happening between now and 2027. She stated the numbers were going to be low and very hard to meet with current technology. As part of the agreement with the EPA, the State has to determine what numbers are appropriate numbers and look at how best to improve the Arkansas River by making improvements between now and 2027 without having major costs. Regulation 85 applies only to the larger wastewater plants. The smaller plants were not included in the regulation due to the cost to make the changes that would be needed. The larger plants have systems installed already that would require less significant cost to make upgrades, noting that the costs were still in the millions of dollars. Per person, it was much more cost effective for the larger plants. In an effort to meet

goals, the State developed the Voluntary Incentive Program. The majority of it will be large facilities, not the smaller ones again. The State felt large facilities making bigger improvements would be better than smaller facilities making smaller changes. The Voluntary Incentive Program provides credits to those plants that can operate in a way that is below the Regulation 85 standards. She referred to the example on the back of Exhibit A. If you are right at the 15 mg/L limit, you don't get any credits. The lower you go below 15 mg/L, the more credits you will get. Each credit is a one-month delay in the compliance schedule for having to meet the low-level limits. You can go up to a maximum of 10 years if you use nitrogen and phosphorus both. With the credits, you can delay costs of implementing additional treatment processes that would cost \$30 or \$40 million in Pueblo or \$200 million for Denver's plant. The extremely large costs can be delayed for a number of years by making incremental improvements in what is being discharged into the river. She stated that Pueblo has signed up for the program, noting we do run a little bit better than the standards. This will allow Pueblo to take advantage of getting credits that can be used to delay the costs and the time to meet the ultra-low standards. Cost wise, this gives them more time for the technology to improve and make plans to get some facilities built to help reach the really low levels. Lessons learned will help them save money down the road. Each year, an annual averages report will be submitted to the State. The State will calculate the months of credit Pueblo will receive.

Ms. Getts questioned if Pueblo's plant was considered a large plant. Ms. Keller replied yes, we were considered the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in the State of Colorado. She stated there are hundreds of plants that are one million gallons or less. She stated that Pueblo's 19 million gallons a day was small compared to Denver's 150 million gallons a day.

Ms. Connors questioned what they were doing voluntarily to reduce the numbers. Ms. Keller stated that one of the things they can do to improve their process is add chemicals. The plant does well treating nitrogen. If they do add a chemical, it is typically acidic acid, which helps provide more carbon to supplement the bacteria, so they can do more treatment. This allows them to lower the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus that is being discharged. She stated that the Pueblo plant is in the process of adding a hydrocyclone, which was like a centrifuge. The hydrocyclone will retain the bacteria that take up phosphorus more readily than other bacteria. The other bacteria are sent to the waste line. She stated that this type of treatment is readily used in Europe. There is one facility in Florida and a place in Oregon that is in the process of building a hydrocyclone. It will be exciting when it is up and running to be able to test its effectiveness, noting that Europe has been doing great with it. This should help them get lower levels, which would help eliminate some of the additional chemicals used.

Ms. Solis questioned the 2027 deadline. Ms. Keller replied that 2027 is when a standard would be taken to hearing and presumably adopted. They may adopt it statewide; they may not. Most standards are adopted into the basic standards, and as they rotate over the five years through all of the basins, they take those standards that have changed and adopt them into the basins, which allows them to apply the correct numbers to each segment. She stated the Arkansas Basin hearing is usually the year after basic standards are adopted; therefore, the standards would apply to the basins in 2028. The changes have to be adopted into the permit, noting a new permit application would have to be submitted within a year after the hearing. It would show up in the permit by 2029. With those standards in place, they would then have a compliance schedule to determine what they want to build, get it built and online, and start operating.

Ms. Keller stated that the other thing that is happening in conjunction with the credit program is the Arkansas Fountain Coalition of Urban River Evaluation. This is a watershed group with Colorado Springs Utilities, Upper Monument Creek, Tri-Lakes, Fountain, Security, Woodmen

Hills, Widefield, Pueblo, and Pueblo West. They are collecting data from Monument Creek to the outlet of the Arkansas River and from the Pueblo Reservoir to John Martin Reservoir. This data will be set up with a model to determine what site-specific standards would be appropriate for the segments. This will help the State to determine what standard they would apply. It will look at the variables, noting that most of them are indirect. There are not a lot of things that are direct variables that tie with nutrients. It's things like the pH, the dissolved oxygen, the amount of sunlight, the habitat, etc. There are a lot of things that play into nutrients as to whether or not they are an issue. The model will take all of the data and determine what the controlling factors are to come up with numbers that would be needed to meet or eliminate any potential issues.

Acting Chair Lopez questioned the Arkansas River branch to John Martin Reservoir. Ms. Keller replied they would be going from the Pueblo Reservoir to John Martin Reservoir. The reason it goes to John Martin is primarily because nutrients tend to be the problem when water is held in a lake. There are many issues with the fate of the discharges from the wastewater facilities upstream, questioning if it makes it to John Martin Reservoir or does it all go out on the ditches and the farmer puts it on the field, they add more fertilizer, and then their returns carry nutrients to the river. The model will help make it clear what the sources of nutrients are.

