



GreenvilleWater

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
Greenville Water
407 W. Broad Street, Level 2,
Greenville, South Carolina
May 7, 2024
8:15 a.m.**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

Chairman Phillip A. Kilgore, Vice-Chairman James W. Bannister, Debra M. Sofield, Wil Brasington, and Mayor Knox H. White. A quorum was present.

Greenville Water Senior Staff in attendance:

Chief Executive Officer Jeff Boss, Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Bob Schmidt, Chief Operations Officer Jeff Phillips, Chief Technology Officer Kenneth Frazier, Director of Operational Technical Services Dr. Jane Arrington, Director of Information Technology Brad Treas, Director of Water Resources Elizabeth Pierczynski, Director of Business Services Steve Miller, Director of Human Resources Lisa Bryant, Director of Communications Pam Flasch, Director of Engineering David Niese, Assistant Director of Facilities Maintenance Allen White, Controller Brian Bearfield, Internal Auditor Jacob Polson, and Attorney Adam Bach.

The Regular Meeting of the Commissioners of Public Works of the City of Greenville, SC was called to order at 8:15 a.m. by Chairman Kilgore.

1. WELCOME

Chairman Kilgore welcomed guests the following guests to the meeting: Spencer Donovan of the Post and Courier, Forest Hunt with Freese and Nichols: Infrastructure Consulting & Engineering (FNI), and Kevin Strickland with Hussey Gay Bell Engineering Architecture Design (HGB).

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were presented.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Kilgore asked for questions pertaining to the consent agenda items. There being none, he called for approval of the items of the Consent Agenda which were the meeting minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting May 7, 2024, the Water Resources Report, New Development, and New Annexations. Commissioner Sofield moved, seconded by Commissioner Brasington, to approve the items of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore asked Bob Knight to provide a legislative update. Mr. Knight reminded everyone that the legislative session was ending with legislators in the throes of the budget. A couple items of interest were mentioned. The Senate has put \$11 million of recurring money into the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (SCRIA) to match Federal

money which should bring in somewhere in the neighborhood of \$60 million which will be distributed in grants. The Senate also gave \$15 million in onetime money to the rural infrastructure fund and to the state water and sewer fund. The House of Representatives put \$750,000 in recurring money and \$4 million in one time money. There are big differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget that will have to be reconciled between now and mid-June. There is talk of transferring river basin planning from the Department of Natural Resources to the new Department of Environmental Services. Both legislative bodies have given money to make the restructuring happen, but only the House of Representatives gave the \$2.8 to transfer the river basin planning.

5. CUSTOMER SURVEY

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Director of Communications Pam Flasch to present information received from the recent customer survey. Ms. Flasch asked the Commission to keep in mind the presentation was a very high-level view of the information. A detailed report from the consultant will be received at a later date. The presentation was just a sketch of Greenville Water customer's perceptions.

EMG Consulting conducted the customer survey. EMG provides community and resident research. Customer satisfaction across multiple departments was measured. The departments included not only customer service, but also billing, field operations, field services, engineering, and the communications department. Nearly 50,000 surveys were sent out over two weeks via e-mail. Approximately 3,600 responses were received. This was a good response, as the team expected around 2,500 responses. The results showed customers know where to look when they need information, and they are very curious to learn more about Greenville Water. The survey information will be used to inform and act on departmental and company wide procedures.

The following were a sample of the surface level results from the survey:

- Overall Greenville Water satisfaction: 86%
- Water quality satisfaction:
 - Clarity 92.3%
 - Smell 89.5%
 - Taste 82.9%
- Service satisfaction:
 - Accurate billing 79.1%
 - Reliable 91.2%
 - Customer service 65.2%
 - Easy payment options 84.9%
 - Quick onsite response 55.4%
 - Good value 83.8%
- Outreach (Topics/Themes of interest):
 - Water sources
 - Treatment procedures
 - Environmental stewardship
 - Water pressure
 - Rates

Ms. Flasch stated the following were the key takeaways at this very high level of the survey:

- Drill down on survey data and comments.
- Evaluate messaging to assure customers understand water quality standards.
- Evaluate Greenville Water's outreach and brand identity.

Chairman Kilgore thanked Ms. Flasch for the information.

6. DROUGHT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Chairman Kilgore called on Chief Operations Officer Jeff Phillips to provide a drought management policy update. Mr. Phillips shared the last time the drought management plan was updated was in 2011 during the surface water withdrawal permitting process. At that time only general information was updated. The Palmer Drought Index was used as the drought management trigger. This index is not a good indicator of drought for the entire system due to the terrain differences. Also, very minor and limited penalties were spelled out should Greenville be under an extreme drought.

In the past year Greenville Water has been involved in the River Basin Councils which have pushed for drought management plans to be updated. Part of the reason is the plans can be used as operational controls that can be implemented in modeling. When the original plan came out, the low inflow protocols were not incorporated into the drought response. Greenville Water reservoirs can change quickly and need to be incorporated into the plan as well.

The updated policy changes the triggers, which are now the Low Inflow Protocols for the Keowee-Toxaway River Basin. Each drought level requests a reduction in flow. Not only are the low inflow protocol stages included, but the Table Rock and North Saluda reservoir elevations are also included in the triggers. Another adjustment is a tiered rate program. The tiered rate program requires Commission approval before implementation at the time of a drought response. The water rate adjustments are set at consumption over 5,000 gallons. This threshold will not impact the at-risk population. The proposed tiered rate is as follows:

Rate Schedule under Extreme Drought	
0-5,000 gallons	Regular Rate
5,000- 7,500 gallons	3 Times Regular Rate
7,500- 10,000 gallons	4 Times Regular Rate
10,000 gallons and greater	5 Times Regular Rate

Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional users cannot be held to this requirement. Other restrictions would be put in place under certain trigger levels. Violations of those could result in a disconnection. Depending on the number of times there is a disconnection, the reconnection fee would increase.

