Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: **Tuesday, June 22, 2021**

TO: **City Council**

FROM: **PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DIRECTOR PALMISANO**
BEAU KAYSER, WATER DIVISION MANAGER

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTIONS APPROVING THE 2020 CITY OF WATSONVILLE URBAN WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN AND THE WATER SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY PLAN**

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:
An Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) provides information on the present and future water demands and supplies, and provides an assessment of the City's water resources needs. The 2020 UWMP will act as a guide to maintain and sustain efficient use of urban water supplies, evaluate available sources of water supply, to promote conservation programs, and to plan out strategies for responding to water shortages and drought conditions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Approve and adopt the resolutions for:
1. The Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) and,
2. The Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP).

DISCUSSION:

Background: In 1983, the California Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 797, which is known as the Urban Water Management Planning Act. This act mandates that all urban water suppliers serving more than 3,000 customers or providing more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually to develop an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). In order to comply with State water planning law the UWMP must be reviewed every five years and must be adopted after public review and hearing. It is then filed with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Purpose: The City of Watsonville's 2020 UWMP revises the 2015 UWMP. This 2020 UWMP provides information on the present and future water demands and supplies, and provides an assessment of the City's water resources needs. The 2020 UWMP will act as a guide to maintain and sustain efficient use of urban water supplies, to describe and evaluate existing and potentially available sources of water supply, to promote conservation programs and policies, and to plan out strategies for responding to water shortages and drought

conditions. DWR summarizes the status of all plans submitted statewide. DWR can use these plans as a resource to set targets, such as to track progress toward decreasing daily per capita urban water use throughout the state.

Grant Funding Eligibility: Adoption of an UWMP is required by the State of California to qualify for grant funding and to receive drought assistance from the State. With the potential for new grant funding opportunities becoming available through a potential infrastructure bill, completing the UWMP is more crucial than ever.

City Water Supply: About 90% of the City's water is supplied from the groundwater in the Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin, and about 10% comes from Corralitos and Browns creeks. Fourteen groundwater wells and the Corralitos Filter Plant currently produce an average of approximately 7,000 acre-feet of water per year. All City water sources meet State and Federal drinking water standards.

Water Supply Reliability: One of the main purposes of the UWMP is to demonstrate that water systems are adequately prepared to supply water under a variety of conditions. The City has made a number of preparations to provide for water during emergencies. Historically, the most common emergencies have been regional power outages and earthquakes. The City has learned from its experience of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, and has taken many steps since then to prepare for similar situations.

The City water system is designed as a network, so that if one source of water or a main pipeline is damaged, water can be supplied from another area of the city. Additionally, most areas within the service system are served by multiple sources, thus limiting dependence on a single supply source. Nearly all source water sites are equipped with emergency back-up generators and fuel tanks that will keep the system operational during emergencies.

Impacts of Drought. The UWMP also analyzed the impact of drought on the City's water supply. It was determined that after five years of drought, as long as conversation measures are implemented, the City will have adequate water to meet the community's water needs.

Water Quality: Based on review of water quality monitoring data ranging from 1990 to the present, there have been no significant changes in the City's water quality. In 2014, California proposed a drinking water regulation specifically for chromium-6. City water is well below the current standard for chromium. If a new standard is established, the City is prepared to ensure that its impacted sources will meet the required treatment levels within the compliance period. The City's groundwater and surface water has met or exceeded State and Federal drinking water safety standards for over 85 years and will continue to do so.

State Water Conservation Goals: The Water Conservation Bill of 2009, or SBx7-7, is water conservation legislation that seeks to achieve a 20% statewide reduction in urban water use by December 31, 2020. The bill requires each urban retail water supplier to develop per capita water use targets to meet the 20% goal by 2020.

The City of Watsonville service area is located in the Central Coast region. The State set a target level of 117 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) for this region. The City's per capita water use has been trending downward over the last 20 years. By 2015, the City had already surpassed the State water conservation mandate.

In 2020, the City's gpcd was 87, significantly lower than the targeted reduction of 117. ***Therefore, the City has achieved and surpassed the State water conservation mandate for 2020.*** The City has been able to achieve such low levels of water use due to its long-term efforts to promote water conservation. Staff will continue to work towards achieving additional water conservation savings and expand its water conservation programs.

State Water Conservation Program: The Urban Water Management Planning Act requires that all water agencies implement a water conservation program.

The City continues to successfully promote water conservation in a variety of ways including public education, the use of local print and electronic English and Spanish language media, articles in the City's newsletter, and inserts in the City's utility bills. The City evaluates its programs on an ongoing basis and has been proactive in implementing changes and improving the effectiveness of its water conservation program. All programs are described in more detail in the 2020 UWMP. Among these programs are:

- Metering
- Tiered Rate Structure
- Public Education and Outreach (including landscape audit consultations, offering rebates and free water efficient devices, classes and trainings)
- Water Loss Control
- Water Conservation Program Coordination and Staffing Support

Pajaro Valley Groundwater Basin Overdraft: Seawater intrusion in the Pájaro Valley basin, a result of groundwater overdraft, was first documented in 1953. Since then, annual water use has generally increased, and the basin continues to be in a state of overdraft. The Pájaro Valley groundwater basin is overdrafted, causing groundwater elevations to drop below sea level and leading to seawater intrusion, causing chloride contamination of groundwater wells up to three miles inland.

City Efforts to Address Groundwater Overdraft: The City has committed to reducing its use of groundwater to the maximum extent possible over the next 30 years, with a goal of no net increase in groundwater use during that period.

- ***Recycled Water***. The City has played a key role in addressing groundwater overdraft in the Pájaro Valley by taking the lead in designing, permitting, constructing, and operating the Recycled Water Facility, in partnership with the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water). The City and PV Water will continue to find ways to increase the utilization of our recycled water.

- ***Water Conservation***: Residents and businesses have responded to the City's education and outreach efforts to conserve water, and the City will continue to communicate with our customers and provide incentives to conserve water.

Coordination with the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PV Water): PV Water is a state-chartered water management district formed to manage existing and supplemental water supplies. PV Water's primary goals are to reduce groundwater overdraft and to provide and ensure sufficient water supplies for present and anticipated needs within the Pajaro Valley.

PV Water Projects: PV Water has completed a number of important projects to help reduce overdraft, slow seawater intrusion and protect water quality within the basin. PV Water has increased water storage at the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant, constructed the Harkins Slough Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery Facility and the Coastal Distribution System Project, which is used to distribute water from the Watsonville Recycled Water Facility, and implemented significant agricultural water conservation programs.

PV Water is also designing the College Lake project, which has the capacity to supply another 2300 acre-feet of water per year to farmers in the groundwater basin, and is anticipated to be built in the next five years.

Water Shortage Contingency Plan:
To manage water usage during drought, the City can rely on its updated Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP). The WSCP is Watsonville's operating manual to prevent catastrophic service disruptions through proactive, rather than reactive, management. This way, if and when shortage conditions arise, the WSCP allows the City Council, City staff, and the public to identify and implement pre-determined steps to manage a water shortage.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
Adopting the 2020 UWMP and the WSCP supports the Strategic Plan goal of improving the City's infrastructure.
03-Infrastructure & Environment

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
There will be no direct financial impact to the City for approving this item. However, adoption of a 2020 UWMP and WSCP is required by the State in order to qualify for grant funding.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:
Alternative includes not adopting the 2020 UWMP and/or WSCP; however, adoption of a UWMP and WSCP is required by the state in order to qualify for grant funding.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):
None.