

MINUTES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BEAUFORT-JASPER WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 4/23/2020

Be it remembered that the Members of the Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority held its regular meeting Thursday, 4/23/2020 at the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority Administration Building and by way of its first virtual meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with the BJWSA Bylaws, as amended. This meeting met the notice requirements of, and was properly constituted pursuant to, Chapter 4, Section 30-4-80(A) of the Code of Laws for South Carolina, 1976, as amended, commonly known as the “Freedom of Information Act”

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Authority physically present: Chair Michael Bell; Secretary/Treasurer Greg Padgett.

Members of the Authority attending by video conferencing: Vice-Chair Jimmy Baker; Donna Altman; Lorraine Bond; Brandy Gray; Andy Kinghorn; Don Manson; Thayer Rivers; Jerry Schulze; Dr. Bill Singleton.

Staff physically present: Joe Mantua, General Manager; Sarah Linkimer, DGM, F&A; Libby Breland, Executive Assistant/Clerk to the Board; Kenneth Frazier, Director of Information Technology; Jon Torrescano, IT Systems Administrator.

Staff attending electronically: Pat Burke, DGM of O&TS; Brian Chemsak, Director of Engineering; Allena Lee-Brown, Director of Human Resources; Beth Lowther, Director of Finance & Support Services; Pamela Flasch, Public Affairs Manager; Shawn Flood, Capital Projects Manager; Tammy Holman, Procurement & Risk Manager.

Legal Counsel in attendance by video conferencing: Erin Dean, Esq., Tupper, Grimsley, Dean & Canaday, PA, and Lawrence Flynn, Member, Pope Flynn Group.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 8:00 a.m., Chair Michael Bell presiding.

By way of roll call, Chairman Bell confirmed the attendance of all members of the Authority.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Michael Bell gave the invocation and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Michael Bell asked for advanced comments at this time. There were no public comments received prior to this meeting as noted by the clerk to the Board.

Public Comments may be submitted electronically by emailing your comments to publicmeeting@bjwsa.org. Advanced Comments will be accepted up to 1 hour prior to the

scheduled meeting start time and shall be limited to three (3) minutes or 390 words. All Advanced Comments will be provided to the Chair and read aloud for the record during the initial Public Comment period.

Public Comments may also be submitted throughout the course of the meeting. Those comments should also be emailed to publicmeeting@bjwsa.org and limited to 3 minutes or 390 words. Comments submitted during the meeting will be provided to the Chair and read aloud as indicated in Item XII, noted below.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Moved by Secretary/Treasurer Greg Padgett, seconded by Brandy Gray, to approve the minutes of the 3/26/2020 regular board meeting as written and distributed in advance to the Members of the Authority. No corrections were noted,

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion to approve the 3/26/2020 board minutes was approved by 11-0.*

GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT

Joe Mantua submitted the following report:

Asset Management

1. SOB Operations Center Update – We continue to monitor temperature and humidity levels using remote sensors at five minute intervals with data downloaded weekly. All staff assigned to the facility have been moved back in.
2. Water Quality – Raw water quality at both Purrysburg and Chelsea continues to be a challenge. Although somewhat improved at the intakes, we are still dealing with high organic loading and now algae in the reservoirs. In an attempt to combat the resulting taste and odor complaints, we have increased carbon dosage, primarily at Chelsea. This approach has resulted in a decline in taste and odor complaints within the last week.
3. Asset Manager Search – Second interview with candidate conducted this month via video conference.

Workforce Investment

4. Safety Report – We had another solid month for safety as we have moved past 1.635M hours since our last preventable lost work day case. Take twos and safety talks for the month were also above our stated goals.
5. New Employees and Promotions – We are pleased to welcome Stephan Gauthier, Revenue and Billing Supervisor and Nia Frazier, Meter Technician to the BJWSA Team. Additionally congratulations to Nathan Goodwin and Darius Witte for their promotions to Field Operator IV and to Jeanie Phillips for her promotion to Accountant II.

