



GreenvilleWater

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
517 West Washington Street
Community Room
Greenville, South Carolina
June 2, 2020
8:15 a.m.**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

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

Greenville Water Senior Staff in attendance:

Chief Executive Officer David H. Bereskin, Chief Operations Officer Jeff Boss, Director of Business Services Gary VerDouw, and Attorney David Ward.

The Regular Meeting of the Commissioners of Public Works was called to order at 8:15 a.m. by Chairman 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 the Regular Commission Meeting May 5, 2020, the Water Resources Report, the Finance Update, New Development, and New Annexations. Commissioner Sofield moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Bannister, to approve the consent agenda items. The motion passed unanimously.

4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Legislative Liaison Bob Knight to provide a legislative update. Mr. Knight stated everyone is waiting for the Legislators to return. The proposed date is June 16th. The issue at hand is the allocation of the \$1.9 billion received from the Federal Government. Greenville County received \$91 million which will need to be spent by December. There are questions as to what it means to be spent, whether it can be allocated and spend it in January and February, et cetera. An appropriation bill will need to be passed early in June. In September, Legislators will return to handle legislation that was left incomplete in March, with the rule being only legislation that has passed one House or the other will be taken up. The Legislators are scheduled to be in session for two weeks in September.

Mr. Knight stated there is expectation the State bill, as well as the Greenville County bill, will provide utility relief for customers who are struggling to pay their bills as a result of the pandemic. Greenville County is suspected to have a public hearing in June to talk about how the \$91 million will be allocated. The hearing has not been announced yet. Typical utility relief bills go through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. In Greenville

County this would include the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority (GCRA) and Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources (SHARE). This money may also be shared with partners such as The Greenville County Human Relations Commission or The United Way. These organizations then send payment to the utilities on behalf of the customer. It is suspected that this will continue. GCRA is expecting to receive CDBG money in July, but the amount is unknown. Each of the granting organizations have their own standard rules as to contribution amounts and who qualifies. The agencies state they do not expect this to change.

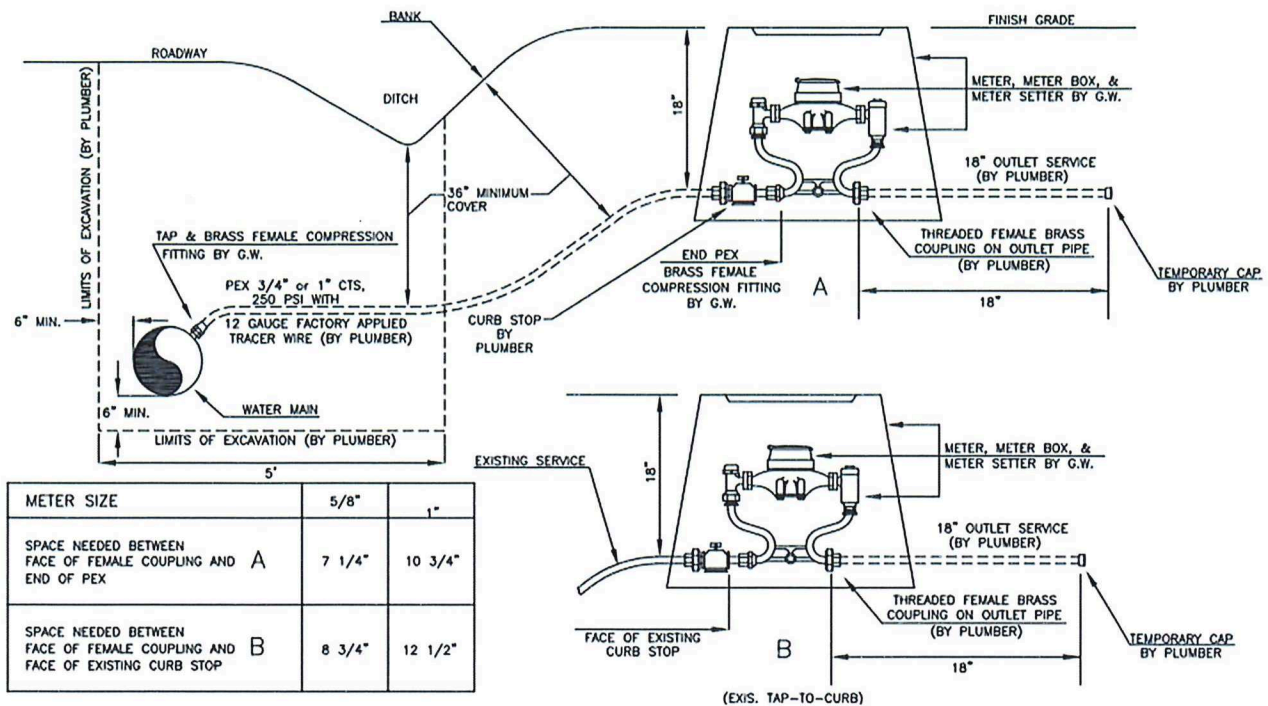
5. TABLE ROCK SPILLWAY MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Chief Operations Officer Jeff Boss to provide an update on the Table Rock spillway rehabilitation. Due to heavy rains across the Nation recently, there have been dam failures in the news. Considering this, Greenville Water Staff wanted to update the Commission on the Table Rock spillway maintenance progress. Mr. Boss reviewed history of the watershed and how staff manages the dams. Two years ago, the lake levels were managed by letting water run over the spillway. With the addition of the Watershed Management Plan and water modeling, staff determined this was not the best way to manage the lake levels. Lake levels were dropped by one foot at both lakes and the levels are now managed through the water model. The storms predicted to come through are modeled, and the lakes are raised or lowered depending on what the model says.

