



GreenvilleWater

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS  
407 West Broad Street  
Commission Conference Room  
Greenville, South Carolina  
December 7, 2016  
10:30 a.m.**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

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

Greenville Water Staff in attendance:

Chief Executive Officer David H. Bereskin, Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey, Chief Operations Officer Rebecca West, Director of Information Technology Joe Beineke, Human Resources Director Richard Posey, and Commission Attorney David Ward.

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The Regular Meeting of the Commissioners of Public Works was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chairman Kilgore.

**1. WELCOME**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments were presented at this time.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Kilgore listed the items of the Consent Agenda which were the meeting minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting November 1, 2016, the Water Resources Report and the Financial Update Report. There being no questions or comments regarding the consent agenda, the items were deemed approved.

**4. ECPI MANUFACTURING DAY**

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Director of Human Resources Richard Posey to summarize Greenville Water's participation in ECPI University's Manufacturing Day. Mr. Posey explained Manufacturing Day is a National event, with about 2600 events hosted Nationwide on the first Friday in October. Hurricane Matthew delayed the event in South Carolina until November 16<sup>th</sup>, affecting the attendance numbers. There were 160 students originally signed up; However, 96 participated on the rescheduled date. The students were from Berea High School, Wade Hampton High School and Travelers Rest High School. There were 6 classrooms with the students broken up into groups of 16. The classrooms represented Robotics in Manufacturing, PA Solutions, ECPI students: robots; Wynit, The US Army and Greenville Water.

Director of Water Resources Rick Pfeleiderer, presented an American Water Works Association (AWWA) Interactive Tour titled *How Water Works*. Mr. Posey remarked the students were really engaged. Watershed Manager Henry Poole built a watershed demonstration that the students enjoyed interacting with. GIS Supervisor Shana Lowe and GIS Technician Datis Cole provided a presentation about GIS and GPS equipment. Mr. Posey noted he provided recruitment brochures to the students.

Chief Executive Officer David Bereskin added Greenville Water hopes to have an intern position developed to talk about when presenting to college students in the future.

## **5. PINNACLE MOUNTAIN FIRE UPDATE**

Chairman Kilgore invited Chief Operations Officer Rebecca West to provide the Pinnacle Mountain Fire Update. Ms. West presented a synopsis of the events to include the following timeline:

November 9, 2016

- A call was received stating that an escaped campfire was located within Table Rock State Park.
- At this point in time there was no immediate threat to the Table Rock Watershed, but the situation was being monitored.

November 12 – November 18, 2016

- The Fire continued to spread beyond Table Rock State Park into a portion of the watershed.
- Realizing this could become a spreading wild fire, Greenville Water was able to get staff together to review the roads and areas that needed to be cleared, especially if the fire moved beyond the South Saluda River.
- Additional outside resources were secured and deployed. Renewable Water Resources provided two gators for support.

November 19, 2016

- High winds occurred throughout the watershed.
  - Wind gusts to 35 mph
  - The fire was contained at the South Saluda River
  - As the day progressed, winds increased and the fire jumped across the river and quickly started moving further into the watershed.
  - Greenville Water decided to take one of the roads at Slickum all the way up to the North Carolina border because the Palmetto Trail would be another break area for the fire.
  - When working with a fire as large as this one became, the SC Forestry Commission has jurisdiction or control, moving everyone into an Incident Command System where Greenville Water becomes a support, with the decisions being made by the SC Forestry Commission.

November 20-25, 2016

- The fire was clearly within the watershed area and contained to the west of Slickum Road. Greenville Water Staff made sure the SC Forestry Commission and those making decisions were well aware that Greenville Water had roads within the watershed that could serve as fire breaks. These roads had been prepared before the fire and staff continued to enhance those areas to contain the fire.
- Efforts began to clear and “back burn” areas along the North Carolina/South Carolina border to contain the fire to the north. For the most part, the “back burn” efforts truly helped maintain the buffer along the watershed.
- Efforts began to clear a road east of Slickum Road (Heath House Road) as the “last line of defense” for the fire within the Table Rock Watershed.



- Incident Command identified areas to the east, west and north of the fire that would trigger evacuations for residents in North Carolina and South Carolina.