Preparation for Change

6. PTO Conversion – The conversion to the new Paid Time Off (PTO) benefit was completed this month. Thanks to all who played a part in making this a seamless, smooth transition.
7. COVID-19 – We continue to operate with eligible employees working from home and those continuing to report to their normal work places practicing social distancing and implementing measures to minimize risk. The additional cleaning and disinfecting of occupied work facilities continues on a regular basis. We have continued the suspension of all service disconnections for lack of payment to ensure the community has access to clean water for sanitation during this crisis. The lobby will continue to remain closed until further notice. We will continue to monitor the situation and adapt as necessary.

Organizational Excellence

8. BJWSA Team Performance – The past month has been extremely challenging and stressful for our entire team. The folks have done an exceptional job of adapting to new conditions and continuing to operate and maintain our plants and systems, keeping projects and initiatives on track, providing excellent support to each other and all executed with a high level of customer service. Thanks to all for a job well done!
9. Employee of the Quarter – I am very pleased to announce the Jamie Sease was selected as our Employee of the Quarter. Jamie serves as Administrative Coordinator in the Human Resources Department and is much deserving of this recognition. Congrats to Jamie and thanks to the selection team for their work. Also, yesterday was Administrative Professional Day and despite not being here we want to recognize all the administrative professionals and we will be trying to get everyone together once we are back able and do something in person to recognize the great support that they do for the organization and for the customers.

Customer Satisfaction and Engagement

10. Stakeholder Engagement – The COVID-19 situation has prevented us from face to face engagement with our customers and the community however Public Affairs continues to communicate via our website, social media and email correspondence. Updates regarding COVID-19 have been made on the website, we've been coordinating with local municipalities to help deliver messages and a written message was sent out to customers via email. We were pleased to receive a number of positive comments from our customer message email as well as a 49% open rate.
11. Media Coverage during COVID-19 – Public Affairs has done a great job getting the word out regarding what not to flush during the COVID-19 crisis. We have utilized multiple media outlets including print, TV and electronic billboards to continue educating our community on the negative impacts of flushing wipes, rags and paper towels.

➤ **Public Affairs Report.** Pamela Flasch highlighted recent and upcoming initiatives taking place throughout the service area:

1. We continue to post reminders about “what not to flush”. We’ve had a lot of local media coverage as well as customer and social media follower engagement.
2. Staff is working on a variety of projects, including the annual water quality report (wholesale report was mailed in late March).
3. Please contribute to the archive. If you have an observation or photo to share, please send it to Lou, Morgan or Pam. We hope to preserve our experiences during this time – possibly for online publication.

At this time, Chair Michael Bell expressed his appreciation to all of the employees and in particular the Administrative Professionals with special mention to Libby, (Clerk to the Board) “we appreciate you”, as well as all the employees who are still working out in the field who cannot work from home, “we thank you”.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of the Executive Committee. Committee Chair Michael Bell stated that the Executive Committee did not meet.

Report of the Capital Projects Committee. Committee Chair Don Manson reported that the Capital Projects Committee met on 4/15/2020 and reviewed the status of the Capital Program and Development Activity. A summary of noteworthy projects was included in the Board Packet. Some projects of note:

Project Highlights:

1. The Purrysburg Expansion to 30 MGD; Phase I construction continues with clearwell walls being applied with shotcrete. Phase II 90% design documents have been received for internal review.
2. Highway 170 36-Inch Water Main Extension Project: Currently being bid with a due date of April 21st. Award approval will be presented to the full Board for Approval.
3. The Cherry Point Equalization Tank: Online and operational. Contractor is working on punchlist items and final closeout of the project.
4. The Bonaire Estates Sewer Extension: Vacuum system and station has experienced some early operation issues but all problems have been resolved and currently operating well. Customers continue to be connected to the system.
5. Galvanized Waterline Projects:
 - a. Phase I, Div I and II construction is complete and is closing out. Div III approximately 95% complete with remaining construction activities anticipated to be completed in May 2020. Div IV approximately 90% complete construction and punchlist items anticipated to be completed in early July 2020.

