



Ferron City Council Emergency Town Hall Minutes
05/26/2021
Ferron Elementary
125 W Mill Rd, Ferron Utah
Phone - (435) 384-2350 Fax - (435) 384-2557 Web -
ferroncity.org

1.

Present:

Mayor Adele Justice Council Member Wendy Price
Council Member Dell Mead Council Member Troy Winter

Also Present:

Brittany Yeates, Recorder Jacqueline Wilde, Treasurer
Gordon Bennett, Ferron Canal Co. Jacob Sharp, CVSSD
Tracy Behling, Ferron Canal Co.
Approximately 150 Ferron Residents

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, WELCOME

Mayor Justice welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Roll call showed Council Members Price, Mead, and Winter were all present. Council Members Richman and Winn were excused.

2. DISCUSSION OF WATER AND DROUGHT CONDITIONS

The mayor apologized for the short notice but felt this information was urgent to get out to the citizens. She thanked Ferron Elementary for the use of the building and for the students for cleaning up the cemetery and planting flowers. The city began the season believing we had a half-acre ft allotted per water share. Turning on the secondary was delayed by a week to help. The city was told this week that the allotment has been decreased to a quarter-acre ft per share. The Council's priority is gardens and fruit trees. They did not impose a lot of restrictions because in the past that made citizens use more. The city has cut back on the parks and the cemetery. The Golf Course is another priority. They will be hand watering the greens only. The city cannot afford to let the greens die. She informed the crowd that the city will be sending out tips with the utility bills on how to conserve water. She asked that everyone be kind to their neighbors.

Tracy Behling with the Canal Company explained why there was a change in the allocation. It was first expected to receive around 18,000-acre feet to run off the water shed which is less than the normal 40,000-acre feet. At that amount, they figured a half-acre foot would work. Every two weeks, the forecast went down. It is now at 9,000 square feet, the second worst in recorded history. He then read a statement from the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service).

"We've been concerned about the high likelihood that a significant portion of this year's snowmelt runoff would soak into head water soils and not make it to the downstream reservoirs. Unfortunately, we are seeing that reality unfold. Note that the snow water equivalent has dropped. Infiltration has caused the soil moisture to increase, however, at the same time there has been minimal response in Utah's streams. Showing that, as we feared, most of the water being delivered by our snowpack is staying in the head waters and not producing a significant runoff response."

After they got to the 9,000 forecast, they cut the allotment to the quarter acre feet. Of the 9,000, we've seen 3,000 so far.

Another issue that comes into play is the whole western United State is experiencing this drought. The dams in Washington, Oregon, and Northern California are not releasing water and so are not producing hydropower. This has been the local power

plants have to run at higher loads than they have ever run at this time of year. They own a third of the shares in the Canal Company or reservoir. They also lease another 7,000 shares as an insurance policy. The power company needs enough water after the irrigation system to be able to run through the fall and winter.

He then said that some people believe that if the dam project had been completed it would make a big difference. He calculated there was a difference of about 1700 square feet. Mr. Behling then mentioned that he just received a report from a hydrologist about the six worst years and what we may expect. They'll analyze that.

Gordon Bennett with the Canal Company said that farmers do not use meters so he and Kash Winn check their sprinklers and do calculations daily. All the pipes coming out of the dam are metered and checked daily. Nobody is out of irrigation water as of today, but everybody is at least at half. He believes we will be lucky to make it to July 1st. He said if people start to use their culinary water that would cause other issues. This is the worst he has seen, and it is critical. Everyone needs to work together.

Marty Mower asked about the water that needs to go out to the San Rafael. It was confirmed that Paradise Ranch has the first filing and is guaranteed their water first. Mr. Mower then asked about finding a way to store the water for these sorts of situations since we are in the desert. There is a plan to eventually put in a storage pond up near the dam. The mayor confirmed the water storage is on Ferron's project list. She then said that during the over twenty years she has been with the city, we've always pulled through. She believes that the power of prayer and calling on a higher power does help.

Tracy Behling said that the reason for the dam restoration project was to bring Millsite back to its original capacity. Removing the sediment would've cost over 50 million dollars. It was supposed to be cheaper to raise the dam.

Bruce Smith asked if the irrigation company owns the water from all four ponds up the mountain. Mr. Behling said that irrigation company owns Wrigley reservoir and the water from Ferron Reservoir on down.

Russ Oakeson enquired if the reason the reservoir was so low was because of the construction work. He was told the difference would've been only about 1700 more. The problem is that we went from an average of 40,000-acre feet to only 9,000.

Council Member Troy Winter said that he has had questions addressed to him about those who have pasture grounds who are on the city's secondary water system. Mr. Bennett said there are a few properties like that on the system and they have their own share allotments that do not go against the city's shares. Once they have used up their shares, they are out.

Tracy Behling said the power company pays over \$600,000 for their lease whether they use it or not. We have benefitted from that as they have benefitted from being here.

Lane Justice said that he works for the middle school. They have decided to shut the water off on the bottom half of their turf area. It has taken him over eight years to get it healthy, but they are going to do their share. He said that all of us are in this together. Everyone needs to do their share.

Rayola Pfnister asked about the 50 million that it would have cost to dredge the reservoir and if with all the problems and delays if it wouldn't have been cheaper. There was a discussion about dredging and government regulations.

The mayor asked that everyone go home and reevaluate our situation. See what you can do personally to make a difference. We are stewards of our own water. We started with 415-acre feet and have used 203-acre feet in just a few weeks. The city will keep posting updates about the water usage.

Dennis Worwood mentioned a few tips on conserving water. One big one was not keeping turf lawns going. Focus on keeping trees, shrubs, and gardens alive. Lawns will go dormant. Drip systems are better than sprinkler heads. Also, fix leaks, install water saving devices and better management. Examples of better management are shorter showers and turning off the water when you brush your teeth. It is technically illegal to put gray water out into the yards. Established trees should survive with two good waterings a month. He said we've been through this before and we'll get through it again.

The mayor joked that 'Brown is the new Green.'

3. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Mead moved to adjourn at 8:23 PM. The motion was seconded by Council Member Price. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Mayor Adele Justice

Brittany Yeates
Ferron City Recorder