

Emergency Meeting
Wednesday, June 22, 2022
Municipal Court Complex
6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Mayor Herrera asked for the roll call.

Mayor Herrera	present
Mayor Pro Tem Dominguez	present
Council Member Zackery Herrera	present
Council Member Delgado	present
Council Member Olivas	present

Approval of Agenda

Council Member Delgado made the motion. Council Member Olivas seconds the motion. Pledge of Allegiance was recited at this time. Ms. Casados said she would get a roll call vote for the approval of the agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Dominguez	yes
Council Member Herrera	yes
Council Member Delgado	yes
Council Member Olivas	yes

Motion carries.

Discussion, Consideration and Action of the request of an Emergency Operating Grant to prevent a reduction in services for safe drinking water impacted by the drought that has caused the considerable stress on the Village of Cuba Public Water System and financial stability with consideration to replace old infrastructure waterlines in the amount of \$2,000,000.00

Council Member Delgado made the motion. Council Member Olivas seconds the motion. No discussion. Motion carries.

Public Comment

Mr. Ted Rael from DCI said the water is vital to their needs. He said the water is critical for the 20 to 30 patients on dialysis on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. He said the water can not be turned off at their facility at night. He said they water needs to go through the systems to prevent the build up of germs. He said water is crucial to them, he said yes, it is crucial to the community too, but without sufficient water, the patients will have to be sent to other centers. He said the past weekend the water

was turned off for 2 days and they had to flush the system, and that is damaging to the filters and they are expensive to have to replace.

Mayor Herrera was asked how much storage there is. Mayor Herrera asked Mrs. Esther Herrera to answer. She said the lowest it has been in the last month is 10 feet and that is low pressure for some points and no water at all for others. She said the purpose of the water being turned off on Saturday and Sunday was to gain water in the tank, if not there would have been no water at all, it would have been out completely. She said turning the water off on Friday and Saturday evenings has been working out good, it has helped a lot. She said the last time it went from 10 feet to 18 feet and now it is at 21. She said once the water is on, the booster pumps have to be turned on to get water by the school. She said it is a "teeter-totter" thing. Mayor Herrera said it looks like the rain has curbed the use of water. He said the gain of water is better than what it had been. Mr. Martin Maestas said if it comes down to it, they can figure out a way to get water from La Jara from the pond. He said it is filling and it is there if they need it. Mayor Herrera asked if it is from Ernie Torres. He was told yes. Mrs. Esther Herrera asked if it is drinking water. She was told no; it is not drinking water but it is there if needed. Mayor Herrera said if water is needed for fires or emergencies, they water can be taken directly from the wells if needed. Mr. Maestas said they can get water from there as well, if needed. Mayor Herrera said the wells are not the issues, the transporting from the well to the tanks and after that is the issue.

Ms. Carey Beam asked if they could be told what the money would be used for. Mayor Herrera said they were thinking of the complete replacement of the lines from the tanks to the wells. Mrs. Esther Herrera said they have a company come out and fix a blockage between the filter plant and the main tank. She said they will be here on July 11. She said TLC Plumbing will have to cut the line and put a launch for the pigs and cut the line by the tank to receive the pigs and everything that it pushes out that has built up in the lines before it gets into the main tank. Mr. Maestas asked if they will be able to hold the flocculation for the amount of water being used. Mrs. Herrera said yes, if the tanks stay where they are now. She said they will put a valve where the water can't come through at all and they will put a 2-inch tap on that same line which will connect to the fire truck where the water will go into the truck and then the hose will push the pig through the line. Once that is done, they will install 3 valves that can be opened and closed. She said if they pig just on the 11th, everything will be taken apart and the valves left in place. Ms. Beam asked if that is a permanent repair. Mrs. Herrera said no, this is just to use the pigs. She said the valves will stay there and they will be useful if there are leaks between certain places, they can be isolated. Mayor Herrera once the obstruction is removed, it will allow the wells to flow fast enough. He said there are no problems with the wells, it's a restriction with the water flow to the tanks. He said once the restriction is out of the way there should be no issue with keeping up with the water demand. Mayor Herrera said about the \$2,000,000.00, an engineer did a cost replacement estimate from the line and this is the starting point as far as getting the work done. He said this truly is an emergency throughout the whole town not just the line.

