Water Dept. After-Action Report Overview

April 25, 2023

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Key Takeaways

- Following the December 2022 Water Outage Incident, the Water Resources Dept. carried out a root cause analysis to compile incident information and procedures for further analysis.
- Internal after-action reporting is carried out by staff after any incident and is a common operational practice and typically not distributed to the public or Council.
- The goal of an after-action report is to identify any system adjustments or improvements that can be made to better service the community and provide a more efficient and effective response to future incidents.
- The Water Resources Dept. presented preliminary findings to Council at their January 10, 2023 meeting. A more detailed analysis of the incident causes and possible improvements were then used to create the After-Action Report/Improvement Plan to guide operational improvements.
- The report was requested and released to the Independent Review Committee that was formed to conduct a deeper assessment and analysis of the incident. It was also released to the media in response to a public records request. Staff should have also notified and provided copies of the report to Council once it was decided that the report would be released.

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What is an After-Action Report?

- An After Action Report is a document that summarizes key information gathered during the evaluation of an incident. The report identifies improvements, and provides for a more efficient and effective response to future incidents.
- This type of report is technical in nature and is a best practice.
- The Water Resources Dept. (WRD) deals with a multitude of common and uncommon incidents on a regular basis. Therefore, the WRD completes these types of reports for a variety of situations.

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Standard Response and Documentation

- The typical process the WRD follows for incidents that impact the safety of the customer, employee, or the environment is to complete a Root Cause Analysis.
- The WRD uses the Corrective Preventive Action Report form to determine the cause, solutions, short and long term changes and deadlines.
- The incident at Christmas was large and complex.
- Therefore Homeland Security's After Action Report/ Improvement Plan format was utilized.

Objectives of the After-Action Report

- Compile and review data collected during the incident
- The After-Action Report further analyzed:
  - Causes for Mills River Water Treatment Plant (MRWTP) going offline
  - Loss of water service in Southern and Western Areas
  - Increase resiliency during extreme weather events
  - Customer communication improvements
  - Determine potential outside resources
- Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of each objective during incident.
- Determine and implement actions for improvement.

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Status of Identified Improvements

- Many of the corrective action items listed within the Improvement Plan have already been completed.
  - More comprehensive list of equipment, specifics and vendors
  - At Mills River Plant: new feed lines, extra insulation, replacement of mechanical equipment.
  - Staffing to perform essential functions and a department Public Information Officer have been requested in the FY24 budget
- Long term improvements continue.
  - Examples: CIP planning, regular scheduled cross-training and mentoring during incidents
- Other improvements will be addressed with the Mills River Plant Miscellaneous Plant Improvements - Phase 2

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Summary of Events

- December 29, 2022: public records request received for an after-action report
- January 4, 2023: water service is fully restored
- January 10, 2023: staff presentation to council
  - Summary of incident and communication timelines
  - Review of immediate after incident actions
  - Establishment of Independent Review Committee
- January 9th - 24th, 2023: Water staff held functional area meetings to discuss the root causes for the various issues encountered during the incident
- January 30, 2023: The After Action Report was completed and Water staff began implementing the Improvement Plan
- March 1, 2023: the Report was released to the Independent Review Committee under a non-disclosure agreement.
- April 19, 2023: the Report was released to the media after the redaction of sensitive security information.

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