



GreenvilleWater

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
407 West Broad Street
Commission Room, Level Two
Greenville, South Carolina
September 28, 2015
12:00 p.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 Financial Officer Phil Robey, Chief Operations Officer Dennis Porter, Director of Business Services David Hughey, Director of Human Resources Richard Posey.

The Regular Meeting of the Commissioners of Public Works was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by the Chairman, Commissioner Kilgore.

1. AUTOMATED METER READING PRESENTATION

Director of Business Services David Hughey provided an update on Metron-Farnier, a premier supplier of web-connected smart water meters, Automated Meter Reading (AMR) performance. Greenville Water partnered with Metron in 2011 after continued effort to resolve issues with a previous supplier, Itron Inc., lead to a move in a different direction. In February 2015, after issues with their product, Metron agreed to change out the 8,000 remaining 600 series registers and replace them with new units. It was agreed the Evaluation of the Metron product would be based upon the performance (failure rate) of the new replacement product at a failure rate of two percent and Metron was to honor the replacement product with a full ten year replacement warranty. Currently there are approximately 37,000 Metron registers installed, with the majority of these being the 800 series, and approximately 129,000 of the Itron product remains.

Mr. Hughey presented information showing product purchased and received in January of 2015 is already experiencing 5.9% and 4.7% failure rate. The longer the product is in the ground the higher the failure rate. Commissioner Sofield asked Mr. Hughey to explain the failure. Mr. Hughey demonstrated the failures by providing failed product for the Commissioners to see for themselves. Examples of the failures were blank LCD displays, battery issues, loss of consumption due to no accumulation and transmission failure. The failures create more work for the Billing Department as well as Field Services who go back out to manually read the failed readings and change the meters out. Greenville Water has an employee who is almost completely dedicated to testing the failed meters and boxing them up to ship back to Metron for replacements.

Chief Executive Officer David Bereskin advised the presentation was provided for the purpose of keeping the Commission informed regarding product failure and Greenville Water's business relationship with Metron, which has ceased. Commissioner Sofield asked the percentage of automated read failure per week of the 40,000 to 45,000 meters read. Mr. Bereskin answered ten percent at the highest, which is a lot of rework for staff. As customers increase, the rework takes away from efficiencies and productivity gains. Commissioner Bannister asked what the next step would be. Mr. Bereskin stated the plan is not to go back to manual reading but to look for another product. Greenville Water would like to try again with another vendor. In recommending trying another vendor, Mr. Hughey reviewed the advantages of automated meter

reading which are reduced read time, increased accuracy, reduced time from read to bill and increased safety. The interim solution is to continue to hold Itron and Metron accountable for warranty replacement and due to the performance issues cease purchasing Metron products. Greenville Water will continue to purchase Badger Meters and begin purchasing Badger Registers and use the Itron 60 W or 100W ERTs while a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Automated Meter Reading (AMR) or Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) solution is issued. As the RFP process will be lengthy, Staff will present an update to the Commission with a more permanent recommendation at a future meeting.

2. BEST PLACES TO WORK 2015 EMPLOYEE SURVEY DISCUSSION

Human Resources Director Richard Posey presented results for the Best Places to Work Satisfaction Survey Greenville Water staff participated in May of 2015. The company that handled the measurements was Best Companies Group (BCG) which was founded in January 2004. Greenville Water's participation, which was a first for Greenville Water, was through the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce. Best Companies Group handled the measurements so there was complete confidentiality. There were 150 employees that participated in the survey. Mr. Posey stated the results will be used to improve employee satisfaction, improve morale, increase retention and reduce turnover with an outcome of higher quality and cost effective service for Greenville Water customers. Departmental meetings have been scheduled to review the results with staff and to receive feedback regarding ways to improve to be one of the Best Places to Work in 2016.

3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m.



Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman



Kimberly J. Haulter, Executive Assistant