- b. Phase II, Div I design review is complete with 90% design documents expected in late April. Div II preliminary design comments sent back to engineer in early April, detailed design survey to begin April 13, 2020.
6. CPWRF UV Replacement: Startup of the first channel presented some issues that required resolution prior to the system being energized. Startup has been rescheduled for April 20th.

Developer Report

7. March Capacity Fees: Fees were collected in the amount of **-\$115,498.70**; The Year-To-Date total for capacity fees is \$9,628,942.01; 14 precons were held and 8 Service Authorizations were issued; New water taps totaled 222 and sewer taps totaled 204.

CIP Activity for Board Approval

8. Change Order for CIP-1366 Purrysburg WTP Expansion to 30 MGD
9. Change Order for CIP-1696 Hwy 170 36 Inch Water Main Extension
10. Change Order for CIP-2185 Galvanized Water Line Replacement Program

A copy of the CIP Update Memorandum from Shawn Flood dated 4/9/2020 was included in the Board Packet and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof.

Report of the Finance Committee. Committee Chair Greg Padgett reported that the Finance Committee met on 4/16/2020 and submitted the following report:

1. Alum Pond update: Tricia provided an update on the Purrysburg Alum Pond contract. Due to COVID-19, the cement plant may not be able to accept the alum sludge as originally planned and the backup plan is to haul the alum sludge to the landfill.
2. Capital Improvement Program: The committee received and approved three change order requests for CIP-21366 Purrysburg WTP Expansion, CIP-21696 Hwy 170 36 Inch Water Main Extension and CIP-22185 Galvanized Water Line Replacement Program that will all be presented in New Business today.
3. IT Update: Kenneth provided the IT FY20 Areas of Focus that included three significant project updates.
4. March Call Center Metrics: The committee reviewed the call center metrics. The average call wait time was 34 seconds and the abandonment rate was 1.9% in March.
5. FY2020 YTD Financial Statements and Investments: Total operating revenues are \$2.1 million over budget, while total operating expenses (including depreciation) are \$2.2 million under budget. The committee reviewed the investment report and interest received this period was \$21,250. The committee also discussed Cutoff, Delinquent Fees and Penalty statistics related to COVID-19.

6. FY2021 Operating Budget Update: The committee discussed and reviewed budget options for FY21 that included the original budget along with a worst case scenario. The committee recommended moving forward with a continuation of the current year's budget with the idea if the economy changes, a revised budget can be brought to the Board for approval during the FY21 fiscal year.
7. 2020B Series Resolution: The committee discussed and approved the SRF loan for Hwy 170 36 Inch Water Main Extension in the amount of \$8,961,012.
8. Miscellaneous: The committee was updated on the Series 2020A Refunding Bond closing on April 16, 2020.

A brief discussion was held regarding the financials including the upcoming budget preparation and costs recovery due to the financial impacts of COVID-19. Chair Michael Bell added adorations to Joe for rallying for BJWSA and advocacy groups for the water industry by writing letters and putting campaigns in place to work with the government seeking help allocating funding, not only for utilities, but also support for its customers.

A copy of the financial report dated 3/31/2020, was included in the Board packet and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof.

Report of the Personnel Committee. Committee Chair Jimmy Baker reported that the Personnel Committee met on 4/14/2020 and submitted the following report:

