



San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Citizens' Advisory Committee
Water Subcommittee

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 22, 2024
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
525 Golden Gate Ave., 3rd Floor Tuolumne Conference Room

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Meeting URL

<https://sfwater.zoom.us/j/84029700480?pwd=sw1eQkO9zn2EbLSINCswlsaNufd1QN.1>

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Meeting ID / Passcode

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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
Staff Email for Public Comment: cac@sfwater.org

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call at

Present at time of roll call: (4) Clary, Sandkulla, Nagengast, Jacuzzi

Absent: (2) Kott, Perszyk

Public Comment: None

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

A motion was made (Jacuzzi) and seconded (Sandkulla) and the August 27, 2024, were approved without objection.

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.



Public Comment: None

3. Report from the Chair

- Chair Clary welcomes committee members, staff, and the public
- Chair Clary recognized Member Sandkulla's last meeting as she is retiring from BAWSCA and the CAC and appreciated her contributions to the CAC and wished her luck on her future endeavors.

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: [Regulations & Minimizing Water Loss](#)

Presentation:

- Water Loss Regulations in California
- Two Types of Regulated Water Losses
- SFPUC's Standards
- Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022 Water Audit Results
- SFPUC's Water Loss Reporting
- Real Losses (331 agencies) or Validated FY 20/21 Water Audits
- Existing Water Loss Reduction Activities
- Additional Ways SFPUC Can Minimize Water Loss Further
- Relevant Water Loss Links

Discussion:

- **Chair Clary** asked if the third type of regulated water loss is water theft.

Staff Yan responded that the third type is unauthorized used and that the SFPUC has a bypass connection in some of the large meter services that will see the bypass valve which essentially means it bypasses the meter. The SFPUC does lock these meters, but some users are able to bypass this system. Additionally, the SFPUC does have access points like fire hydrants where members of the public will use it as a handwashing station. The SFPUC is able to catch these instances through 3-1-1 service calls.

Chair Clary asked if the SFPUC needs to install a water supply station where these instances are commonly happening.

Staff Teahan mentioned that the SFPUC has been removing the water fountains as they have been abused for other activities than drinking, which is what they are intended for. They have mostly been removed from the Tenderloin.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked if a connection is considered at every meter.

Staff Yan stated that every meter is considered a connection.

Member Sandkulla asked what the Apparent Losses standard measure is and whether there is a need to stay below it.

Staff Yan responded the standard is to stay below the Apparent Losses.

- **Chair Clary** asked if the graph on “SFPUC’s Water Loss Reporting” are the gallons per connection.

Staff Yan responded it is, and the red line is the Real Loss Standard which the SFPUC is hovering around that the orange line is Apparent Losses which the SFPUC is averaging below.

- **Member Nagengast** asked if all connections regardless of meter size are treated equally.

Staff Yan responded yes, and the SFPUC staff could break it down by size and connections and the reason why the reporting is set up to allow the SFPUC to grade itself amongst its peers.

- **Chari Clary** asked if the SFPUC is keeping the peers anonymous in the “Real Losses (331 agencies) or Validated FY 20/21 Water Audits” slide and if those on the right-hand side of the slide are smaller systems.

Staff Yan responded that yes and that those on the right-hand side are typically smaller systems from the San Joaquin Valley whose pipes are not in good shape.

- **Chari Clary** asked how much of SFPUC’s losses are breaks.

Staff Yan responded that from the 9.5% of water losses about 80% of it is due to breaks and leaks.

Chair Clary commented that it will be tough to bring it down over time depending on the standards.

Staff Yan responded that the SFPUC does reach out to other standards like the American Water Works Association (AWWA) since they have other metrics for an optimized water system per year – theirs is 15 breaks per 100 miles. In a low year, the SFPUC is at 10 breaks per 100 miles and even in SFPUC’s highest year, they still fell within the optimization window.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked how negative Real Losses are possible.

Staff Yan responded that there are municipalities whose meters are not being read accurately.

