

**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Citizens' Advisory Committee
Wastewater Subcommittee**

MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, September 10, 2024
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room**

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Mission: The Wastewater Subcommittee shall review sewage and stormwater collection, treatment, and disposal system replacement, recycling, and other relevant plans, programs, and policies ([Admin. Code Article XV, Sections 5.140 - 5.142](#)).

Members

Amy Nagengast, Chair (D8)	Maika Pinkston (M-Enviro. Org)	Andrea Baker (B-Small Business)
Douglas Jacuzzi (D4)	Moisés García (D9)	Elizabeth Steele
		Teshara (D7)

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayoral appointed, B = Board President appointed

Staff Liaisons: Lexus Moncrease and Sharon Liu-Bettencourt

Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to order and roll call

Members present at roll call: (4) Nagengast, Teshara, Pinkston, Baker

Members Absent: (2) Jacuzzi and Garcia

London N. Breed
Mayor

Tim Paulson
President

Anthony Rivera
Vice President

Newsha K. Ajami
Commissioner

Sophie Maxwell
Commissioner

Kate H. Stacy
Commissioner

Dennis J. Herrera
General Manager

OUR MISSION: To provide our customers with high-quality, efficient, and reliable water, power and sewer services in a manner that values environmental and community interests and sustains the resources entrusted to our care.



2. **Approve [July 9, 2024, Minutes](#)**

Motion was made (Baker) and seconded (Pinkston) to approve the July 9, 2024, Minutes.

Public Comment: None

3. **Report from the Chair**

- Welcome members, staff, and the public

Public Comment: None

4. **Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the Committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda (*2 minutes per speaker*)

Public Comment: None

5. **Presentation and Discussion: [Biosolids Project and Biogas Utilization System Update](#)**, Daniella Brandao, SFPUC Biogas Project Manager, Kim Stern Liddell, SFPUC Environmental Compliance Manager, & Rickie Cleere, SFPUC Environmental Justice and Land Use Analyst

Presentation

Biosolids Project and Biogas Utilization System Update
Overview of Southeast Treatment Plant and the Biosolids Project Objectives
Biosolids Project Objectives
Biosolids Project Construction Progress Update
Project Modification – Biogas Utilization System
Biogas Utilization Project Update
Biogas Utilization System Overview
Biogas Utilization Project Schedule
Environmental Impact Report Addendum Findings
Environmental Impact Report Addendum
Net Operational Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions w/ the Modified Project
Summary of Operational Air Emissions
Environmental Justice Commitments & Community Air Quality Monitoring Update
2017 Biosolids Project Environmental Justice Report
Operational Emissions
SFPUC's Environmental Justice Commitment
Environmental Justice Outreach and Engagement
Collaboration w/ the Community Around PM2.5 Reduction & Offset Strategies
Community Air Quality Monitoring
How we provide updates

Discussion

- **Member Nagengast** would like to hear how this project marries to the long-term vision of the state where we're talking about natural gas transition, and hydrogen as a replacement but not the idea of developing more pipelines. She further commented that the answer seems to be yes for its flammability,

for reducing it, so how do you marry both of those and allow the flexibility to say well there could be a be future state in our lifetimes where natural gas pipelines aren't a thing that we leverage anymore. How do you know, how do you build that flexibility into a new piece of infrastructure that will be in our community for 50 to 100 years.

Staff Brandao responded there was a lot of discussion around governance at the beginning of this process where we raised questions such as, what are we going to do with the gas? Is that something we want to pursue? And the point is we can't become electric overnight, so, this is more a gap field that helps us go from where we are now to the vision of the future. She further commented that as long as we have digestors at our wastewater treatment plants, we'll produce the biogas, so think of this as a bridge, we're producing renewable gas, and we're injecting into a pipeline. It doesn't stop anyone or the City from taking the gas downstream and building a facility that converts to hydrogen cells. So that is where we are, we cannot build and other use for the gas. But we can use existing infrastructure to bring the gas elsewhere.

Member Nagengast asked is there a gap field to say nope, you must keep your biogas onsite, and how do you use it to the highest and best use? Is that flexibility there?