A seep was noticed around six months ago in the spillway. The seep was noticed before the regular SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) inspection was done. DHEC told staff not to worry about it, to just monitor the seep. Staff being overly cautious, decided to investigate it further. Ground penetrating radar did not show anything significant. Other methods were used to look for hollow spots, but none were found. Dye testing was also used at the top of the dam, inserted through holes drilled into the concrete. This was done to see if the water was coming underneath the spillway and down. No dye came through here. Finally, dye was inserted at the end of the run called the high flow channel. After inserting dye here, it was noticed coming through in the seeping area. Water was infiltrating at the end of the channel and was coming out in two sections. A project scope has been put together. There was no subsidence of soil found so the project scope only involves sealing the joints in the spillway. Quotes have been received and the work is expected to start upon the completion of the automated outlet valve installation.

6. PRACTICE CHANGE REGARDING METER OFFSET

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Mr. Boss to present on the proposed practice change for meter offsets. Chief Executive Officer David Bereskin requested to review the meter set process in place of Mr. Boss. Mr. Bereskin presented the process of installing a meter using a display to illustrate each step from the corporation inserted into the main to the outlet service spool piece. See the diagram below:



Offsetting of a meter is a practice Greenville Water has allowed to relocate existing meters to avoid conflicts such as driveways, changed property lines or other utilities. In offsetting a meter, the existing curbstop is removed and a coupling is installed to extend the service line to a new meter location. An offset is only allowed to be up to 10-feet and must be approved by Greenville Water's Engineering Department. Greenville Water has historically allowed developers to put new taps where they plan on a lot. If the location has not been determined, Greenville Water recommends the tap be put in the middle of the lot. During construction, Developers shuffle around lots after taps have been made. The existing lots get subdivided resulting in conflicts. This causes an issue to arise with meter maintenance. Maintenance in driveways is very disruptive and expensive to replace. Vehicles potentially damage the meter boxes. Greenville Water owns and maintains the inlet service and an offset introduces an additional leak point at the coupling. The coupling also inhibits future slip renewal of a service line.

Since meter offsetting was a practice and not a policy, Greenville Water has decided not to allow meter offsets going forward as of June 8, 2020. Greenville Water is working with the Home Builders Association and Developers on a solution. The current proposal is for the home builder and developers to do their due diligence up front to get the tap location correct before the house is built. Greenville Water is working through a process of reviewing existing inventory within Greenville County to see where exceptions existing today will be allowed, to ease the acceptance of discontinuation of the offsetting practice. Chairman Kilgore asked if the issue is a cost issue or more of an integrity of service issue. Mr. Bereskin responded the inability to plan poses both a cost and integrity of service issue for the unsuspecting homebuyer.

7. AUTOMATED METER READING UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore invited Director of Business Services Gary VerDouw to provide an update on automated meter reading. Mr. VerDouw began by reviewing the process followed by Greenville Water Field Service Representatives (FSR) in reading all 180,000 water meters using Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) Technology which allows the reading of meters through a radio-based endpoint installed on the water meter to remotely pick up meter readings via drive-by collection of radio signals emitted from the meter endpoints. If an AMR endpoint signal is not picked up, the FSR will get a manual reading from the meter. The remote endpoint is also checked for failure. If the remote endpoint has failed, the FSR either replaces it then or submits a service order to replace the endpoint later.