Ms. Connors questioned if they have seen an increase in certain levels due to the homeless camps along the Fountain Creek. Ms. Keller replied the E. coli levels are almost always going to be impacted by the homeless, because they tend to have concentrations along the creek where they are living. They haven't seen any increases during the regular flow period; it's the storm events when they see peak amounts. She isn't sure if the peaks are higher now than they were before because it is dependent on the size of the storm, i.e., how it runs off or if it soaks in. There are so many variables in a storm event, it is hard to compare one to another. It definitely exceeds stream standards during storm events. In the summer months, there will be higher levels. All of Fountain Creek is listed on the 303(d) list as impaired for E. coli around Colorado Springs and Pueblo.

#### SOLID WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE - TED LOPEZ

Acting Chair Lopez stated he did not have a report.

Ms. Getts stated that Ms. Cortese wanted to let the Committee know that she was giving a "State of Recycling" presentation to PACOG on February 28, 2019. It would cover what can and cannot be recycled and what products provide the most revenue.

Acting Chair Lopez questioned if this was part of an attempt to educate elected officials. Ms. Getts replied yes. Acting Chair Lopez stated that the PACOG meeting runs from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Ms. Keller questioned if grease recycling was addressed for bio-gasses. Ms. Getts replied she was not aware of any. Ms. Keller stated that grease can be used to create bio-gasses in a self-contained system or by adding to digesters. She stated that is was a nasty process. Ms. Getts questioned if the wastewater department would be interested in the separation of grease products to be used as a fuel source. Ms. Keller replied they were not currently set up do it, noting she would like to look at different ways, like solar. She stated the State has grants for hydro-power and would like to explore the ways it could be used within the facility, noting there are 12 million gallons of water flowing through it every day that could be harnessed for something. Looking at the feasibility of creating a bio-gas or a compressed gas, using grease was a possibility. Ms. Getts stated that the facility could easily get rolled into an energy performance contract and start making investments using the savings from that contract. She

stated that the City of Pueblo was about to start one, but there was a waiting period. She felt it should be included in their Request for Proposal (RFP). Acting Chair Lopez questioned what type of grease. Ms. Keller replied it was household grease, not petroleum based. Acting Chair Lopez asked if it would be used as fuel by the wastewater facility. Ms. Keller replied it could be put back into a natural gas line or used as compressed gas in buses or our own vehicles. Ms. Getts stated that some of the wastewater plants have started using it and have found that it has generated a good amount of savings for them, noting Grand Junction was one of them and Longmont was another.

### OTHER

Ms. Getts stated the Fountain Creek Water Sentinels have been doing a lot of water testing through River Watch Colorado. She stated it was pretty basic, but still testing dissolved oxygens, some of the major temperatures, and Ph levels. She thought they were testing monthly, noting she felt it would be interesting data. She questioned if they should make a presentation to EPAC as to what they were doing and the source of their funding.

Ms. Getts questioned gray water use. She was interested in what Tucson, Arizona, has done, noting they have a Gray Water Ordinance in their community and offer incentives for installing gray water use systems. They have worked out all of the issues that could come up with those types of systems, i.e., backflow and contamination. She questioned if this was something the Pueblo community has thought of and if there were any major barriers. She said it was found that about one-third of the water that goes into the sewer line can be reused safely. She questioned Ms. Keller if a gray water program would benefit Pueblo. Ms. Keller replied that anytime you pump water it costs to pump. Water is pumped in as it comes into the plant and gravity feeds it through the rest of the plant. If the solids are more concentrated, that makes the treatment issues more difficult. She stated it was becoming a bigger problem because of the way the State looks at things. Treatment plants are set up with a certain design capacity, and if your loading gets higher and higher but your flow is not going up, then you start exceeding the plant's standards. Standard rates change, and flow rates change. She stated there is a group that is reviewing how they are going to designate the design criteria, noting they were not close to being ready. She stated trying to implement gray water would be a problem because the plant's design only allows so many solids. Ms. Getts stated then it would not be a shift in equipment but a State level policy changing the numbers. Ms. Keller replied that it may require some equipment because instead of it flowing, they may have to add water to make it flow or may have to change processes where it flows freely by gravity. If a few homes do it, they will never see it. If it becomes like Tucson where it is citywide, it would be a different situation. She stated Tucson's plant was struggling.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Acting Chair Lopez asked if any members were interested in serving as Chair for the year 2019. There were no responses.

Acting Chair Lopez asked if any members were interested in serving as Vice Chair. There were no responses.

Acting Chair Lopez asked if there were any nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Connors nominated Ms. Keller as Vice Chair. Ms. Getts seconded the nomination. Ms. Keller was asked if she accepted the nomination. Ms. Keller replied she had time issues and declined the nomination.

