



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

MEETING MINUTES

**Tuesday, April 23, 2024
 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room**

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Meeting URL

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Mission: The Water Subcommittee reviews water supply system reliability, water conservation, recycling, regional cooperation efforts, and other relevant plans and policies. ([Admin Code 5.140-142](#))

Members:

Jennifer Clary (Chair) (D11)	Suki Kott (D2)	Amy Nagengast (D8)
Nicole Sandkulla (M-Reg'l Water Customers)	Eliahu Perszyk (M-Large Water User)	Douglas Jacuzzi (D4)

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayor Appointed, B = Board President appointed

Staff Liaisons: Lexus Moncrease and Sharon Liu-Bettencourt
 Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

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 Mayor

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 Commissioner

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 Commissioner

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 Commissioner

Dennis J. Herrera
 General Manager

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Members present at roll call: (6) Clary, Kott, Perszyk, Nagengast, Jacuzzi and Sandkulla

Members Absent: (0) n/a

2. Approval of the [February 27, 2024](#), Minutes

Motion was made (Perszyk) and seconded (Kott) to approve the February 27, 2024, minutes.

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.



AYES: (6) Clary, Kott, Perszyk, Nagengast, Jacuzzi and Sandkulla

NOES: (0)

Public Comment: None

3. Report from the Chair

- Chair welcomes committee 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: [Water Conservation Program Update](#), Julie Ortiz, SFPUC Water Conservation Manager

- *Resources:*
 - i. [Pacific Institute Evaluation of SFPUC Water Efficiency Programs](#)

Presentation

Conservation Program Update

Presentation Outline

SFPUC Retail Conservation Program

Conservation Plan

Conservation Measure Evaluation

Current Core Programs

Pacific Institute Evaluation

Pacific Institute Recommendations

Recommendations (continued)

Seeking Water CAC Input

Discussion

- **Staff Ortiz** presented on the 2025 Conservation Plan process and the Pacific Institute's Evaluation of the SFPUC's retail water efficiency and alternative water supply programs. She stated that she would like suggestions and thoughts on where the committee thinks the most feasible remaining opportunities for water savings are and to get the committee's thoughts on conservation programs, either the programs currently offered or potential conservation programs. She also asked if the committee had suggestions on people or organizations to talk to in relation to the development of the 2025 Conservation Plan for the Water Conservation Team.
- **Member Nagengast** asked what the high-level goals were for the past five years. She asked if the Water Conservation Team achieved their high-level goals for the past five years. She also asked if there was an evaluation of the profiles of these programs and if the programs used all their money for the time and what the participation rates looked like for the programs.

Staff Ortiz responded that the Water Conservation Team is big on metrics. In terms of big goals, one was to continue to offer a mix of measures that meets the breadth of their customer base. She expressed that her team thought the greatest remaining water conservation opportunities include working with customers who had water usage over the average; this could be from a variety of reasons, leaking, wasting water, or even over irrigation. Staff Ortiz stated that the team feel like they have met those broad goals, they offer a mixture of programs and do specifically target groups that overuse water. She stated that she did not have specific metrics in the slides. She also stated her team did not use their full operating budget which is approximately 3 million if you remove staff salary from the budget.

Member Nagengast asked if this is for all 5 years or if it is an annual budget.

Staff Ortiz responded the 3 million is an annual budget and that this budget covers paying out incentives, toilet replacements, and shower heads, aerators and other gadgets given to customers. She stated there was less participation during the Covid years in programs that required staff to go on site to people's homes and replace things. She stated that her team also have every measure tracked by month and participation, that information just is not in the slides. Staff Ortiz stated that there is usually an increase in participation when there is a drought or when they do certain outreach measures. For example, there was a big spike in participation for the toilet change when they communicated to customers through bill inserts and that there is remaining budget, so there is capacity for more water conservation efforts. Staff Ortiz further continued that some programs have lower participation, such as the landscape grant program because it is big and complicated and generally requires an applicant to take significant time coming up with their project.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked about the ultra-high yield, high efficiency toilets and whether they were now using pressure assisted toilets.

Staff Ortiz responded that her team has been using ultra-high yield, high efficiency toilets over the course of the second direct install program. However, she does not know if these toilets are also pressure assisted but knows they replace flushometers which uses the same technology.

Member Jacuzzi commented that he has been replacing the toilets in his rentals with pressure assist toilets and had found success and that tenants no longer complain about having to flush the toilet 2 or 3 times like they had to with the gravity toilets.