Council Member Herrera said there is a question from Tim Ramirez. He asked "what happened to the plans with the Kino proposal that was brought up a couple years ago." Mayor Herrera said they are still working on the annexation for that. Mayor Pro Tem Dominguez asked where they are with the grant now. Mayor Herrera said they need to present all their information to the county first. If the county can't help then they will go to the state level. At the state level there are 2 different departments they can go to. If not, it can be sent and see if emergency money can be given directly from the Governor. He said there are also federal options. He said they need to follow certain steps.

Mayor Herrera asked if they would put additional holding tanks. Mayor Herrera said no. He said the only tank to be replaced is the one at La Loma by the school because of its age and condition, but that is still in the funding process. Council Member Herrera read another question. "Where are we getting the water to supply the mud bogs?" Mayor Herrera said that is coming from the pond in La Jara. He said they will get money generated from the mud bogs to pay for the water. He said there will be no water wasted on the mud bogs if there is a shortage. They will get water from another source. Council Member Herrera asked about the restrooms. Mayor Herrera said there will be porta-potties. He said the Eichwald Center is closed. Council Member Herrera asked Ms. Casados about the band coming, if it would be open for them. Ms. Casados said they had other plans.

Ms. Carey Beam asked if the service will be interrupted during the repairs. Mrs. Esther Herrera said no. Ms. Beam asked as long as the tank is at 10 feet or more there will be no more shut offs. Mrs. Herrera said no, there will be no more shut offs when the tanks are more than 16 feet. Ms. Beam asked how people can get notice if they are going to be without water to plan to have water on-hand while it is off. Mayor Herrera said that is a good point, that they did a very bad job about it the times the water was turned off and no one was notified. Mrs. Herrera said it was because it was a "more than an emergency basis". Council Member Herrera said it was posted on social media, but not everyone has social media. Mayor Herrera asked Ms. Beam if she has any ideas on how to get the information out faster. She said she is trying to think of ways because she knows of people that get water that are out of Village limits, so even if it is posted in the Village limits the ones outside may not see them. She said social media may not work all the time either as Council Member Herrera mentioned, not everyone has social media. Ms. Beam asked if the Water Department has a voice mail message that can be recorded to inform if someone decided to call. Mayor Herrera said down the road what they can do is create a e-mail/phone data base where mass email/texts can be sent out. Mrs. Esther Herrera said she spoke with CUSI, the company that does the billing, and she is waiting for a quote for bill payment on line as well as receive e-mails. Mayor Herrera said maybe on the next billing cycle, contact information can be requested from the customers. Council Member Herrera has a question from Lee Ramirez, "We heard a rumor that the meters were going to be read and everyone would pay for their usage. Is this true, instead of a flat rate?" Mayor Herrera said once the meters are read, they will pay for the usage.

Mayor Herrera was asked if the pigging of the lines will help with the pressure. Mayor Herrera said yes, it will help with the pressure because this will allow more water to get from the well to the tank. He said the fill time for the tank will be better, and not allow for loss of pressure. Mayor Herrera was told a few years back the lines needed to be cleaned and it still has not been done. Mayor Herrera said the lines don't need to be replaced, the truth is there are things that need to be worked on and that has been the story for the past 20 years but they need to start somewhere. Mr. Kyle Sandoval asked why it had to get to an emergency condition to get the \$2,000,000.00. He asked what happened to the past councils', why had they not applied for grants. He asked what happened to the big water plant. Mayor Herrera said they are still working on that, they need annexation. Mayor Herrera said they get a lot of Capital Outlay money to fix lines, replace lines and what happens is the system is so old the money is used to fix things here and there, put band-aids on things and that is where the funds are used. He said the funds are not used where they should have been used. Mayor Herrera was asked if cleaning the lines would help. Mayor Herrera asked when the last time the lines were cleaned. Mrs. Esther Herrera said the early 80's. Mayor Herrera said at least the main line will be cleaned now and they can address the other lines. He said this will not happen over night and he said by declaring an emergency would be the best route to go. He said any other way would take years. Mayor Herrera was told the lines need to continue being cleaned. Mayor Herrera said yes, the lines to the wells can be put on a schedule to make sure they don't run into the same problems. Mrs. Esther Herrera said they will need flush hydrants on