Acting Chair Lopez asked for additional nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Solis nominated Ms. Getts as Vice Chair. Ms. Conners seconded the motion. After some discussion as to the role of the Vice Chair, Ms. Getts accepted the nomination. The motion to accept Ms. Getts as Vice Chair was passed unanimously.

Acting Chair Lopez motioned to accept the role of Chair for the year 2019 by acclamation. All present were in favor of the motion.

#### AGENDA FOR APRIL 4, 2019 MEETING

The next regularly scheduled EPAC meeting is Thursday, April 4, 2019, at 229 West 12th Street, from 5:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

#### ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Chair Lopez stated that Pueblo Energy's Future (PEF), an organization that has been around for a few years, is in the process of putting together their campaign to inform the public about some highlights about the Phase I, Municipal Electric Utility Feasibility Study. He stated there were a few details required before it could be finalized; however, he didn't see anything negative with the City moving forward with the next step being Phase II. The City Council created an Electric Utility Commission to coordinate the study. It was discussed at one of the coordinating meetings to educate the public about the highlights and the benefits of a municipality and what needed to be taken into account. Ms. Getts stated the meetings were open to the public and information gets posted to the Website for the Electric Utility Commission. Chair Lopez stated the tag line was "Bringing Power Home". He stated they were forming four committees to move it forward. They had a meeting on digital communications, business outreach, neighborhood outreach, group outreach, and speakers. There was a PowerPoint presentation that could be presented at different groups, i.e., Rotary Club, town house meetings, etc. He stated there would be some training on how to make the presentation. He stated the next step would be to see if City Council, along with the Mayor, was willing to put it on the ballot before the voters. He wasn't sure if the voters had to approve moving forward to Phase II or if the Mayor and City Council would create an ordinance approving Phase II, which would be easier than collecting signatures. With the new form of government, the Mayor can veto decisions voted on by City Council. He stated he has mentioned to some of his customers that changes were coming and that he was also going to mention it at the next Pillars of Unity meeting next Wednesday at 12:00 p.m. at the Lucero Library. He wanted to inform the community. Somewhere along the line, the voting public has to approve creating debt to acquire the facilities that will be needed. There may be two decisions, i.e., to approve acquiring municipalizing and then to create debt.

Ms. Getts questioned how many people were on EPAC and how many vacancies there were. Ms. Smith, Recording Secretary, replied there are currently seven members and two ex-officio members--one with Colorado State University Extension (CSU Extension) and one from the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDPHE) who is the Environmental Coordinator. There are five additional vacancies from different sectors. She stated that EPAC has twelve regular members. The members have three-year terms. Both ex-officio members have indefinite terms. She stated applications for membership are submitted to the Department of Planning and Development, which then submits them to PACOG for appointment. Ms. Davis asked if the application could be found online. Ms. Smith replied it could be found under the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG) Webpage under Environmental. Chair Lopez questioned the number needed for a quorum. Ms. Smith replied that a resolution was passed by PACOG in 2012 decreasing the required quorum of seven to five. She stated that the five vacancies were as follows: one for Private Citizens, one for Organizations with Substantial

Economic Interest, and three for Public Interest. She stated that vacancies are published in The Pueblo Chieftain. Chair Lopez stated that one doesn't have to wait for the advertisement of the vacancies, they can apply any time. Ms. Smith replied that was correct. Once an application is received, it is submitted to PACOG, who makes the appointment by resolution.

Ms. Conner questioned the consideration of having monthly meetings. Chair Lopez stated the meetings were held monthly for some time, but because attendance was lacking, the meetings moved to bi-monthly. He stated that other meetings could be scheduled as needed.

Chair Lopez suggested having a presentation on the Municipal Electric Utility Feasibility Study. Ms. Conner stated that the study was important for Pueblo and very interesting.

Chair Lopez stated he would be going out on a limb and contrary to the tone of The Pueblo Chieftain editorials by stating there was a positive outlook to the study. The study was not to reach a decision to acquire or municipalize but to find out what was needed and the cost or the savings. He stated that the 10 to 12 percent savings would be substantial. He noted that one of The Pueblo Chieftain editorials referred to a dollar amount of \$250 million for acquisition while another one published last Sunday put the proposal in proper perspective. He questioned the gross amount received from rates paid, which he felt would be substantial. He stated it surprised him to learn that the population in Pueblo increased in the last eight years by 3.6 to 3.9 percent. The increase in utility costs was 360 percent. Ms. Conners stated that it was overhead and that underground utilities were very expensive. Chair Lopez stated that the tone would probably alarm readers. He noted that there have been comments that the City Council can't even do a paving utility, how are they going to run a large operation like this.

Ms. Getts stated that she thought Pueblo Energy's Future intends to hold more town hall meetings and was working on a list of frequently asked questions. Chair Lopez stated they need to have a version that is written to be easily understood by the general public. Ms. Getts stated the full study was available online.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before EPAC, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.



Sandra M. Smith  
EPAC Recording Secretary

SMS