Staff Ortiz said that they typically function on a like for like system, so what they use in the direct install program would depend on what the toilet that is already there is like.

Member Jacuzzi commented that last time Staff Ortiz presented, she talked about Floom Devices and that he has been installing them in his rentals as well.

Member Clary asked if Member Jacuzzi could explain what a Floom Device is.

Member Jacuzzi responded saying it is a learning device that plugs under the water meter and alerts the owner within 15 minutes when there is something outside the pattern of normal water use. He said that he has a 4-unit rental with a hose outside and there is an unhoused person who showers with the house. However, this person usually forgets to turn the hose off when he leaves and the Floom Device alerts him of this, then he can send someone to turn off the hose. Member Jacuzzi further commented there was an instance where he was unable to get anyone to turn off the hose and the hose used 270 gallons of water over the course of an hour.

Staff Ortiz commented that many utilities programs have incentives for this situation. However, the SFPUC's Water Conservation Team does not have incentives for this situation because the SFPUC technically does not allow measuring devices on their meters, but they do recognize that Floom Devices are popular.

- **Member Perszyk** commented that when they designed a large research building, he was told by the plumbing engineer that for big buildings, they cannot go below 1.1 because they would not get enough sanitary sewage flushing. He said that big apartment buildings that are designed for higher flow pipes might run into issue if the toilets get switched out. Member Perszyk asked if there will be a fixed cap for the commercial rebate incentive or if it will be based on total water savings.

Staff Ortiz responded that it would be two parts. One would be based on deemed equipment and the other would-be custom projects. There will not be a cap on that.

Member Perszyk said that he noticed there are multiple grant programs and coupling grant programs together is a great idea. However, he feels that there is a concern regarding the deed restriction when it comes to onsite water reuse grant and the green infrastructure grant. For example, UCSF would not be able to take advantage of the grant because a 20-year deed restriction is too long for them. He feels that many property owners might feel this way. He wants to know if there is any way to change this so that the SFPUC can guarantee financial return on investment and not lock property owners into 20-year deed restrictions.

Staff Ortiz responded that she could share their concerns with the people who run the onsite water reuse grant and the green infrastructure grant.

- **Member Clary** asked if the water budget could be a way around those restrictions and commented there are water agencies that have individual water budgets for each property, and once you install that benefit your water budget reflects that change and if you push past your water budget there is some kind of penalty. She believes Redwood City still does this.

Staff Ortiz said that the issue is if you have a change of property ownership, can you convey the water budget to the new owner. That is why the deed

restriction is there. Otherwise, what happens to the investment you have made there on the water use production.

Member Clary said that the Water Conservation Team are the ones who are developing the water budget for conservation efforts in the first place.

Staff Ortiz responded the issue is whether you could force a new owner to enforce the water budget.

Member Jacuzzi commented that he does not believe the deed restrictions make any sense at all. From a financial and economic perspective, you could just get rid of the deed restriction completely because for the size of the property and the amount of water we're talking about, you can't get reconnected, if you're disconnected, you must stay disconnected, so therefore you would have to follow the water budget.

- **Member Perszyk** stated that this is a very conservative approach to spending their budget, he is just wondering if there is an alternative to the deed restrictions that could be considered.

Member Clary commented that it seems like a lot more could be done if these restrictions didn't exist.

- **Member Perszyk** said that he is currently working on a project that he could start if he could get the grant but that he is unable to right now because the return investment does not meet the threshold.

Staff Ortiz responded that she cannot speak to specifics but that she will bring that up to her office. Staff Ortiz noted that when they started doing toilet replacements, they were guided by a study that said you need to go below 1.28 for commercial properties and that this has not really panned out as a widespread issue and has become less of a concern.

- **Member Sandkulla** asked about onsite reuse and that she would like to see a study done on the projects that have been implemented, especially post pandemic to see how the implemented studies have done and how well they stay implemented over time. She further commented that if this study does not exist, she believes it should and would be very helpful, especially for people thinking of long-term implementation outside of the city. Member Sandkulla noted that the Pacific Institute Report covered demand projections and noticed that water loss projections and methods was not on the list and wanted to ask about that.

Member Clary stated that there is now a legal requirement on that.

Member Sandkulla asked where projected losses get factored in and presented as parent losses are quoted at 10% currently which is very high.

Member Clary asked if this high loss is because fire flow is included in losses.

