THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date: January 24, 2023

Subject: Establishment of the water outage independent review committee membership

Staff Resource(s): Ben Woody, Assistant City Manager

Action Requested: Affirmation of independent review committee (IRC) membership which will analyze events and circumstances related to the recent water outage

Background:

- In December 2022, the City of Asheville experienced several days of extraordinarily low temperatures, causing water pipes to freeze and break and related infrastructure to fail.
- The associated damage to the system resulted in numerous customers of the City's Water Department to go without water for extended periods of time.
- On January 10, 2023 City Council adopted a resolution (Resolution No. 23-7) that established a multidisciplinary and independent review committee (IRC) to review the water outage.
- The IRC shall include the following position classifications: two residential water customers, one commercial water customer, one emergency response/disaster preparedness professional, two communications professionals, and three subject matter experts in public water systems.
- Two appointments shall be made by the Buncombe County Commission, and the remaining appointments shall be made by the City Council
- The IRC will provide:
    - a comprehensive account of the event,
    - an assessment of the City's operations and emergency response and communication efforts, and
    - an analysis of needed infrastructure and process and policy changes that, if implemented, would maximize prevention of future events and improve communication, emergency response, and mitigation processes.

Vendor Outreach Efforts:

- Not applicable

Council Goal(s):

- Improve/Expand Core Services

Committee(s):

- Not applicable

Pro(s):

- The IRC analysis and written report will identify and assess actions that took place originating from days of unusually cold weather and provide actionable items to improve operations to minimize future impacts.

Con(s):

- Not applicable

Fiscal Impact:

- Funding will come from the Water Resources Fund's existing budget to contract with an independent facilitator to support the IRC and to engage with an expert to prepare a written report.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to affirm the following seven members to the water outage independent review committee:
    - Residential Water Customer: Michele Ashley
    - Commercial Water Customer: Carolyn Roy
    - Communications Professional: Mike McGill
    - Communications Professional: Rob Brisley
    - Public Water Systems Subject Matter Expert: John McLaughlin
    - Public Water Systems Subject Matter Expert: Ted Tyree
    - Public Water Systems Subject Matter Expert: Michael Holcombe

Attachment(s)

- IRC Interested Candidates