



GreenvilleWater

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
407 West Broad Street
Commission Room, Level Two
Greenville, South Carolina
March 3, 2015
8:15 a.m.**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

Chairman Phillip A. Kilgore, Vice-Chairman James W. Bannister, Debra M. Sofield and J. David Sudduth. Absent: Mayor Knox H. White. A quorum was present.

Greenville Water Staff in attendance:

Chief Executive Officer David H. Bereskin, Chief Operations Officer Murray Dodd, Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey, Chief Administrative Officer Dennis Porter, Director of Engineering Mike Sharpless, Director of Water Resource K.C. Price, Director of Business Services David Hughey, Controller Jondia Berry, Information Technology Director Joe Beineke and Commission Attorney David Ward.

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

1. WELCOME

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were presented.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Kilgore listed the items of the Consent Agenda which were the meeting minutes of February 3, 2015, the Water Resources Report and the Financial Update Report. There being no questions or comments, the items were approved.

4. VERDAE MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY UPDATE

Mr. Rick Sumerel, President and CEO of Verdae Development Inc. presented The Verdae Masterplan to the Commission as provided in Commissioner's Agenda package. Mr. Sumerel began with a summary of the creation of Verdae Development, Inc. and its history.

Mr. Sumerel reviewed the Phase 1 Development that was launched in 2005 including infrastructure improvements, residential and office development, leading up to Phase 2 Development of remaining residential, infrastructure improvements and commercial/retail development. Verdae Development staff now meets once a month with the City of Greenville Planning staff which is incredibly helpful, keeping communications open, giving parties involved much needed information.

Mr. Sumerel thanked the Commission for Greenville Water staff's assistance with a new section being developed by being accessible and keeping Verdae Development staff informed on development progress within the section.

5. SONDES UPDATE PRESENTATION

Director of Water Resources Mr. K.C. Price reviewed reasons the sondes units were being used; which are to develop long term historic perspective on water quality and quantity. Limited data leads to poor management decisions, and this would be the only way to determine if watershed management practices are working.

Deployment of the instrumentation measures dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH, conductivity (total dissolved solids), pressure (flow), and turbidity. Mr. Price provided a representation of the sondes currently being used and explained the functionality of the parts.

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) has a set of criteria in regulation form, Regulation R61-68 Water Classification and Standards. These are standards the State wants a water body to be in. All various waters have been classified to these standards and put in methods to protect it. Mr. Price reviewed SCDHEC's Trout Waters classification.

Mr. Price pointed out the placement of the sondes at each reservoir and explained the data collected, as provided in the Commission Agenda package. Staff is still working on the logistics of getting data in and out, but the data is exciting, what it is showing and the long term use of the data is promising.

6. ACCOUNT WRITE-OFF/SET-OFF DEBT REPORT

Controller Mrs. Jondia Berry reviewed the write-off and set-off debt report beginning by explaining the write off press. Accounts considered uncollectible are written off annually at the end of the year. Uncollectible by definition is non-active customers with a final bill balance that is 365 days old or older. The write-off process moves the account balances meeting the uncollectible criteria from active Accounts Receivable to a write-off status. Writing off uncollectible accounts does not forgive the debt and it is still payable by the debtor. Mrs. Berry provided a write-off trend for the last five years, as provided in the Commission Agenda package. In 2014 less than one percent of water sales were actual write-off.

The collection tools used for write-offs include searching for old balances, requiring payment prior to establishing new accounts and participation in the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Setoff Debt Collection Program. MASC forwards submitted claims to the Department of Revenue (DOR) to collect the balance due from the customer's state income tax refund. DOR requires a Social Security Number to submit a claim because setoffs can only be applied to individual income tax refunds. Each year in early October, letters are sent to those with a final bill thirty days or more past due. The letter explains the outstanding balance will be submitted to the Setoff Debt Collection program, and fees applied, if the balance is not paid. Unpaid claims are uploaded to DOR in mid-December. Individual state income tax refunds are reduced for the outstanding balance owed and money is sent to Greenville Water. Claims are removed from the Setoff program if there has been no activity after three years. Mrs. Berry presented the set-offs received since the start of this process in 2009.

Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey presented a proposed tool to improve collections. The proposal is the use of a third party collection agency. This would be a supplement to other collection tools to recover bad debts from non-active residential, commercial and industrial accounts. Commissioner Sofield asked what the cost to Greenville Water would be to use an agency. Mr. Robey answered cost would be on a negotiated contingency basis. Chairman Kilgore asked if the use of a collection agency would be prior to or after the use of the other collection tools. Chief Executive Officer David Bereskin stated prior to, because in current procedures the write-off accounts are in a 365 day or greater status of non-pay. Also, there is no process to collect from commercial or industrial accounts at this time. The processes currently require an individual social security number based on individual debt. Use of a collection agency would allow Greenville Water to collect from commercial and industrial customers. Chairman Kilgore directed Mr. Robey to determine the terms of use for a collection agency and bring back

to the Commission. Commissioner Sofield added opening the discussion with agencies that rely on Greenville Water's collection system.

7. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Government Liaison Bob Knight reviewed the Legislative Update provided to Commissioner's in the Agenda package. Mr. Knight specifically mentioned the Surface Water Withdrawal Act (SWWA), stating it is still in circulation. South Carolina Farmers have created a website, www.savescfarmers.com, where they are asking for support in telling legislators to oppose rushing through new laws and to support South Carolina family farmers. This is in an effort to prevent reopening the SWWA in Columbia.

8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Mr. Bereskin called attention to the presentation board displayed for various meetings and conferences used to share information about Greenville Water, such as the pipeline replacement program and strategic planning.

Mr. Bereskin updated the Commission on the Customer Information System (CIS) upgrade to version 4. The system is getting better. Employees in Customer Service, Billing and Accounting put forth extraordinary effort in this process through daily activities plus testing and working around the issues. The employee effort has been fantastic. Commissioner Sofield asked if a function for billing date changes is included in this version. Mr. Bereskin responded there will be a more formal procedure to set up special dates. Business Services will bring a presentation to the Commission when everything is up and running smoothly.

Mr. Richard Posey will be joining Greenville Water as Director of Human Resources on March 23, 2015. He will be joining the company from Easley Baptist Health System.

Mr. Bereskin presented the rendering of the statue for the open area of the campus project prepared by Mr. Doug Young, who introduced himself to the Commission in February. Mr. Young is in the final stages of preparing a three dimensional model of the concept discussed in that meeting.

9. COMMISSION COMMENTS


No comments presented.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.



Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman



Kimberly J. Haulter, Executive Assistant