



## Staff Report

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**File #:** 19-38

**Version:** 1

**Date:** 1/28/2019

**Item #:** 3.3b.

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Steve Powers, City Manager

**FROM:** Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

**SUBJECT:**

Water Treatment Plant Staffing

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Safe, Reliable, and Efficient Infrastructure

**ISSUE:**

Shall City Council approve the addition of two Water Treatment Plant Operator positions (2 FTE) to the Utility Fund, increasing authorized staffing from 319.30 full-time equivalent positions to 321.30, effective immediately?

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the addition of two Water Treatment Plant Operator positions (2 FTE) to the Utility Fund, increasing authorized staffing from 319.30 full-time equivalent positions to 321.30, effective immediately.

**SUMMARY:**

The Water Treatment Section of the Public Works Operations Division is responsible for treating drinking water at the Geren Island Water Treatment Plant. Additional treatment processes are being implemented to prevent cyanotoxins from entering the water distribution system. The processes require additional labor to properly dose the powdered activated carbon (PAC), monitor the settling, and staff the water treatment plant 24 hours a day during peak periods of turbidity or algal blooms. Adding the positions mid-year will allow new employees to be in place prior to the beginning of the next algal bloom season. The positions will also be used to operate the new ozone treatment process when implemented in 2021.

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

The total cost of two full-time Water Treatment Plant Operators for a full year is \$203,250. This results in an estimated additional cost of up to \$50,810 if the positions are filled beginning April 1, 2019, through the remainder of FY 2018-2019. Salary savings from other vacant positions are sufficient to off-set the mid-year addition.

If approved, the two Water Treatment Plant Operator positions will be included in the proposed budget for FY 2019-2020. The additional positions were anticipated in the FY 2020 - FY 2024 Utility Fund forecast presented on December 10, 2018.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Geren Island Water Treatment Plant is located on an island in the North Santiam River near Stayton, Oregon. The plant primarily treats surface water from the North Santiam River and sends it to Salem via two water transmission mains. The slow sand filtration process normally requires four full-time Water Treatment Plant Operators and a Water Treatment Services Supervisor.

In order to protect the City's drinking water from the presence of cyanotoxins emanating from potential algal blooms in the Detroit Reservoir and North Santiam River watershed, the City is employing additional treatment methods. Powdered activated carbon requires staffing the plant up to 24 hours per day, depending on PAC dose.

In addition to supporting PAC operations, a recent consultant evaluation noted that the plant was currently minimally staffed at only four operator positions and that an additional two positions were needed to cover for absences, vacations, training, after-hour calls, and on-going maintenance needs.

The City plans to construct an ozone treatment facility as a long-term solution to preventing cyanotoxins from entering the drinking water supply. That plant is expected to begin operation in 2021. The two additional Water Treatment Plant Operator positions will be needed to operate the ozone facility on a 24-hour-per-day basis.

Mark Becketl, AICP  
Operations Division Manager

Attachments:  
None