

"Placerville, a unique historical past forging into a golden future."



City Manager's Report
February 26, 2019, City Council Meeting
Prepared by: Cleve Morris, City Manager
Item #: 3.3

Subject: Review and provide input on October 14, 2019 PG&E Power Shut Off and the effects on the City of Placerville and discuss ways to avoid the safety concerns created by the Shut Off.

Purpose: On October 14, 2018 PG&E de-energized power to a portion of the City of Placerville jeopardizing public safety and welfare. Staff has asked PG&E to attend a meeting to discuss that process and the concerns of the City and how it can be improved.

Background:

On October 14, 2018 PG&E de-energized power to a portion of the City of Placerville jeopardizing public safety and welfare. Public Works and Public Safety Staff responded appropriately, however due to poor communication from PG&E, preparation for the event followed by staff response to the power outages was made much more difficult.

Public Facilities that were affected include Town Hall, Police Station and Fire Station 26, City Hall and the Water Reclamation Facility. In addition, power was shut off to traffic signals on Highway 50 and other areas in town. Power was out to some facilities through Monday at approximately 11:00. The City's Water Reclamation Facility did not have power restored until Monday afternoon after 3:00 and other wastewater facilities were not restored until after 6:00 on Monday evening. One of these facilities, a lift station, encountered additional problems due to the outage and required manual pumping every 6 hours until Wednesday when repairs could be completed. The Highway 50 traffic congestion was not relieved until the final signal at Bedford Ave. was restored at 6:15 PM Monday evening.

Discussion:

With proper notification, staff could have called in additional resources to prepare and handle the issues resulting from the power shut off. Because this occurred on a weekend, the City was not fully staffed. In addition, because of the lack of communication and uncertainty of the shutoff, it was still difficult to determine the need to staff up.

City Officials received no direct communication from PG&E confirming their plans to shut off power in the City. The City learned of the problem through personal emails to individual employees from PG&E. In addition, once we had preliminary information, it was difficult to verify and get additional information from PG&E. In fact, Acting City Manager Pierre Rivas called the PG&E customer service line and was told they had no information regarding the

planned shut off. Fortunately, Vice Mayor Acuna had a contact he was able to communicate with and obtain some information that assisted staff in responding.

The City's backup systems performed well. The Police Department, Town Hall and the Water Reclamation Facility all ran on back-up power. However at one point obtaining fuel became a problem as our normal fueling stations were without power and unable to pump fuel. Staff was resourceful and resolved this situation.

On October 28, 2018, the Council adopted a resolution condemning the actions of PG&E for the following reasons:

1. Wind speeds in the areas where these important facilities are located never reached the 40 mph threshold established by PG&E.
2. The Main Street area where our Police Station, Fire Station 26 and Town Hall are located are not in an Extreme Fire Danger Zone.
3. Many restaurants also operate in this area. Many lost money due to not being able to operate, and losing food to spoilage.
4. The Water Reclamation Facility is also in an area away from the Extreme Fire Danger Zone and did not experience sustained winds above the 40 mph threshold.
5. Lack of proper notification to public officials increased the risk to the public.

Tonight we are asking to have a discussion with PG&E on what they learned from this and what are their plans to improve this situation in the event future wind events necessitate planned outages.

Options:

1. Direct Staff to continue to work with PG&E to resolve issues related to planned shutoffs.
2. No Action

Cost: None at this time.

Budget Impact: None.

Recommendation: Direct Staff to continue to work with PG&E to resolve issues related to planned shutoffs.



M. Cleve Morris, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Presentation
3. Handout