Dear Board Members,

Thank you for your good work. The status of Moab’s water supply has been a big concern of mine for many years now. My concerns have only grown these past 2 years as I’ve camped and hiked on Cedar Mesa and seen the scores of dead Junipers and Pinyons due to the extreme drought.

Mike Duncan has been so kind as to help educate me on what’s going on in Moab regarding water resources. I’ve watched both your meeting on Jan. 13th and the Special City Council Meeting from a couple weeks prior to that, and looked over the pertinent pages of Rosalie’s report. I would like to watch the Jan 20th MAWP meeting as soon as the link is available.

I have several questions and comments that I’d like to make.

1) How did Chuck come up with a 1% – 1.5% annual growth rate of water consumption from now through 2060? This number seems extremely low given the growth that we are seeing and experiencing in town.

2) Is gray water really ok to water plants with? I worry about putting chemicals from detergents used for laundry and/or showering onto plants.

3) My husband and I have been using Time of Day Watering in both SLC and Moab for decades. It has a major caveat to watch out for, which I have learned through experience. Often times sprinkler heads break and cause geysers. If a person is watering during a time of day in which they don’t see the watering happen, they may not know about a broken head for a long time, thus wasting a lot of water. This can be a big problem for second home owners who aren’t in town to check on their sprinkler systems. I would advise that if someone were to use TOD watering that they manually turn their system on once a week and check it for damage and if they are out of town for long stretches to have someone check their system for them while they’re gone.

4) Have you considered educating, not only high school students, but also tourists. We’ve had relatives from out east come to visit and be extremely wreckless with water, for example turning on the shower and walking away for 5 minutes. Tourists from wetter areas may not understand the importance of conservation. I wonder if we should place prominent signage
around town, including in hotel rooms and lobbies, restaurants, visitor centers, etc. Once covid and the mask mandate is over could we use the electric signs outside of town to let tourists know that Moab is experiencing “Severe draught” and “Please conserve water”.

5) It seems like water conservation is going to have to come from All sectors of water use. A couple percent from each sector will add up. I believe that residents will be less resistant to chipping in if they know that commercial and tourist related sectors are being mandated to conserve.

6) I read in Rosalie’s report that at the time she compiled her data hotels and overnight rentals were using 16% of our water. However, since then that capacity has increased by 30%, which would put hotels and overnight rentals now using approximately 20%. This is significant. Should we be requiring hotels/overnight rentals to also conserve water? For example by requiring them to use low flow shower heads and toilets and to only change sheets and towels upon requests and not daily?

7) In Rosalie’s report Commercial business accounted for 17% of water use. I assume this includes restaurants. Could we require that restaurants only provide glasses of water and refills upon request? A lot of water is wasted by servers continually filling water glasses that don’t get drunk.

8) My impression of Moabites is that they highly value their gardens, including community gardens. It’s also a known fact that we need green plants to absorb CO2 from the atmosphere to help reduce climate change. I would recommend that we do what we can to keep as much vegetation alive as is possible.

9) I have recently been asking locals about what they think should be done about conserving water. There seems to be a very strong opinion that our problem is tourism and that we need to limit, slow down and/or stop growth. I personally don’t think you will make any headway with locals without addressing this issue first. Is there anything we can do to slow down growth in the valley? This is probably a tough one because developers will push back, but the growth is not only adding to water concerns, but many other problems as well.
I would love to help out in any way that I can, however there are a few technical glitches on my part that you should consider.

1) We are going to move to our other house near the golf course, which would put me living in Grand County as opposed to Moab City. Currently we live close the water sewage treatment plant. Just this past fall the new plant has been emitting horrible smells. I called the plant and found out that when the BLM dumps their waste it sits in a holding tank for days until they have the capacity to process it, as they are burdened with the heavy use from hotels and overnight rentals. This smell has been bad enough to drive us out of our current neighborhood.

2) I am currently available on Wed afternoons for meetings, with the exception of once or twice for vacation. However Sept – Nov and possibly Dec. I am scheduled to teach math online through the U of U at 3:00 each Wed. I know you would like 73% attendance. I would barely be making that target without having room for something out of the ordinary coming up for me.