Ms. West added if it had not been for Greenville Water's fire roads within the watershed the Forestry Commission could not have gone in and contained the fire as they did and evacuations would have had to occur much sooner.

November 26-27, 2016

- The fire jumped over a section of Slickum Road
- South Carolina Forestry Commission decided to begin "back burning" the area between Slickum Road and Heath House Road
- Rain started during the evening of November 28, 2016 through November 29, 2016. Approximately 2" of rain fell within the Table Rock Watershed, which suppressed the fire.

Ms. West provided a picture example of back burning to give more clarity to the term and what took place. Approximately 7,200 acres or 77 percent of the watershed was impacted by the Pinnacle Mountain fire. Staff began immediately tracking costs and resources deployed for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the Fire Management Assistance Sub-Grant application. Greenville Water support efforts during the fire included:

- Firefighting support (e.g., road clearing, "back burn" activities)
- Helicopter water bucket disinfection
- Transporting firefighting crews to sites
- Fire suppression around Greenville Water facilities and key lines of defense for the fire
- Equipment support for firefighting crews

The week of November 21<sup>st</sup>, Commissioner Sofield asked customers and employees to help support some of the efforts of the Table Rock Wesleyan Camp. The camp did an amazing job volunteering their resources and facilities for the firefighters. At the peak there were approximately 250 firefighters involved. The camp was feeding them and giving them a place to rest. At least four vehicle loads of supplies and a generous donation totaling \$925 were taken to the camp and presented to the Director of the camp.

The path forward includes assessing the watershed to determine restoration needs, installation of gates and signage to restrict access within the watershed along the North Carolina/South Carolina border, installation of "green technology" silt control devices in erosion-prone areas, improvement of roads for proper drainage and erosion control throughout the watershed and complete an activities debriefing and "lessons learned" from the fire event. The first debriefing will be internal, then also engaging with other participants as their debriefings take place. This will help to learn how to continue to coordinate should another event happen.

Commissioner Sofield shared she is interested in hearing about the debriefing and the next steps forward and what Greenville Water needs to work toward. Chairman Kilgore added that staff may need to give some thought to what might be recommended to the delegation in terms of legislative relief. Clearly the cause of the fire was something that should not have taken place and if that is what the law currently allows, the law should change. A certain drought level should trigger a fire ban in South Carolina's forest. Mr. Bereskin recommended this topic should be brought up to the Keowee-Toxaway Drought Management Advisory Group.



Ms. West provided a map, included in the Commission agenda package, that detailed the Proposed Restoration Plan, Phase I. Moving forward, using the Wild Fire Response Plan, recommendations are to clarify the role of Greenville Water's Watershed Staff relative to fire support activities including:

- Transportation support within the watershed
- Equipment support for the fire
- Provide information about the watershed (per Greenville Water's Wildfire Response Plan)

Greenville Water's Watershed Staff's overall responsibilities will be focused on:

- Implementing and refining the Watershed Management Plan and the Wildfire Response Plan
- Watershed road management
- Watershed vegetation management
- Managing access to the watershed
- Supporting research work within the watershed
- Supporting the needs of United States Geological Survey's (USGS) flow monitoring program

Ms. West shared initial sampling of the water in the Table Rock Watershed looks normal. The data is being compared to data from the last ten years of monitoring. Due to most of the back burning not scorching or allowing for excessive runoff, there is a considerable buffer area still remaining in the watershed and that is helping to manage runoff from rain events.

Commissioner Sofield, on behalf of the Commission, thanked Staff for keeping the Commission informed so the public could be informed. Commissioner Sudduth, echoed thanks to all Staff and added this is a time for everyone to understand we should not take this precious resource for granted.

## **6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**


Mr. Bereskin shared Staff has sought out pricing for repair to 300 of the slate tiles on the roof on the Main Office and would like to move forward with replacing the tiles. Asphalt and Solar tiles were alternatives that were priced, but the repair of the slate tiles is the most economical solution. While looking into solar tiles, Staff did look into solar panels for the back covering. These panels should provide around 200 megawatts. Further investigation into Duke Energy's program will take place and will be reported to the Commission.

## **7. COMMISSION COMMENTS**

Commissioner Sofield conveyed her desire for Commission Meetings to begin at 10:30 a.m.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

  
Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman  
*Acting Chairman*

  
Kimberly J. Haulter, Executive Assistant