the lower spots where they sediment sets. She said there used to be some but when 550 was done, they got buried.

The question was asked from someone that works at the clinic, what happens in the meantime? Mayor Herrera said the state will have to send someone, maybe the National Guard, with water to the clinic. He said they will have to see what is done when they go to the county. He said they are trying to avoid where the entire system fails.

Mr. Ben Yeargin asked if there is a way to reduce the sediment getting into the line or is that something they will have to deal with. Mayor Herrera said, with the installation of the flush valves, the lines can be flushed on a regular basis. The sediment in the wells is something that happens. Mr. Yeargin was told that the sediment in a well is a constant battle. Mayor Herrera asked Mrs. Esther Herrera if there is something that catches the sediment at the well. Mrs. Herrera said it goes through the filtration system. She said the water goes through the round part in the middle of the filter plant. She said inside there is sand and little plastic balls that when they backwash, they get pushed around and that is what catches as much iron as it can out of there. Chlorine and permanganate are 2 chemicals that are used to reduce the iron in the water.

Mayor Herrera said he is sure everyone got the notice of the water restriction and if we all work as a community and watch out for your neighbor, we would not have this problem. Mr. Luciano Salaz said not to abuse the water and to read the meters in the first place to see how much water everyone uses. Mayor Herrera said that is right. The amount of water used will not be known until the meters are read. Ms. Beam asked if there are any ordinances on the books to be enforced. Mayor Herrera said they need to make amendments to the existing ordinance. Ms. Beam said she does not feel comfortable going to her neighbor and telling them about their water usage. It was mentioned at this point, to maybe go to the Village and report the usage, and it would be up to the Village to go out and address the problem. Mayor Herrera said once the customer has their meter read and has to pay for the actual amount used, the money will make them conserve. Mr. Luciano Salaz said there are the people that do not use that much water then there are the ones that water their horses. How much water does each horse drink a day and these people are not paying for their water because the meters are not read? Mayor Herrera said he is right. The only way for accountability is through the meter reading. Mr. Salaz said they can haul water for the animals, and pay for it. Council Member Herrera said they need to consider how much water the businesses use. Mayor Herrera said they need to look at the rates as well. Mr. Salaz said the last month the water as been a little better. Mayor Herrera was thanked for being there to talk to the people, not like before where there was no one. Mayor Herrera said they are here to listen to concerns. He said the problem may not get solved right away but they are willing to get ideas and work on things. He said they are not going to get ideas and not do anything about it. Council Member Herrera said the times the doors were locked could have been for Covid restrictions. He said they can always call and leave a message or leave a note in the drop box. Council Member Delgado said the office closes at 4:30. Mr. Salaz asked what happens when they want to pay their bill at 10:30 in the morning and the doors are locked, and then someone yells at them to put it in the box, or when they leave to put a sign on the door a time when they will return. He said he was told to put it in the box and he said now he has to go home, get an envelope, go to the bank for the correct change then put it in the box. He said he could see when the pandemic was going on to do that. Council Member Herrera said they are other people in the office that can take payments. Mayor Herrera said they will talk about that within themselves. Council Member Olivas asked if there is not someone who can fill in part time. Mayor Herrera said they are looking for someone. Mrs. Herrera said when she goes out, there is always someone in the office.

Mrs. Wendel Cebada said every time she doesn't get water her pump runs dry and she has already had to replace it twice. She said any type of notification would be helpful. She said that would really help everyone in the community. Mrs. Herrera said she should have not been without water.