Staff Ortiz responded that there is now a state law, so it is the standard for every urban water supplier to meet regarding supply side loss and the SFPUC's group on this topic is managed by operations. This is not within the scope of the Pacific Institutes' studies. She said that the Water Conservation Team does annual water loss audits and balances. She stated that her team have a water loss reduction program and that they must meet the requirements of pressure management and all those other aspects of looking at ways to reduce water lose. She said that she is not the expert on this but that to her understanding, the standard is that losses per connection per day is no longer reported as unaccounted for water percentage. She said that her team is within the top 25th percentile when it comes to recuing water losses.

Member Clary commented that she does not understand the goals here. When she is looking at the program, she sees that they are trying to spread the budget as efficiently as possible, increase water efficiency, reduce demand and achieve equity. Member Clary asked if they have done an equity analysis of their program. If they have, can the committee see the analysis. If they have not, could it become part of the process. She said that when the direct install program was first stated in 2007 or 2008, they found that zip codes 94109 and 94124 were not getting rebates; these neighborhoods were the Tenderloin and Bayview and they started focusing more on those neighborhoods. She asked if there are better metrics now to understand who is being helped, who is not being helped and who is not being reached at all. Is there a communications plan that goes with this?

Staff Ortiz responded that the Water Conservation Team can map where their assistance has gone zip code and by neighborhood. She said that over the years, they have served neighborhoods on a broad spectrum. She stated that the first toilet replacement program was focused specially on low-income customers, customers on the rate assistance program and affordable housing providers.

- **Member Clary** asked since the Water Conservation Team is replacing toilets with 1.6 gpf toilets, are they planning on going back to low-income communities to do replacements.

Staff Ortiz responded that the Water Conservation Team is planning on going back unless they already have an hgt toilet. In fact, they were some of the first people they reached out to. She stated that they also have some data in terms of an equity plan and that they have outreach plans connected to the planning process and related to marketing programs. She further stated that they focused more on measures that are more widely applicable, like the toilet replacements and they do multilingual outreach for the toilet replacements.

Member Clary asked when they would be seeing a draft.

Staff Ortiz responded early next year.

Public Comment: None

6. **Presentation and Discussion:** [Groundwater Update](#), Obiajulu Nzewi, SFPUC Groundwater Program Manager

Presentation

Groundwater Update for SFPUC

Agenda Items

Westside Basin and SFGW Summary

Plans and timeline for increasing groundwater blending

Metered Groundwater Pumping in Northern Westside Basin, January 2017 – March 2024

Wellhead water quality monitoring results and trends

Golden Gate Park Central Well (GCW) – irrigation only groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2024

North Lake Well (NLW) – irrigation only groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2024

South Windmill Well (SWW) – irrigation only groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2024

West Sunset Well (WSW) – currently not in use groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2024

Lake Merced Pump Station well (LMW) – potable use, currently under repair groundwater pumping, levels, and water quality 2018-2024

Raw Groundwater Nitrate Concentrations Compared to Reservoir Blends, 2018-2023

Raw Groundwater Hexavalent Chromium Concentrations Compared to Reservoir Blends, 2018-2023

Groundwater Monitoring

Westside Basin and SFGW Summary

Discussion

Staff Nzewi presented on the groundwater monitoring and testing for the Westside basins. He said that they currently monitor across the Westside basins by measuring water levels over 110 wells. He said that about half the wells are monitored either every hour or every two hours. He said that the other half are monitored by hand every quarter and takes a week and a half of two people out in the field. He said the wells go from Golden Gate Park all the way to Millbury.

- **Member Clary** asked if this monitoring is done for both the city program and the regional program.

Staff Nzewi responded affirmatively and that they are making good progress with Daly City on the Vista Grande Drainage Basin project.

- **Member Clary** asked if this is the stormwater project.

Staff Nzewi confirmed it is and that this project would allow us to augment Lake Merced levels with stormwater from Daly City.

Member Jacuzzi commented that was historically where the most water came from.

Staff Nzewi said that is true and that the basin and the watershed were formerly connected but got disconnected during development of the area and

that the Groundwater Team is attempting to reconnect the basin and the watershed.

- **Member Clary** asked if they had a goal for what the water level of Lake Merced should be.

Staff Nzewi responded they do have a goal and that they hope to keep Lake Merced between seven and a half and eight and a half feet. Lake Merced is currently at five feet. San Francisco previously had a good rainy season and Lake Merced went up to seven and a half feet.

