



Board of Supervisors Memorandum

June 19, 2018

Continuation of Item # 28 on the June 12, 2018 Consent Calendar - Arizona Board of Regents, University of Arizona, Membership in the Water and Energy Sustainable Technology Center Project

Background

At the June 12, 2018 Board of Supervisors meeting, the subject item was continued to the June 19, 2018 meeting. The continuation was related to questions raised by Supervisor Miller about the \$30,000 annual fee for the National Science Foundation Water & Environmental Technology (WET) membership and the \$50,000 in-kind contribution component of the agreement. The following provides information about WET membership and the agreement fees and in-kind contributions.

Water & Environmental Technology Center

The WET Center is a multi-university establishment with a focus on water quality, emerging contaminants and technology for water treatment. The National Science Foundation lead center consists of research institutions located at Temple University, University of Arizona, and Arizona State University. Research areas of focus are targeted at issues common to municipal water and wastewater providers nationwide and include:

- Potable water security and distribution
- Wastewater treatment technologies
- Bio-solids land application
- Reclaimed water and reclaimed water reuse
- Mine tailing restoration
- Potable water treatment technologies
- Industrial contamination

This is the 20th, and final year, for the NSF WET Center. Annual dues for the WET Center membership are a \$30,000 cash contribution. This amount is included in the total \$50,000 cash contribution in the agreement. WET membership provides Pima County a voting member on the advisory board for targeting research projects that have maximum impact for our community and our utility. This year Pima County's contribution resulted in a paid internship for a graduate student assigned to our Anammox Research and Pilot Demonstration Project which is also funded by the National Science Foundation.

Water, Energy & Sustainable Technology (WEST) Center

The \$5.5 million state-of-the-art Water & Energy Sustainable Technology (WEST) Center, built by Pima County, brings together industry, government and academia for the development of new technologies that will help communities deal with water scarcity and

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The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

Re: **Continuation of Item # 28 on the June 12, 2018 Consent Calendar - Arizona Board of Regents, University of Arizona, Membership in the Water and Energy Sustainable Technology Center Project**

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reuse. The WEST Center represents an important partnership, which is among a few in the nation, bringing together various expertise to address some of the grand environmental challenges facing society today.

The partnership involves Pima County, Tucson Water, numerous industrial partners, and the University of Arizona. Researchers from the UA's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and College of Engineering work on site. The Center is unique in its ability to conduct the translational research necessary to advance the sustainable technologies of the future. Current research areas focus currently being conducted include:

- Reclaim water flow through capabilities
- Advanced technology demonstration projects for potable water
- Anammox pilot demonstrations for bio-augmenting mainstream wastewater treatment
- Virus and pathogen attenuation through advanced water treatment
- Aquatic toxicity testing

Corporate sponsors pay an annual membership fee of \$100,000 which allows them access to research, to conduct pilot-scale research in the high bay, and voting membership on the advisory board. These members include recognizable names like Xylem, DOW, MetaWater, GE Power & Water, Pepsico, Agilent Technologies, PWNT, IXOM, Calgon Carbon and SC Johnson. Both the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD) and Tucson Water serve as municipal members with reduced annual membership fees in exchange for in-kind services.

Currently RWRD pays a \$20,000 cash contribution for WEST membership and provides up to \$50,000 of in-kind contribution services. RWRD receives voting membership on the advisory board with RWRD serving as the chair. The in-kind contribution includes use of RWRD facilities and conference rooms, access to wastewater treatment plants and samples for research purposes, access to RWRD generated laboratory data, and technical expertise. The emphasis of the in-kind service is focused on our technical and operating expertise as most of the research is collaborative and RWRD plays a critical role in offering recommendations and advice to make the research applicable to "real operating" scenarios. Because of the collaborative role and practical application expertise of RWRD, the \$50,000 annual in-kind contribution is not tracked as would occur from an accounting perspective with grant funded projects. Due to the active partnership and involvement from RWRD operation of wastewater conveyance and treatment systems and our presence on-site, the value is generally inferred and has not been an issue.

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As noted by Chief Deputy County Attorney, Andy Flagg, at the June 12, 2018 Board of Supervisors meeting, the Intergovernmental Agreement and \$50,000 contribution amount are properly reflected on the Board's Agenda.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board approve the Intergovernmental Agreement to enable RWRD to continue with the third year of WEST membership.

Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/mp