The question was asked what happened to the tap on Hwy 126. Mayor Herrera said he thinks Horseshoe springs was closed due to contamination issues with septic systems.

Ms. Toledo said on the letter sent out about water restrictions, it said about fines and warrants and who is enforcing that since there are no police. Mrs. Herrera said the notice said at this time there would be no fines. Mayor Herrera said they need to put it in the ordinance first.

Ms. Casados asked Mayor Herrera if they can get a roll call vote on number 4 before they continue with public comment. Mayor Herrera said OK.

Mayor Pro Tem Dominguez	yes
Council Member Herrera	yes
Council Member Delgado	yes
Council Member Olivas	yes

Mayor Herrera was told that what they may need to consider with fines that if excessive water is being used, they send out a warning that they will be fined and it will be added to their next bill. Mayor Herrera said that is where the 411 system would come in handy because all reports would be anonymous and they would have a place to go check on. He was told the meters being read would help too. He agreed saying that would be a big help too.

Ms. Beam said Council Member Herrera has mentioned the businesses and asked if there could be a policy for the restaurants to serve water upon request only. She said she has gone where the customers get water with ice and a lot of times, they don't drink it, and how many gallons of water are getting dumped every day because that water can not be reused. She said every little bit helps. Mayor Herrera said there are also low flow toilets. He said this water problem is not going to go away in the future. He said it may even get worse and it is up the community as to how we are going to deal with it. He said there needs to be a system to keep everyone on the same page and keep everyone happy. Ms. Beam asked if there will be a weekly meeting or something specifically on the agenda to discuss the water. Mayor Herrera said they can do updates at the monthly meetings or if there is another emergency it can be done the way it is tonight. Ms. Beam said it is good to move the plans along with everyone contributing. Mayor Herrera said it will not get swept under the carpet. Mayor Herrera was told what he is doing is appreciated and thank you for trying to make things happen. Mayor Herrera said he will try his best.

Rainy, a 5th grade teacher, said she is trying to teach on conserving water in her summer classes. She asked if there is a way to get the water tested. Mayor Herrera said the water is sent out to get tested. She said she is just doing basic water testing on some springs on the reservation and surrounding areas. She said this is something she would like to teach her students, and maybe at the same time if they found good water it could be used at the clinic. She said she is going to try and teach her students how to ration water and how to prioritize their water usage. She also wants to teach them how to harvest water. Council Member Herrera asked Rainy if she has contacted the Soil and Water Conservation. She said she was hoping for some sense of direction. Mayor Herrera said she can contact Esther and she will

give her contacts for the companies. He said what they do is give her packs of what they want to test for. He said it depends on what they want to test for, and she can also get tests at Home Depot for ph. Mayor Herrera said he is sure they can work with the school on something like that. He told her just to reach out to Esther for help. Mrs. Herrera said there is a lot of information on the Office of the State Engineer. She said there they can get material for the students to read and other things on what she wants to teach them about. Ms. Beam said they can gather water and charge for people to get rain water and start using it that same day. Rainy said it is surprising how much rain water can be caught.

Mayor Herrera asked if there was any further comment.

Ms. Carey Beam said at one of the other meetings, there was talk about an Allsup's, or a large travel center, and what types of conversations the Village is having with the new businesses coming in that will require a lot of water, and will the system support it. She asked if this is something for strategic planning purposes being considered for economic development. Mayor Herrera said yes. Mayor Herrera said he is not going to offer water if there is not water for the citizens.

Mayor Herrera asked if there were any further comments. There was none.

Adjourn

Council Member Delgado made the motion. Council Member Olivas seconds the motion. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Approved Minutes for June 22, 2022

The minutes for the EMERGENCY Council Meeting held on Wednesday, June 22, 2022 have been officially approved by the Governing Body on June 29, 2022. The approved minutes have been submitted to the Village of Cuba Website.

Vandora P. Casados, Clerk-Treasurer 

