

## City of Portola Water Forum

July 17, 2013 Memorial Hall

Meeting called to order 1905 hours by Mayor John Larrieu. All council members present.

City Manager Ian Kaiser started meeting by making a few brief comments regarding water sources and stated main problem is we have no extra water sources other than Lake Davis. Stated at present time we are not using the water treatment plant due to some engineering issues and they need to be repaired.

Spoke briefly about the utility billing and that it doesn't just include water, it also includes sewer, landfill and solid waste fees. Ian stated he has reviewed the sewer increases and feels there is some cushion and he can reduce the rates some, undetermined how much at this time, but will know more soon.

The staff and council have discussed the prior rate study and will try and work with Rural Water Council and USDA to get another rate study done that will meet the rural area needs without the Woodbridge expansion.

Ian looking into a tiered rate system with a base rate of consumption and will step up by usage per 1000 galls used. This tiered system will make the consumer responsible for the rates they pay by how much water they use.

Ian spoke about a character he came up with named Water Bill Hiccup. And that Water Bill wants to have a piece of the money spent on water. The City wants to help stop Water Bill hiccup by looking into the rates and getting another study. But this will take time and please be patient.

At this time the forum was opened up for public discussion.

Below are some of the comments, concerns and solutions from the citizens that attended:

In the past with Lake Davis and Fish and Game, and the poisoning of the fish, and a promise to always have free water. (Why can't we re-sell to the state?)

Question about the continuous leak from the Portola High School and why can't it be fixed?

Comment from audience that Woodbridge Project should have never been approved

Question of why the water is not drinkable and smells of chlorine? Todd answered by explaining the state requires the water be treated and chlorinated.

The City will be asking for a water summit which will include all the entities involved with the building of the water treatment plant and address the issues and needed repairs to make it function properly.

Discussion from audience about the cost of the water treatment plant to the City and it was pointed out that the City only paid approximately 17% of the cost, and the City pays an annual fee to the state of approximately \$56,000 whether we use it or not.

Question of why we are not using Lake Davis water, lower the rates, so people can afford to water their lawns and that water should be free. It was explained that the cost of the water from Lake Davis isn't the issue it's the cost to treat it.

Why do some residents and businesses have different rates? It was explained that the meter size decides the base rate. Some businesses and residences need bigger meters.

City needs to get into negotiations with the County and State and see if it can get out of the contracts.

Why can't we sell the unused water to others downstream? (It's against the law)

Can we just moth ball the water treatment plant until it needs to be used?

Can we separate the water from Lake Davis and the water from the wells/springs? Answer was no because way to do that we only have one pipe to feed the system.

If the state will eventually make us go to Lake Davis water why not shut down the wells and use it strictly?

Is the cost of running the wells more costly?

What is the base amount of usage per household? Answer was about 4000 per month or less.

US average increase for water costs is 13%, and the City's is approximately 35%

Solution: To get a water rate that will cover costs even if the population decreases during the upcoming years.

Solution: To consolidate services with GLRID and down size

Suggestion: To start a water commission with all the surrounding water districts and to brainstorm on the issues together.

How can we help the low income families with their utility bills? Suggestion was to create a fund at the Family resource center to assist with their bills.

Tiered billing system

Meter the water so it limits the amount of water used by the household to keep them from overuse, so they won't have to be shut off for overuse by those on a limited income.

Idea: Have citizens donate from their change to help low income residents with their bills. (example: if bill is 91.50 round up to 92.00 and change goes into special fund)

Check into seeing if a program like HEAP can assist with utility bills

Why does water and trash coincide with each other, causing some to get shut off for not paying their bills?

Suggestion: Try and re-negotiate the rates with the state for Lake Davis water.

Suggestion: Making time limits as to what time of day and when you can use water. The issue isn't the amount of water available, we don't have a shortage.

Closing statement:

Julianna said that the new City Manager is listening to the citizens and is giving you a voice. He is willing to try and help and give the City some positive feedback. Please work with him and the council to address these issues.

Adjourned at 2047 hours

Approximately 48 to 50 in attendance