Member Sandkulla commented these are data issues with the meters in San Francisco where some of the meters themselves are struggling to meet the accuracy requirements, however, those meters are needed due to the type of meter it is and the type of flow that goes through it. This is an ongoing issue with the large meters since they are designed for a higher flow and when there is a continuous 30% to 40% reduction, the meters are not as accurate at the lower flow and there is a need to find a way to get the accuracy connected at the reduced flow.

Staff Teahan commented that the SFPUC is having data accuracy issues post-COVID due to some buildings having high flow meters and they are not capturing the data because the buildings has not been reoccupied at capacity. Staff is on site testing the meters to ensure they are still functioning as they should be.

Chair Clary asked if that explains the big spike in the FY 19-20.

Staff Yan stated there was operational functions behind the spike during that year whether it be breaks, weather, closing valves or pressurizing the system. The SFPUC is also not the only user of the distribution system, the fire department's data is also included.

- **Chair Clary** asked if the higher-pressure zones are right below the reservoirs.

Staff Yan responded that they are not right below and the customers that experience higher pressures are on lower elevation, however, there are a lot of factors to be considered such as piping construction, where leaks occur, and the installation decade. The SFPUC will do a lift and shift where they shift sensors around to get a general survey of the water system to tell where non-surfacing leaks are occurring.

- **Chair Clary** asked how the SFPUC is able to hold itself to a level of service where a main water break is able to be repaired within 4 hours and minimize the affected customers to less than 1% within those 4 hours.

Staff Teahan responded that it is within SFPUC staff response time and SFPUC is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. If someone calls to report a break, within 30- minutes, SFPUC has sent someone to inspect it. Depending on the severity of the break, it will either be addressed right away or if it can hold until the morning, SFPUC will send crews in the morning to repair.

Staff Yan added that SFPUC operators will want to keep pressure on the leak making sure there is no infiltration.

- **Chair Clary** asked if the SFPUC has recently started adding pressure reducing valves so that customers are in a set point range of 76 pounds per square inch (PSI) of pressure.

Staff Yan responded that this is not new as the original engineers have done this.

Chair Clary asked if Twin Peaks is the only area to use the hydropneumatics tanks.

Staff Teahan responded that the highest major reservoir the SFPUC has is the Town Summit Reservoir and the areas surrounding it that cannot be fed water by gravity use the tanks and the other location is Crocker-Amazon.

- **Chair Clary** asked if residential areas have the 1-inch meters.

Staff Yan responded that yes, typically residential areas have these meters.

- **Chair Clary** asked if our current meter sensors measure 4 times a day.

Staff Yan responded yes; they measure 4 times a day.

- **Chair Clary** asked if SFPUC can identify or predict where breaks will happen.

Staff Teahan responded there is no way to predict where breaks will happen and historically, there are breaks in the Diamond Heights area or parts of the Mission District or Excelsior, usually in the older parts of town where pipes were installed pre or post World War II. Majority of the breaks are something called circumferential breaks which means that a pipe was not properly embedded with the soil when installed.

- **Chair Clary** asked how much of pipe replacement is the SFPUC doing on its own versus in coordination with other city department projects.

Staff Teahan responded it's about a 50/50 split and for example, if Department of Public Works (DPW) is paving Polk Street, no one will be able to touch it for 5 years post-pavement so it's best for all utilities to do repair works together. These transit projects are slowly going away and then it will be moving more towards SFPUC-only projects.

Chair Clary confirmed that the timeline that the SFPUC is looking at to replace the 320-mile priority pipes is about a 45-year timeline and said that this is better compared to other utility departments across the State. The remaining pipes will be replaced in approximately 100-year timeline.

- **Chair Clary** asked if Wastewater goes in first to replace their pipes or if they are part of a different trench.

Staff Teahan responded that most of the wastewater trenches are right down the middle of the street and water is about 5 feet up the curb.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked what the SFPUC preferred pipe type is when replacing pipes.

Staff Teahan answered that it is ductile iron mains and copper and that the SFPUC recently did a project with the College Hill Reservoir that supplies Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, and it is all ductile iron pipes spanning from the reservoir to the hospital.

