

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SHIRTSLEEVE SESSION
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020**

A. Roll Call by City Clerk

An Informal Informational Meeting ("Shirtsleeve" Session) of the Lodi City Council was held Tuesday, February 4, 2020, commencing at 7:01 a.m.

Present: Council Member Chandler, Council Member Mounce, Mayor Pro Tempore Nakanishi, and Mayor Kuehne

Absent: Council Member Johnson

Also Present: City Manager Schwabauer, City Attorney Magdich, and Assistant City Clerk Farris

NOTE: Council Member Mounce participated in the meeting via teleconference.

NOTE: Council Member Chandler left the meeting at 7:48 a.m.

B. Topic(s)

B-1 GreatBlue Research 2019 Customer Satisfaction Survey Presentation (EU)

Due to a misunderstanding regarding the time of the meeting, representatives from GreatBlue Research were not present for the meeting. Business Development Manager Astrida Trupovnieks provided a brief introduction and City Manager Schwabauer reviewed the PowerPoint presentation provided by GreatBlue Research regarding the 2019 customer satisfaction study. Specific topics of discussion included background about GreatBlue, project overview, areas of investigation, research methodology, telephone survey respondent snapshot, digital survey respondent snapshot, focus group participants (residential customers), in-depth interview participants (commercial customers), key study findings, perceptions of Electric Utility, service and staff drive ratings, satisfaction with office personnel, low rate of first contact resolution, customer service problematic for residents, contact resolution improves ratings, satisfaction higher with field personnel, commercial customers' satisfaction with staff, expectations increasingly being met, public ownership important to customers, improvements in bill and discount programs, rates viewed as higher than surrounding utilities, outage restoration time acceptable, positive relationship, website satisfaction, communication preferences vary, awareness and interest in commercial programs, focus on customer service and contact resolution improvements, implementation of a commercial customer quantitative survey, perform testing of website, and reintroduction of energy conservation and renewable energy topics to 2020 survey.

In response to Mayor Kuehne, City Manager Schwabauer responded that the main issue is the public's ability to reach the Finance Department on the telephone. Currently, there are 16 lines available; however, the new computerized system will have unlimited lines, offer a call-back service, and give customers an approximate wait time. He further stated the kiosks and cross-training have already reduced wait times.

In further response, Deputy City Manager Andrew Keys stated the customer service staff consists of a supervisor and five representatives to cover telephone calls and the windows; during lunches and breaks, coverage can be down to three employees; window service is prioritized over telephones; a minimum of two windows are open, with a third being opened if more than five customers are waiting; a window dedicated to payments only is opened if the line is too long;

and wait times have greatly improved over the last year.

Mayor Kuehne noted that when he went to Finance to pay for his business license, there were five or six people in front of him, but the wait was only 11 to 12 minutes. He further noted that the customer service representative was professional and courteous, but not particularly friendly, and he thought there was room for improvement.

In response to Council Member Chandler, Electric Utility Director Jeff Berkheimer stated that the level of public awareness about the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) being publicly owned was about the same as public awareness in Lodi until about ten years ago when SMUD started a marketing campaign. City Manager Schwabauer stated Electric Utility has increased its social media presence, with daily posts and approximately 2,000 followers on FaceBook.

In response to Mayor Kuehne's question regarding why online respondent answers reflect more skepticism than phone respondents, City Manager Schwabauer stated the issue is not addressed in the report but he theorizes that people tend to be more negative in the privacy of their own homes than when interacting with a person on the telephone; he verified that the online and telephone questions were the same. Ms. Trupovnieks later reported that GreatBlue verified that online survey respondents generally tend to give lower ratings than telephone survey respondents.

In response to Mayor Kuehne, City Manager Schwabauer stated that Lodi is not telling its story in relation to rates, and a greater effort needs to be made.

In response to Council Member Chandler, City Manager Schwabauer agreed that the City's consolidated billing may give customers the impression they are paying more for electricity.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Nakanishi, Deputy City Manager Keys stated online training courses for new customer service employees are utilized, consisting of 15-minute videos over the course of their first three to six months; these are entry-level positions, but the City receives significant interest; most employees have experience, but there is a difference between customer service in the private sector; and the customers in the Finance Department are often in difficult circumstances, but the staff has no "free drink" to offer in compensation.

Mayor Kuehn stated he feels customer service has definitely gotten better, but there is a long way to go, particularly in friendliness; the City misses an opportunity to thank customers when refunding their security deposit after a year of service; and the City needs to tell its story at events like the light parade and farmers' market, as well as a marketing campaign on billboards and social media.

Council Member Mounce stated the Finance Department has a lot more work to do, but she feels the customers service representatives do amazing work in a difficult job.

Myrna Wetzel, member of the public, stated she pays her bill at the window and that the customer service representatives work hard, so it bothers her that they received negative feedback on the survey; she has not had a really bad experience paying her bill.

Electric Utility Director Berkheimer stated there are many opportunities called out in the report; the Northern California Power Agency (NCPA) is putting together a statewide rate analysis; Electric Utility will be working to get the news out and to become more visible; and he looks forward to next year's results.

C. Comments by Public on Non-Agenda Items

None.

D. Adjournment

No action was taken by the City Council. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 a.m.

ATTEST:

Pamela M. Farris
Assistant City Clerk