

Summary of the Community Advisory Work Group (CAWG) Meeting #15
March 25, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Reynolds Desalination Facility
Topic: Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

Presentation: General Information on Community Advisory Work Group (CAWG)

Presented by Gregg Harpenau-Parks, Customer Service Manager, Introduction slides by Gabriel Innocenzi, Bilingual Public Affairs Representative.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

Summary of Presentation Slides:

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Meeting Purpose**
- 3. Ground Rules**
- 4. Agenda**
 - Purpose of Meeting
 - What is Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)
 - Public Comment/Q&A
 - What's on your mind
- 5. What is AMI**
- 6. How AMI Communicates**
- 7. AMI & Sweetwater Authority**
- 8. Neptune 360 Customer Data Slide**
- 9. AMI Feasibility Study**
- 10. Financial Impacts**
- 11. Potential Benefits for Customers**
- 12. Current Meter Reading Practices**
- 13. Questions?**

[Q&A Summary](#)

Is there a data payment plan included in the meter?

A: Yes, the data plan is part of the meter's cost.

Q: But do you still have to pay for it separately?

A: Yes, we do.

Q: If we were paying for a standard cell phone data plan, it could be \$20–\$40 per month. But with a system like this, managing 300+ locations, how is the charge calculated?

A: Currently, the data plan costs about \$14 per meter.

Q: Do you pass that cost on to the customer?

A: Currently, no.

Q: When the meter is in service, someone has to pay that \$14 per month. Who covers that cost?

A: That would be a discussion for management and the board.

Q: So, if there are 35,000 meters, that would be \$35,000 per month just for data?

A: Yes.

Q: Does the system provide real-time leak detection, similar to devices like Flume?

A: Yes, it provides alerts, but integration with third-party devices like Flume would need to be explored.

Q: Can this system integrate with Flume to enhance monitoring?

A: That would require further research. Flume provides private data to users, but future integrations are possible.

Q: What are some challenges faced with meter modernization?

A: Some companies have discontinued certain meters, creating compatibility issues. It's similar to how VHS and Betamax used to compete. Some early adopters of AMR technology faced glitches, but over time, these issues have been resolved. The City of San Diego, for example, experienced significant setbacks in its modernization efforts.

Q: How should modernization be implemented to avoid operational disruptions?

A: The best approach is a phased rollout. Starting with a small group in Phase 1 allows any kinks to be worked out before expanding. This method also distributes costs over multiple years, making budgeting easier.

Q: How will you address concerns from residents who feel they are paying for a system but not directly benefiting from it?

A: A study will be conducted to determine the most cost-effective and equitable rollout strategy. The board will decide on prioritization, ensuring fairness in implementation.

Q: What is the expected timeline for full implementation?

A: The optimal rollout is estimated to take three years. However, this depends on securing adequate funding before proceeding.

Q: Will new meters be compatible with different transmission units?

A: Yes, the new meters are designed for compatibility. In the future, when meters are replaced, only the head unit will need to be updated.

Q: How often do meters need to be replaced?

A: Typically, meters are replaced every 15 years due to wear and tear.

Q: How is automation expected to reduce costs?

A: Automation reduces labor costs by eliminating manual meter readings and billing processes. If this effort is implemented, staffing assignments would be evaluated.

Q: What is the Flume device, and how does it work?

A: Flume is a device that attaches to the meter and monitors water usage. It alerts users via a phone app if unusual consumption patterns suggest a leak.

Q: Is Sweetwater Authority still offering Flume rebates?

A: Yes, there was a promotion that provided 250 Flume devices at no cost to customers. There are a few more Flume devices available—visit www.Sweetwater.org for updates.

Q: How difficult is it to install Flume?

A: Installation is simple and takes about 30 minutes. It attaches to the meter with a rubber strap and connects to a home Wi-Fi system.

Q: Does Sweetwater Authority assist customers with meter maintenance?

A: Yes, staff are available to help with installations and maintenance, including replacing old meter boxes when needed.

Q: How long will it take to install the 365 smart water meters?

A: The deployment has been ongoing since 2022 and continues as new developments come in and old meters need replacement.

Q: How do the smart meters connect?

A: They plug into the register magnetically, allowing for easy installation and compatibility.

Questions Regarding the Green Fleet:

Q: Have you purchased any new electric vehicles?

A: Based on the last board decision, we purchased one electric vehicle and one hybrid. We are also considering compliance with state regulations on electric vehicles.

Q: Has the decrease in electric vehicle prices influenced purchasing decisions?

A: It has influenced our options, but the focus is on understanding regulations and ensuring the right vehicles for the right tasks.

Q: Have the charging stations been installed?

A: Yes, the project was recently completed. There are charging stations at different locations, including Purdue and operations sites.

Q: How many charging stations are there?

A: There are a total of six charging stations across multiple locations.

CAWG Group suggestions for future meetings:

- Conservation efforts
- Upcoming public engagement events.
- Updates on the trail
- Updates on the solar floating array.
- Updates on the Green Fleet
- Updates on Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)
- Updates on the Water Resources Master Plan and the Desalination Project.