- **Chair Clary** asked how the SFPUC publicly marks its progress on projects such as improving for seismic safety.

Staff Teahan stated that the Communications Team does a good job at getting the message out to the public.

- **Member Sandkulla** commented that security is important in identifying vulnerable areas in the infrastructure and if there is a report to the SFPUC Commissioners on miles of pipe replaced and water breaks, and so forth.

Staff Teahan commented that the SFPUC is identifying these areas and will state it publicly due to security purposes and that a report is presented to the Commissioners.

- **Chair Clary** asked what interactions and discussions are happening with other agencies about minimizing water loss and if there is a target the SFPUC is trying to meet with water loss.

Staff Yan responded that the SFPUC is part of the Water Loss Reduction Committee, where they are discussing strategies and that currently the SFPUC is currently in the preparation state so that when a target is identified and regulations are implemented, they can ensure SFPUC is properly adhering to guidelines.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked where the SFPUC draws the line in terms of water sent to the South Bay and other jurisdictions.

Member Sandkulla responded that there is a contract between the SFPUC and wholesale customers that is called a J table where the starting input is Hetch Hetchy, and it keeps track of everything up to the county line meters. There is a losses calculation between the county line meters and the initial production.

Chair Clary asked if this is part of the bottom loss.

Member Sandkulla responded that the State does not regulate the SFPUC from a wholesale perspective so there is no reporting on this.

All 26 agencies are doing their efforts on reporting just like San Francisco is doing.

- **Chair Clary** asked what the water loss at the regional level is.

Member Sandkulla responded that it is higher than she would like but it isn't an area that is targeted now. When there are large volumes of water, SFPUC tries to recover in other ways such as generating power. The other agencies pay for every dollar that comes through their turnout. The SFPUC has always been very conscious of what this loss number is because they don't pay for it. There are data accuracy issues because the meters cannot maintain the accuracy year over year and staff are having difficulty even when calibrating them.

Chair Clary asked if there are agencies with high numbers.

Member Sandkulla responded that she does not believe so because agencies are paying \$1,700 per acre foot that goes through the meter, there is incentive to reduce the losses. Their numbers have always been under 7% on average.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked what material is used to embed the pipes for neighborhoods that are not as sandy and what is the embedment requirement per diameter.

Staff Teahan mentioned that they put their pipes in sand and the minimum requirement is 1 foot of sand regardless of diameter.

6. Discussion: Water CAC FY 2024-2025 Priorities, Water CAC Chair CAC

- *Resource:* [SFPUC CAC FY 22-23 Annual Report](#)

Discussion

- **Member Jacuzzi** commented that he is interested to learn what the latest on groundwater use and that his neighborhood wants to see more groundwater use and that his organization also has a lot of households who would like to take advantage of the green infrastructure funds.

Chair Clary commented that the idea of not understanding how to quantify green infrastructure is the same argument that was had over conservation 30 years ago and she asked how we start doing the quantification of household projects.

Member Sandkulla responded that the question to think about is why they are willing to do it for commercial and not residential and the concern may be that there is no ongoing commitment on the residential side.

Chair Clary commented that they might be struggling with the management piece and questioned how others are doing it.

Member Sandkulla mentioned that she is not aware of anyone else doing it on a residential scale where it's not being managed by either a

Homeowners Association or property management firm and that in San Francisco we don't have a lot of these.

Chair Clary asked Staff to write Alternative Water Supply as a priority especially now that we have the direct potable reuse regulations in effect at the State level.

"Alternative Water Supply" was listed as the first priority on the FY2024-25 Priority List.

- **Member Sandkulla** commented that one major project that seemed to be moving forward was the expansion of the existing Los Vaqueros Reservoir and San Francisco as a partner in this project and the project owner, Contra Costa Water district, decided not to move forward with this project becoming more expensive due to the following reasons: Contra Costa's policy that their customers will not pay for this and will be made whole by past investments, the lack of a water backup supply and other project partners saying they did not need as much water as originally intended in their contracts.