Staff Brandao responded that they looked at that too, and the thing is that we produce a lot of gas so its if was just enough to take inhouse but its more that we can take in our boilers. So, the idea is, yes, we do have in our new design, we're building facilities that have the capability of sanding some of the treated gas back to the boilers. It's kind of an operational strategy in the event the pipeline cannot take the gas for a short period of time, we wouldn't have to flare all of it, we could utilize some of it within the plant. It's just that there is more supply that the demand inhouse. So, the pipeline provides that outlet for other uses outside of what we need to require to use within the plant.

Member Nagengast asked staff to confirm that while SFPUC is producing renewable natural gas, it is not using it to offset natural gas for the city's boilers.

Staff Stern Liddell responded that there will likely be a continued need for natural gas because it has some benefits for example its very fast to heat, and there are some industrial and large applications where probably there will continue to be natural gas use even in the future as our society becomes more electric. Right now, it's a bigger component of the total energy portfolio that's needed to run things across sectors from transportation industry to maritime, and over time that will become smaller. There is still going to be a necessity for some industrial processes and some sectors will still have gas. So then why not have that natural gas be from biogas, from digester gas as opposed from extracted fossil fuel. There is going to be a lot of great benefits and utilization and use of this gas for the greater energy market for some time to come. So, this is going to go into this pipeline, and it can be distributed to broad use of end users, so it could go outside the City users well, like for the greater energy market.

- **Member Baker** asked if Staff could quantify how much gas we are talking about referring to.

Staff Brandao responded that on an annual average basis we are talking about fourteen hundred SCFM which is standard cubic feet per minute and confirms that it is a lot of gas. The range I can give provide when we started operations will be equivalent to where we are today because we're just shifting from an old plant to a new plant, so right now we are around nine

hundred so fourteen hundred is how we describe the size of the system because is the annual average.

Member Baker followed up and asked if it's a nine hundred average today, and you can store up to fourteen hundred.

Staff Brandao clarified that we are not storing the gas but treating it, we're taking the gas, upgrading it, and injecting. There is no storage of gas on site.

- **Member Pinkston** asked if after you upgrade the gas and it goes through the pipe, until you find a buyer does the gas just sit in the pipe until a buyer is confirmed.

Staff Brandao responded and clarified that we cannot inject into the pipeline until we have an end use for the gas.

- **Member Baker** commented it's a very valuable asset, and so you can monetize.

Staff Brandao responded that because this is one project, its biosolids and biogas, we are just learning about this from the Tax and Bond council exactly what are the boundaries of where the gas can go. She further commented that it is the same as when we produce power because we use tax exempt bonds to fund out projects, Biosolids has lot of that. We have some tax-exempt bonds criteria we need to maintain so that also going to be considered as we consider and off takers. How can we use that in a beneficial way and help offset some of the costs associated with it. But there are a lot of limitation about what we can do in that regard. The monetization of the resources we're recovering. SO, we don't want to compromise the status of the funding we have for the current projects.

- **Member Pinkston** asked if bad odor would leak out.

Staff Brandao responded all the plans we have for the odor control system for biosolids remain intact and uncompromised. Staff noted that the only thing we're changing is how we are utilizing the gas instead of turbines on site to produce power. We are cleaning it and injecting into the pipeline. So, there is not impact on others.

Member Pinkston followed up and asked if that is the case for the people who will managing this facility, and they will be safe as well.

Staff Brandao followed up and confirmed yes and that the system is safe by design with all the safety features to make sure it's safe for operations long term.

- **Member Baker** asked about in the design build contracting are there any accommodations for local LBE's and MBEs, and what is the response like.

Staff Brandao responded that yes, it's still all under Chapter 6 so we have all the city programs in the RFP and we expect the proposals will address all the components that are important to us, and to the City.

Member Pinkston asked if they have laborers as well as utilizing the SF Hyper Local which is in Bayview Hunters Point.

Staff Brandao responded that they did work with CMD to create the goals that are appropriate for the project, recognin some of this equipment is prefabricated and delivered. We looked at what the scopes of work that can

be done outside of that prefabrication and the LBE goals, all the goals have been set on that.

- **Member Nagengast** asked if it was 20 percent.

Staff Brandao responded no it is less than that.

- **Member Pinkston** asked if there was an organization that will be used to ensure that members of the community are hired for this project.

Staff Brandao responded that she believes we have a very robust system in place with biosolids, and we have successful stories there of how we were able to optimize the programs we're supporting, and we intend to continue to do that.

