



Saturday, May 17, 2014

City Council to Face Monsters Created by Will



San Angelo's City Council will face a number of items impacted by former Director of Public Works Will Wilde. From 1989 to 2004 Wilde worked as Public Works director. From 2004, he served as Water Utilities Director. Here they are:

Reclaimed Water Use: Agenda item #11 is a [repeat study](#) regarding the City's use of reclaimed water. The secret Reclaimed Water study from 2006 returns as an apparition in the 2014 proposal. Will Wilde used this study to steer treated water to his [cotton hobby farm](#). There is no record of City Council approval to conduct the 2006 study or the study's cost to taxpayers. The document has never been made available to the public. However, it will be heavily used in the current analysis.

Former Assistant City Manager Elizabeth Grindstaff witnessed Will's antics on [reclaimed water](#), as well as the Furniture Fiasco (in which she had a [starring role](#)). This will be her first meeting as City Councilwoman for SMD #5.

Earlier this month Assistant Water Chief Kevin Krueger slayed Will's fiction that farmers traded their unpredictable Twin Buttes water rights for predictable reclaimed water from the City. Under Water Czar Will Wilde farmers kept their Twin Buttes rights and [added](#) 100% of the city's treated water.

Water Rate Increase: Agenda item #13 is the water rate schedule. Wilde treated Water Department revenues as his to dole out. City Council thought they'd gotten rid of any excess charges to the public that weren't water related, but they remain to this day. Water rates have been raised to "encourage conservation." When citizen's conserved rates needed to be raised again. That's because the city views water as a revenue source. Council repeatedly asked Wilde and his successors to bring us ways we can encourage people to use our limited water resources more wisely, low volume toilets, xeriscaping, rainwater capture systems, etc.. None delivered.

City's 2013 Financial Audit: Agenda item #14 is the City's Comprehensive Audit Financial Report (CAFR) which chronicled the city's reliance on [water revenues](#) over the years. Auditors gave the presentation in November [in November](#) last year, so the timing is interesting. Pension liabilities should be massive (due to GASB changes).

Fixing City Streets: Agenda item #16 will propose funding solutions for street reconstruction and maintenance. Wilde was responsible for street maintenance until 2004. At that point current Ricky Dickson took over streets as Director of Operations. As a pair they were responsible for ensuring streets reached their thirty year life, if properly maintained. Prior city councils were responsible for providing funding for street upkeep, but its up to staff to educate them on the need and the consequences of failure.

The presentation Tuesday will likely be sobering. City leaders allowed our streets to deteriorate to the point that massive investment will need to be made. Coming after the financial audit, this hill will seem much steeper.

Waste Removal/Landfill Operation: This item is not on the regular agenda but may be discussed in executive session. The period of Trashaway's thirty five year relationship with the city, 1989-2004, exactly mirrored Will Wilde's tenure as Public Works Director. The city extended the contract in 2004, Wilde's last year as Public Works Director, for ten years.

Trashaway-Republic operated the landfill as a regional operation, with 50% of the trash coming from surrounding counties. There have been no credible efforts to reduce trash use (recycling, composting) during the city's relationship with Trashaway-Republic. As the landfill nears the end of its useful life, trash management becomes critical. Add the concern that Trashaway-Republic billed commercial customers unapproved charges for years, and the prospect of a rushed renewal seems tainted.

Closing: On numerous occasions Will Wilde ignored City Council directives and did his own thing. The public finally noticed Will Wilde's unethical side and pressure grew to the point he resigned. The City faces a number of Will Wilde associated monsters. I expect very little to be said about the current consequences faced due to prior actions. The sad part is Will's vision in many of these arenas remains embedded. It's time to craft a new vision, one that moves forward ethically and openly.

by PEU Report/State of the Division at 1:42 PM 0 comments 