1. Personnel Actions Report: Overall Turnover Year-to-Date is 5.49%; 2 new hires as reported in the GM Report; 1 involuntary separation; 1 retirement.
2. Coronavirus Update: BJWSA status was previously discussed under the GM Report.
3. GM FY20 Performance Evaluation: To close out FY20, GM will provide the Personnel Committee his self-evaluation by April 30th; the self-evaluation will be provided to the full Board in May; each Board Member will forward their scores and comments to Erin Dean to be summarized in advance of the June Personnel Committee Meeting; the Personnel Committee makes a recommendation to the Board Executive Committee in June; by the end of June Executive Committee meets with the GM to share performance evaluation results; assuming FY20 merit increases, increase effective July to coincide with staff merit increases.
4. GM FY21 Performance Assessment Update: Working with the Board Chair, the GM has updated FY20 goals which have been shared with the Executive Committee; FY21 goals will be developed and presented to the Personnel Committee and Board by August.
5. Slate of Officers: The Criteria for Building a Slate of Officers was presented as it is time for the annual review.
6. Asset Manager Search Update: Was previously discussed under the GM report.

7. Board Leadership Award: No nomination was received therefore no award for FY20.
8. Employee Handbook Changes: The detail was reviewed and will be shared with the full Board; considerable discussion on 3 items;
 - a. The law doesn't permit deducting for lost, stolen or damaged BJWSA equipment from hourly employee wages; although the law does permit such deductions for salaried, the position has taken not to have different policies for hourly and salaried employees
 - b. Due to cost, copies of the updated Employee Handbook will be made available to all employees electronically; hard copies will be available in general locations and department heads.
 - c. The discussion regarding the Board's direction regarding contributions to charitable organization such as United Way was tabled until the next Board Retreat.
9. Miscellaneous:
 - a. Due to the pandemic, the Employee Family Fun Day with Savannah Bananas 7/11 has been cancelled.
 - b. Due to the extraordinary efforts of the Finance team, PTO payouts, the conversion to new PTO balances and considerable communication efforts implementation has gone smoothly and without any complaints.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Capital Improvement Program

CIP Change Order

1. CIP-1366 Purrysburg WTP Expansion to 30 MGD for Engineering Services to Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) for \$104,800.00 was presented and referenced in the memorandum from Shawn Flood dated 4/7/2020 and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof:

Motion: Recommendation for approval of CIP-1366 Purrysburg WTP Expansion to 30 MGD for Engineering Services to Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) for \$104,800.00 came from the Capital Projects Committee, *requiring no second,*

Discussion: None

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

2. CIP-1696 Hwy 170 36 inch Water Main Extension for Engineering Services to Brown & Caldwell (B&C) for \$87,200.00 was presented and referenced in the memorandum from Shawn Flood dated 4/7/2020 and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof:

Motion: Recommendation for approval of CIP-1696 Hwy 170 36 inch Water Main Extension for Engineering Services to Brown & Caldwell (B&C) for \$87,200.00 came from the Capital Projects Committee, *requiring no second,*

Discussion: None

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

3. CIP-2185 Galvanized Water Line Replacement Program Increase of \$26,860.00 ~ \$11,860.00 to Lowcountry Engineering and an Additional \$15,000.00 Contingency was presented and referenced in the memorandum from Shawn Flood dated 4/8/2020 and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof:

Motion: Recommendation for approval of CIP-2185 Galvanized Water Line Replacement Program Increase of \$26,860.00 ~ \$11,860.00 to Lowcountry Engineering and an additional \$15,000.00 Contingency came from the Capital Projects Committee, *requiring no second,*

Discussion: None

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

Contract Award

4. CIP-1696 Hwy 170 36 Inch Water Main Extension Contract Award to JH Hiers Construction for \$5,598,000.00 Contract Award was presented and referenced in the memorandum from Shawn Flood dated 4/7/2020 and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof:

Motion: Vice-Chair Jimmy Baker moved, seconded by Brandy Gray, approving CIP-1696 Hwy 170 36 Inch Water Main Extension Contract Award to JH Hiers Construction for \$5,598,000.00,

Discussion: Greg Padgett asked if there was a contingency. Sarah Linkimer responded and said that a contingency is built into the original budget as required by the SRF.

