



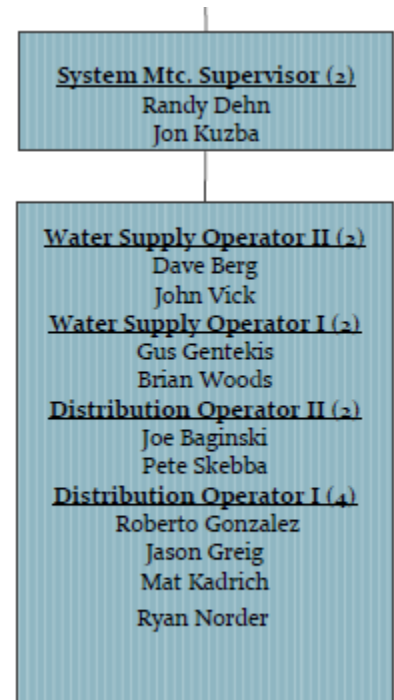
## MEMORANDUM

Date: October 21, 2021  
To: Water Utility Commission  
From: Dan Duchniak  
Re: Organization Structure

At our August 2019 Water Utility Commission Meeting, I presented the findings of a study done by Baker Tilly, who was commissioned to study our current organization structure and make the necessary recommendations to prepare us to meet future staffing needs. Concerns were two-fold, the changing focus of our operations, and the potential for 30% of our staff being eligible to retire within the next five (now three) years.

The chart to the right shows the structure of our operations team at that time:

### August 2019 Structure



### Current Structure



A significant recommendation of the study was to eliminate the distinction of 'distribution and water supply operators' into a more flexible group of 'operators', all fully trained to perform both distribution and water supply duties. This is ongoing and working nicely, though slightly behind schedule due to COVID restrictions. Other changes to our current structure (shown left) include the elimination of two supervisor positions, replaced by one higher level Assistant Manager of Operations, and the classification of three operators to 'Lead Operators'.

This current structure leaves eight positions titled operator I's, (\*including one who was grandfathered as a Dist. Operator II).

### **Proposed Structure**

Fast forward two years to October 2021. Six of twelve in the department are DNR licensed, and the others are on track to be licensed by the deadline of January 1, 2023. All have been receptive to cross training and learning new functions, and two new operators were hired in 2021, due to retirements, who have proven to be good additions to the team.

However, we believe that the elimination of the operator II position(s) has not been beneficial to the department's efficiency. Having eight operators in the field, all with the same job title, creates a void to the crew structure having no one with the authority to make higher-level decisions or to perform a higher level of duties, such as operating heavy equipment when necessary. Without the distinction of a higher-level job title, there is reluctance to take this direction from another peer in the group which can result in conflict in the field.

We are also concerned that the current structure eliminates an advancement step for employees to work towards. As we've all read during these challenging staffing times, any 'room for advancement' is a motivator for employees to do a good job.

Our proposal for operations department staffing is shown to the right. It creates three operator II positions that we would fill from within with three 'senior' operators who have proven they have the experience, skills, and ability to perform at the higher level needed on their crew. Promotion of these individuals would not result in a pay increase because each incumbent is already paid within the new pay range. Placing them in the new range will give them the potential to earn more in the future and accelerate movement in the range.

In addition, we anticipate a Lead Operator retirement next year. At that time, we will hire an Operator I to replace one Lead Operator. This will give us six operator I's and three operator II's to make three crews of three in the field. The two remaining lead operators will fill in the crews for vacations or other absences or provide an additional crew member when a four-man crew is necessary.

With the elimination of the Lead Operator and the implementation of the Operator II position the financial result is budget neutral when fully implemented. I look forward to discussing this in more detail at the meeting and will be happy to answer any questions you have.

**Suggested Motion:** Move to approve modifications to the organizational structure of the Operations Department effective January 1, 2022.