- **Member Sandkulla** asked for the name of the project previously mentioned.

Staff Nzewi responded it was called Vista Grande Drainage Basin.

Member Clary added that this is where the big floods happened.

- **Staff Nzewi** presented the plans and timeline for increasing groundwater blending. He talked about how the sunset supply line shut down for maintenance in January but is still currently shutdown due to a fire.

Member Clary asked for Staff Nzewi to point out the sunset supply line.

Staff Nzewi pointed to the supply line on the presentation and explained that supply line comes from the South. He said the Groundwater Team cannot really run the well without the sunset supply line. He stated however, they were able to somehow get the well running, so they are still attempting to up production of groundwater to 4 mgd. He said they are not going to increase more than 1mgd without going to the commission for approval.

Staff Nzewi states that the second problem for the project to increase groundwater blending is that the variable frequency drives on the pumps got corroded, so currently the pumps don't work. He said that the Groundwater Team must replace the variable frequency drives now.

- **Member Clary** asked if corrosion is something they must anticipate at that plant.

Staff Nzewi said it is a combination of the various delays, but that are looking at 2026 for the recycled water plant to go online and that the Golden Gate Park Central Pump stations provides 1,600 gpm.

- **Member Clary** asked if the pump has nitrate or not.

Staff Nzewi responded that the pump does not have nitrate, it has tetrachloroethylene and that this tetrachloroethylene is one of their main issues. Another issue is that they have low levels of carbon tetrachloride in the West Sunset and South Sunset wells and they are unsure how this happened.

- **Member Clary** asked if these pumps have been used yet.

Staff Nzewi responded they used the West Sunset well and found carbon tetrachloride after the use and it was likely something that was already sitting in the wells and was pulled in once pumping started. He is working on planning a

treatment project to address the tetrachloroethylene for Golden Gate Park Central well and the carbon tetrachloride in the West Sunset and South Sunset wells.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked if the DTSC (Department of Toxic Substances) is involved in this.

Staff Nzewi responded that the DTSC is not involved because they do not know where either substance are coming from, there's not a lot of dry cleaners nearby either.

- **Member Clary** asked if there is still a fund for dry cleaners.

Staff Nzewi stated that there used to be, but it is gone now as the funding ran out.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked what the part per million is on the tetrachloroethylene and the carbon tetrachloride.

Staff Nzewi is that the carbon tetrachloride is very low at around 2 ppb. The tetrachloroethylene varies between 3 and 5 ppb and the MCL is 5 ppb. They can blend that and have authority from the State Board to blend at both locations, but they have decided to not blend and figure out treatment instead.

Public Comment: None

7. Staff Report

Public Comment: None

8. Future Agenda Items and Resolutions

Standing Subjects

- Groundwater
- Water Quality

Specific Subjects

- Green Infrastructure - *Tentatively WW Topic*
- Integrating Tribal Leaders into SFPUC Land Management Decisions
- State Board Water Rights
- Water Enterprise Environmental Stewardship Policy Implementation Report
- Debate about Bay Delta – Member Sandkulla suggested everyone watch the February 5, 2021, Commission workshop about the Voluntary Agreement
- COVID and Long-term Affordability Program
- Implementation if the Bay Delta Plan Flow Requirement
- Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Division Update
- State Policy and Programs on Affordability or Low-Income Rate Assistance (LIRA)
- Bay Delta Plan and voluntary settlement agreement
- Legislative Update
- State of the Regional Water System Report – Bi-annual report
- Drought resilience: 3-year water supply update
- Water Equity and Homelessness

- State of Local Water Report
- Retail Conservation Report
- Harry Tracy Water Treatment Plant tour

Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up

- Resolution in Support of a Resilient Water Supply [adopted August 17, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of the Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension Project [adopted April 20, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of Interim Emergency Rate Assistance Program and Revised Community Assistance Program [adopted July 21, 2020](#)
- Resolution in Support of Improved Communications Related to the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project [adopted August 21, 2018](#)
- Resolution in Supporting Stewardship and Public Access in the Redeveloped Lake Merced West Property [adopted in March 15, 2016](#)
- Resolution on Impacts of Drought on System Maintenance and Improvements [adopted January 19, 2016](#)

Public Comment: None

- 9. Announcements/Comments** Please visit www.sfpuc.org/cac for final confirmation of the next scheduled meeting, agenda, and materials.

Public Comment: None

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned 7:10pm

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