The Commission has final say in any and all drought restrictions. The policy also has a mechanism in place to allow for individuals and businesses to seek a variance. There are mandatory press releases associated with the Lake Keowee drought tiers. The restrictions

would be a last resort in order to ensure that Greenville Water customers have drinking water available to them during extreme droughts.

Chief Executive Officer Jeff Boss explained there is an operating procedure when working with the River Basin Councils. The likely hood of an extreme drought in the Upstate is hard to imagine. However, Greenville Water has protocols in place even when the reservoirs fall to five feet below full pond. In the event there is an extreme drought, extreme measures will have to be taken.

Commissioner Brasington asked for a ballpark number, for perspective's sake, of how many customers would use more than 5,000 gallons normally. Mr. Phillips explained that in the case of extreme drought conditions, voluntary reductions would be requested prior to implementation of a rate schedule change so the numbers would look different. The voluntary reductions may help reservoir levels to never reach extreme declaration. Director of Business Services Steve Miller responded the average customer normally runs around 3,800 gallons of water a month. Staff will follow up with the number of customers that would use more than 5,000 gallons.

Chairman Kilgore asked for confirmation of whether Greenville Water has the ability to control irrigation consumption. Mr. Boss responded Greenville Water does have the right to turn off irrigation meters during a drought.

Chairman Kilgore requested time to study the drought management policy update more before approving the changes. Staff will present some reasonable assumptions and projections of impact to customers in the event of an extreme drought at a later meeting.

Mayor White asked when the last protocol was implemented. Commissioners remembered in 2007-2008 when fountains downtown were turned off and restaurants were asked to not serve water unless it was asked for, et cetera. Mayor White asked what protocols were implemented then. Mr. Phillips stated only voluntary protocols were implemented at that time. The drought level never reached extreme.

7. EDNA PRESENTATION

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Conservation Technician McKenzie Boyd to present on the 2024-2026 Watershed eDNA Species Inventory. Ms. Boyd began by defining eDNA as genetic material shed by organisms such as skin tissue, hair, saliva, fecal matter, et cetera. The environment can then be sampled, and the DNA can be extracted from the sample to determine the species that are present. In this particular project water samples will be taken from the streams in the watershed. The DNA extracted will be used as a species biodiversity tool to detect the following:

- Species of interest such as brook trout
- Invasive species such as hogs
- Native, endangered or rare species

There is a wide range of species that can be detected using eDNA, anything from mammals such as bears, macroinvertebrates, amphibians, fish, frogs, et cetera. Ms. Boyd shared a picture of the green salamander found in the watershed that is currently federally

endangered. It can be hard to see when actually in the stream so using eDNA is a good tool.

The overall goal of this project is to obtain detailed data on both the aquatic and terrestrial wildlife that inhabit both the North Saluda and Table Rock watersheds. This is really important information for future management recommendations as well as conservation initiatives. Greenville Water published valuable data in 1992 from six-week studies to obtain baseline data. This project will build upon that and further the information. Understanding the different wildlife found in both watersheds will help staff assess the health of the ecosystem which correlates to the health of the water.

Ms. Boyd reviewed the project execution, provided maps of sampling locations, and explained the sample processing. Mr. Boss pointed out that projects such as this are why Greenville Water won the prestigious American Water Works Association (AWWA) 2024 Exemplary Source Water Protection Award for Very Large Source Water Systems (100,000 or more service connections).

8. APPROVAL OF PURCHASE OF THE TOWN OF WEST PELZER

Chairman Kilgore called on Mr. Boss to present the request to approve the purchase of the West Pelzer water system. Mr. Boss stated that representatives of the Town of West Pelzer approached Greenville Water early in 2024, after speaking with the Town of Pelzer, regarding Greenville Water's purchase of the Town of Pelzer water system. The Town of Pelzer has been very happy with Greenville Water's management of their water system. The Town of West Pelzer has voted for Greenville Water to take ownership and operation of the West Pelzer water system. Mr. Boss shared details of the process, cost and return on investment.

Chairman Kilgore asked for a motion to approve the acquisition of the Town of West Pelzer's water system. Commissioner Sofield moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Bannister, to approve the acquisition. Mayor White asked if Greenville Water is the sole provider of water to West Pelzer. Mr. Boss confirmed that Greenville Water has been their only provider of water, adding this will be a great opportunity for the Town of Pelzer and the Town of West Pelzer. Greenville Water received a grant to run two water lines underneath the river which will make a complete loop for both of these systems, providing a redundant feed and alleviating their water storage problem. The motion passed unanimously.

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Raftelis Financial is reviewing Greenville Water's fees and rate structure. Staff will bring an update to the Commission in August.

Tryon Capital will be working with Greenville Water to model the Capital Improvement Program to develop a simpler model, where changes can be made easier. An 85-acre prescribed burn was successfully completed at North Saluda.

Mr. Boss introduced new Director of Engineering David Niese. Mr. Niese shared a bit of his story. Commissioners welcomed him to the team.

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10. COMMISSION COMMENTS

No comments were presented.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 9:05 a.m.



Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman



Kimberly Hauker, Executive Assistant