

Moab City Council Agenda Item
Meeting Date: January 26th, 2021

Title: Culinary Water Resources Policy and Conservation Measures

Disposition: Discussion and Possible Action

Staff Presenter: Carly Castle, Deputy City Manager
Chuck Williams, City Engineer

Attachment(s):

- SAMPLE Time-of-Day Watering Ordinance
- SAMPLE Water Shortage Contingency Ordinance

Recommended Motion:

“I move to direct staff to develop a Draft Water Shortage Contingency Ordinance and a corresponding Water Shortage Contingency Plan, and Time-of-Day/Day-of-the-Week Water Resource Management Ordinance.”

Background/Summary:

As the City grows and develops, there is an urgent need for continued and intensified management of our water resources. Combined with the deleterious effects of climate change, sharing an aquifer with multiple users, a mandate from the State of Utah to reduce the City’s per capita water use by 20 percent by 2030, an bleak water year, and the state of our aging infrastructure, there is a need to proactively manage the City’s water resources with additional ordinances and regulations.

At a December 16th, 2020 City Council Work session, staff presented:

1. A status report regarding culinary water availability within the Moab/Spanish Valley aquifers;
2. An outline of approved future capital and maintenance improvements to the City’s culinary water system;
3. An overview of the need for and framework for potential water resources policies and programs; and
4. An overview of the benefits and efficacy of certain water conservation measures.

Following the December 16th meeting with Council, staff has conducted further research regarding action items that target items #3 and #4 above. Specifically, staff recommends the development of a Water Shortage Contingency Ordinance and Water Shortage Contingency Plan, and Water Resource Management Ordinance to be developed and implemented ahead of the 2021 irrigation season. The purpose of the agenda item is to discuss these action items at the conceptual level, and for Council to provide general policy direction so that staff may begin developing the policies and ordinances for review by Council and the public. The attached ordinances and planning documents are included as *samples only*. The draft ordinances and planning documents to be prepared by staff for future Council consideration will be tailored to Moab’s local conditions and specific needs. A public engagement plan is being prepared to operate in concert with the development of these ordinances, and will include a website,

opportunity for public comment, involvement by the City's Water Conservation and Drought Management Advisory Board, and public hearings.

Water Shortage Contingency Ordinance and Plan

Staff recommends that the City develop and enact a Water Shortage Contingency Ordinance, which will empower the City Manager to maintain a Water Shortage Contingency Plan in the event of a drought or loss of water supply. The plan would likely contain several stages of action and would allow the City, based on water supply data, to enact water conservation measures based on mild to critical conditions.

Time of Day/Day of the Week Water Resource Management Ordinance

Under a Time of the Day/Day of the Week Water Resource Management Ordinance, watering limitations are designed to ensure the efficient use of water for lawn and landscape irrigation. The management framework will allow enough water to maintain healthy landscapes year-round, while specifying the time when watering may occur and the days when water may occur for residential and non-residential locations. This ordinance will be tailored to Moab's local conditions and will contain exceptions, which will be developed and vetted as part of a public engagement effort in the coming months. For example, activities such as drip irrigation or gray water systems are typically exempt from a time of day/day of the week management regimes. Implementation of this ordinance will correspond to a robust public education effort to inform residents about the new requirements, and education will be the ordinance's primary enforcement mechanism.

Timeline

January 26, 2021: Council gives direction on proposals

February 9, 2021: Staff presents Council with preliminary draft ordinances

February 10, 2021: Staff presents the City's Water Board with preliminary draft ordinances

February-March 2021: Further workshopping and refining of ordinances with Council, Water Board, and with feedback received from public engagement

April 2021: Public hearings

May 2021: Adoption of ordinances

Staff recommends the Motion as outlined above.