- **Member Nagengast** asked what the estimated cost for this project.

Staff Brandao responded that this going to be a design build fixed price. So tomorrow we'll get the proposals of the actual cost, and we have an estimate of one hundred fifty million dollars.

- **Member Nagengast** stated, you're producing renewable natural gas, but we're not using it to offset natural gas for our boilers as a baseline normal operation, can you confirm if that is correct.

Staff Brandao responded that is correct, but it doesn't mean it can't happen in the future.

Member Nagengast asked for confirmation that, if necessary, it could easily be switched over.

- **Staff Stern Liddell** confirmed yes and that it is part of the long-term planning and further explained that in either case there would still be combustion and that there would still be emissions from the boilers, and that the only way to avoid such emissions would be for the boilers to be electric.

Public Comment: None

6. **Presentation and Discussion:** [Geary Boulevard Sewer and Water Improvements Phase 2](#), Derek Adams, Project Manager, SFPUC

Presentation

- Project Purpose and Objective
- Importance of Upgrading Geary Water & Sewer Infrastructure
- Phase 2 Utility Upgrades
- Overall Geary Projects Timeline (SFPUC & SFMTA Contracts)
- Preliminary Work – Late 2024
- Sewer Main Upgrades
- Water Main Upgrades
- Fiber Optic Conduit Upgrades
- Upcoming Outreach
- Stay Informed

Discussion

- **Member Nagengast** asked if the sewer is brick.

Staff Adams confirmed they are brick.

- **Member Pinkston** asked if DPW will come in and plant new trees.

Staff Adams responded that we're not taking out any trees, they are adding new trees on Geary along that stretch as part of their community enhancement.

- **Member Nagengast** pointed out that in some of the other projects we've been hearing about there has been engagement with some of those owners to say if you need to replace your lateral you should do it in this timeframe because we are coming in to do that as well. Maybe we aren't there yet, but does something like that exist? Is that engagement happening so that they could also plan to upgrade their laterals if needed.

Staff Adams responded yes, they will be doing that kind of outreach, and if they want to do that work it would be a beneficial time.

- **Member Steel Teshara** mentioned that she has considered and will be replacing her sewer lateral and that it is very expensive, and she asked if there is any kind of support from the City.

Staff Adams responded that SFPUC has an insurance program that you can opt in to, and if your upper lateral is in need, that insurance will cover it. So as part of the SFPUC bill, that is an option.

- **Member Nagengast** asked about green infrastructure and the one dig approach and how it might alleviate community issues such as green infrastructure and traffic concerns.

Staff Adams explained that the project in the presentation did not have that type of broad approach, and that for example the surface improvements were under the control of SFMTA. He further noted that the infrastructure being replaced was around 100 years old and that it was not a flood resilience or stormwater management project.

- **Member Nagengast** commented from a communications perspective, if part of outreach will also be about you know water quality and resilience, is there any efforts to ensure that like okay, we've also checked a few homes, either post or during to ensure like no construction efforts have contaminated said water.

Staff Adams responded he has not heard of it, but it could come up and that they only started their outreach going door to door.

Public Comment: None

7. Staff Report

8. [Future Agenda Items and Resolutions](#)

- a. Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up
 - Resolution in Support of SFPUC Class A Biosolids Local Distribution Program [adopted August 21, 2018](#)
 - Resolution in Support of Cityworks Interns Recommendations [adopted on November 21, 2017](#)

- Resolution in Support of Equitable Green Infrastructure Implementation throughout the Southeast Sector of San Francisco and throughout the City [adopted on June 20, 2017](#)
- Resolution Urging SFPUC Commission to Initiate Planning and Environmental Review for Building a New Community Center at Third and Evans and to Direct Staff to Develop an Interim Greenhouse Environmental and Workforce Development Program [adopted on October 18, 2016](#)
- Resolution Supporting the SFPUC to Conduct Robust Community Engagement to Determine the Community's Preference for Remodeling Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale or Building a New Community Center at 1550 Evans [adopted on January 19, 2016](#)

Public Comment: None

- 9. Announcements/Comments** Visit www.sfpuc.org/cac for final confirmation of the next meeting date.

Public Comment: None

10. Adjournment at 7:07pm.

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