



Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Does the City want to “privatize” NMB Water?**

No; the City is not pursuing “privatization”, instead we are seeking to contract with a company to manage day-to-day operational functions, while the City continues to maintain complete control over the direction, policies, plans, finances and rates associated with the utility. The City is not and has never considered selling the utility. Because the City will continue to own and manage the utility, the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) will not set any of the rates or policies of NMB Water.

- **Will this contract result in higher water bills?**

No, there will be no rate increases associated with this transition. The City will not consider any agreement which would increase our long-term operational costs or increase our valued customer’s monthly/quarterly bills. In fact, the City fully anticipates realizing operational efficiency improvements and better protection of the City’s utility assets which will translate into long-term savings for our customers.

- **Will there be lost jobs and benefits?**

No. Just as the City handled contracting Sanitation services in December 2015, we will require any firm to transition every single current hourly employee provided that they pass standard employment screens (e.g. drug, background, physical).

Current salaried management and salaried support staff will be evaluated to determine if they are a good fit within the new organization. Current salaried employees may end up in different roles or positions with the new company or remain with the City. Every effort will be made to have the selected firm retain as many salaried employees as possible.

Regardless of whether the position is hourly or salaried, the City will ensure via contract negotiations that salaries are not cut; additionally, certain salaries may increase as we work to ensure the former employees are at market competitive rates.

Former employees will be offered similar benefits (e.g. medical, dental, etc.) including a 401(k) retirement plan in lieu of their current City pension. A 401(k) is a portable and flexible benefit under the employee’s control.

- **Will there be loss of local control over water?**

Absolutely not. The City will continue to provide oversight, leadership and direction of NMB Water from City review/audit staff, NMB Water executive management, the City Manager's Office, review by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and ultimate control by the Mayor/City Council. This includes determination of all current/future water and sewer rates and fees.

- **Will this result in inferior service?**

Not at all, in fact the purpose of this endeavor is to ensure our valued customers receive better service at the same or better rates. The City's contract will stipulate superior service requirements and guidelines that the contractor must adhere to as well as industry-standard best practices and performance measurements that will be constantly evaluated by the City to ensure the highest quality customer service experience.

- **Will water quality suffer?**

Definitely not. Our contractual terms will require stringent daily laboratory testing of drinking water quality to ensure it continues to meet and/or exceeds all regulatory requirements of the Florida Department of Health, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

- **Why is the City pursuing this path?**

The City's Strategic Plan, developed and unanimously adopted in 2014, directed that a comprehensive review of NMB Water was a high priority. Consequently, the City recently conducted an Operational Assessment. This assessment was conducted by a highly respected independent third party firm, Eisenhardt Group, Inc., and is not affiliated with any contract operations firms.

The results of this assessment were presented to the PUC and City Council in April 2016 and concluded that NMB Water was operating very poorly in relation to our utility peers. Both the assessment and presentations are available online at CityNMB.com. A condition assessment of utility infrastructure also corroborated that NMB Water is in urgent need of improvements in a number of areas, creating significant risk for the City and for our customers.

In order to ensure that we continue to provide safe, reliable water at affordable rates for years to come, a recommendation was made to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for operational partnership services for NMB Water (including Customer Services). This recommendation was accepted on April 19, 2016, with the passage of Resolution 2016-22. The City is using an RFQ method for procurement rather than a Request for Proposal (RFP) method because the primary consideration in the selection is our commitment to attaining the highest standards of quality rather than simply seeking out the low bidder.

The RFQ is only seeking highly qualified firms with demonstrated and outstanding track records of customer service, regulatory compliance, water quality, employee morale, and other key attributes. Any firm not meeting these standards will be immediately disqualified.

NMB Water is committed to providing the absolute finest utility service for ALL of our regional utility customers; we believe that this necessary operational transition will aid us in achieving that goal. Information will be frequently updated at www.NMBWater.com. If you have any additional questions, please contact us at (305) 957-3657 or at NMBWaterContact@citynmb.com