"Los Vaqueros" was listed as a subtopic under priority number one.

- **Chair Clary** asked what other area focus there should be.

Member Sandkulla stated that direct potable reuse should be a focus and there is the expansion of recycled water in Daly City to serve cemeteries to bump it up the regional groundwater conjunction project. The other piece that hasn't moved is an engagement with the irrigation districts to do some kind of regional conjunction use off the Tuolumne River.

"Direct Potable Reuse" was added to the list under priority number one as the second subtopic. "Irrigation District Coordination" was added as the third subtopic under priority number one.

Chair Clary commented that their Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) were found to be incomplete and are now being reviewed and findings will be released in early January. This opens the door for the SFPUC to come in and do voluntary agreements so that there is sustainable groundwater management.

"Groundwater" was added as the second priority on the FY2024-25 Priority List.

- **Chair Clary** commented one reason why we are talking about water loss is to figure out how San Francisco reduces its demand on the Tuolumne River so that they can make the fisheries whole and something to think about is the next steps on the Bay Delta Plan voluntary agreements.

Member Sandkulla mentioned that the State Board has said they are going to come out with a document that will be the biological basis for the voluntary agreement for phase one.

Chair Clary commented that environmental stewardship added.

“Environmental Stewardship” was added as the third priority on the FY2024-25 Priority List.

Member Sandkulla commented that San Francisco and other districts have hired a third-party consultant to go out and do improvements in the Tuolumne River in a coordinator effort for floodplain management and gravel restoration.

Chair Clary stated that under Environmental Stewardship, there should be a point about the Tuolumne Flow Regime.

“Tuolumne Flow Regime” was added to the list as the first subtopic under priority number three.

- **Member Jacuzzi** asked if Groundwater should be put under Alternative Water Supply

Member Sandkulla explained that groundwater is a separate program, so its only context is in San Francisco retail whereas alternative water supply is for the regional system and that Direct Potable Reuse has 3 projects being looked at to enter the regional system. One is in the Fremont Newark area with Union Sanitary District and Alameda County Water District. The second one is in San Jose wastewater plant in coordination with the City of San Jose, City of Santa Clara and Valley Water District all looking at different options to where the water goes and the third is in Redwood City at the Silicon Valley Clean Water Facility. Potential Partners or Cal Water, San Francisco, and Redwood City.

Member Jacuzzi asked if the facilities need to be located close to each other proximity wise to reach a regional area.

Member Sandkulla responded yes because pipe is expensive.

Member Nagengast commented that we want Direct Potable Reuse (DPR) to be more regional.

Chair Clary responded yes, and it should read “Alternative Water Supply – Regional.”

“Alternative Water Supply” was changed to “Alternative Water Supply-Regional” on the FY2024-25 Priority List.

- **Chair Clary** asked if there is anything around workforce that there should be a discussion on.

Member Sandkulla responded that the direction was to come back as part of the budget process and report on how the SFPUC was working on improving their hiring numbers specifically.

Chair Clary commented that the big picture is to look at how the SFPUC can speed up onboarding of new hires and should be a conversation at the Full CAC.

- **Chair Clary** commented that urban water management plans will be a big topic of discussion in 2025.

Member Sandkulla responded that the urban plans will be due in December and demand projections will be due in June of next year. There will be more work on sensitivity analysis included.

Chair Clary stated that Urban Water Management Plan is priority item number 4 and as item 4a is demand projections mid-2025 and fall 2025 for the plans.

“Urban Water Management Plan (Fall 2025)” was added to the list as priority number four. “Demand Projections (Mid 2025)” was added to the list as a subtopic under priority number four.

Public Comment: None.

7. Staff Report

- Next month is a Full CAC meeting where there will be a Water 101 presentation. The Full CAC will be discussing their priorities in this meeting as well.
- CAC members are added on the list for Hetch Hetchy tours and invitations will go out as tours and spaces are available.

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](#)

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

10. Adjournment at 7:01 pm

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