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

Resolution Approval

2020B Series Resolution – Approving the Financing of the Highway 170 Water Line Project by the BJWSA Through the Borrowing of not Exceeding Eight Million Nine Hundred Sixty-One Thousand and Twelve Dollars (8,961,012), Plus Capitalized Interest, if any, from the State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund was presented and referenced and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof:

Motion: Jerry Schulze moved, seconded by Lorraine Bond, approving the 2020B Series Resolution Approving the Financing of the Highway 170 Water Line Project by the BJWSA Through the Borrowing of not Exceeding Eight Million Nine Hundred Sixty-One Thousand and Twelve Dollars (8,961,012), Plus Capitalized Interest, if any, from the State Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund as presented.

Discussion: Sarah stated that the loan rate is 2.6% for 20 years. Lawrence Flynn joined the meeting and added that giving the uniqueness of trying to close a loan in person while practicing social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic he spoke with the State Revolving Fund and under BJWSA's master Bond Resolution, includes a provision allowing signatories of the GM and CFO to sign the documents necessary at staff level to close the loan.

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

Employee Handbook Revisions

Employee Handbook Revisions Adopted 2/27/2020 – Additional Proposed Minor Changes – Approval. HR Director Allena Lee-Brown went through the list of proposed changes.

A copy of the list of changes was included in the Board packet and is attached to these minutes and is made a part hereof.

Motion: Secretary/Treasurer Greg Padgett moved, seconded by Andy Kinghorn, approving the proposed minor changes to the adopted version 2/27/2020 Employee Handbook,

Discussion: Donna Altman asked if the changes were vetted to the Personnel Committee before bringing it to the Board, Personnel Committee chair Jimmy Baker replied yes.

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

(9:08:a.m.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Donna Altman moved, seconded by Secretary/Treasurer Greg Padgett, to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing litigation/claim issues regarding: Kinard v. BJWSA pursuant to SC Code Ann. Section 30-4-40(a)(7) and 30-4-40(7) regarding Attorney-Client Communication related to a contractual matter,

Discussion: non-debatable

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

Chair Michael Bell, excused all persons from the meeting. Legal counsel, GM; DGM F&A; DGM O&TS remained for executive session for the legal briefing.

(9:30 a.m.)

RECONVENE

Motion: Vice-Chair Jimmy Baker moved, seconded by Lorraine Bond, to reconvene regular session,

Vote: *By the way of roll call, the motion was approved by 11-0.*

ACTION ITEMS OCCURRING FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chair confirmed no public comments were submitted during the meeting.

Public Comments submitted throughout the course of the meeting should also be emailed to publicmeeting@bjwsa.org and limited to 3 minutes or 390 words. Comments submitted during the meeting will be provided to the Chair once the meeting has been reconvened following Executive Session and read aloud for the record at this time.

Prior to Adjournment, Chair Michael Bell referenced a letter written to the Island Packet newspaper April 9, 2020, by Phil Porter opined:

We Must Also Think About the Power Grid and Water Works

“Through these unprecedented times I have not seen or heard one word about the precautions being taking by the power grid and water works companies. That would include Palmetto Electric Cooperative, Santee Cooper, the local public service districts, Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority, and utilities beyond that affect our power and water.”

I have reviewed their websites, and some do have notices that they are striving to keep their employees healthy and on the job during these trying times.

Still, with memories of the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew when there was a brief time of no water or power, it is a reminder of how important these utilities are. No power means no water to wash hands, no ventilators for patients, and the list goes on.

A huge “thank you” is due these people who keep the power on and the water running, both of which are needed for the health care professionals to do their jobs. An update on their status would be appreciated.

Chairman Bell thanked each and every one of staff for doing their essential jobs and members for coming and participating in the meeting and making decisions on behalf of the Authority.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: With no further business to come before the Board, and without objection, Dr. Bill Singleton moved, seconded by Brandy Gray, to adjourn at, 9:37 a.m.

Discussion: non-debatable,

Vote: *the motion passed unanimously 11-0.*

APPROVED: 5/28/2020

Respectfully submitted,

Libby Breland, Clerk to Board

Signatures and Attachments on file.