A meter remote endpoint is called an Encoder Receiver Transmitter (ERT®) Module that is attached to new or existing water meters to enable communications for an automated meter reading (AMR) system. A sample of the Itron 100W remote endpoint, which is the standard remote used for reading at this time, was passed around. Mr. VerDouw reviewed the history of the automated meter reading process at Greenville Water beginning in 2003 when all meters were manually read, up to 2017 where Greenville Water switched to Itron 100W as the AMR solution due to high failure rates with the Metron Innov8 meter register/remotes. Greenville Water currently has the following meter remote endpoints in service:

- Itron 50W remotes
- Itron 60W remotes
- Itron 100W remotes
- Metron Innov8 meter register/remotes

In addition, there are 31 Badger Orion Cellular LTE remote endpoints that provide Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) capabilities. These Badger remotes may be accessed at any time via cell technology and provide hourly and daily read information. These endpoints are only installed on all wholesale accounts as well as some of Greenville Water's large commercial accounts.

Mr. VerDouw reviewed the issues experienced with the different types of meter remote endpoints and shared the Itron 100W remotes have been in service since 2017 and have proven to be very durable and reliable; however, the Itron 50W and 60W remotes have been failing. If they are less than 10 years old, Itron provides a 100W remote as a replacement for free. If the failed remotes are more than ten years old, a replacement remote is purchased. A settlement was agreed upon in 2018 for the Metron Innov8s that have been failing. As these endpoints fail, it is not only the remote, but the register also. Any failed Metron product is being replaced with new HRE meter registers and Itron 100W remotes. Greenville Water replaces approximately 400 failed Metron Innov8 registers/remotes each month, as well as approximately 400 failed Itron 50W and 60W remotes. Additionally, approximately 300 to 400 new meters for new services are installed each month. As non-pay disconnections are not currently being conducted, FSRs have been able to stay on top of failed remote replacements. This time is also being used to physically check inactive accounts by verifying the meter reads and that everything is working correctly.

8. RULES AND REGULATIONS CLARIFICATION – BASE CHARGES

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Mr. VerDouw to present clarifications in Greenville Water's Rules and Regulations. Mr. VerDouw explained that Greenville Water has had a couple customer complaints about its practice of billing a full month's base charge for a billing period shortened by a move in/move out, rather than prorating the base charge. Full base charges have always been applied for shortened periods, as per Greenville Water Rules and Regulation 4.90.1 – Water Rates. Mr. VerDouw reviewed the standard protocol followed for move-ins and move-outs to lessen the effect of billing a full base charge and presented a recommended adjustment to the language in section 4.90 of the Rules and Regulations to memorialize Greenville Water's current practice. The proposed update is included below:

4.90 Water Rates

4.90.1 Base Charges for a billing period are established on the basis of recovering the fixed cost of supplying service for each meter size and are applicable on all active accounts. The base charge for the applicable meter size (found at <http://www.greenvillewater.com/customer-service/rate-information/>) will be billed each billing period, whether the account has been used or not.

If a customer requests a Move In for an account, and the move in date is within seven days of the regular read date of that account, the billing for that account will not be made until the billing for the following read date after the move in.

If a customer requests a Move Out for an account, and the move out date is within ten days of the regular read date of that account, the customer would not get a regular cycle bill; instead, the customer would get a final bill after the move out is completed. In order for this to occur, **the customer must notify Greenville Water in advance of the regular read date for this account of the move out and the effective date of the move out.**

The customer's communication with Greenville Water is key to lessening the effect of billing a full base charge.

Mr. Boss was welcomed to provide information on the current Meter Service Inspection Fee and the meter set process. Mr. Boss reviewed the process of tapping the main and installing a service line up to the curbstop, stating at this point the builder/plumber calls Greenville Water's Engineering Department for a meter set. This begins the following process:

- Information on Lot #, subdivision and street name acquired
- Engineering confirms all fees have been paid
- Work order is entered into CIS and EAM
- Work is scheduled for a specific day and sent to Field Operations
- Material is typically requested from the warehouse and stocked the night before the assigned workday.
- Route is established for all work and the crew leaves in the morning
- Crew arrives on site and sets meter box, setter and meter (20-30 minutes)
- Crew proceeds to next jobsite

Mr. Boss provided pictures of what can go wrong which would cause the meter set request to be turned down and an inspection fee applied. Examples included the curb stop not being uncovered, the service line is not installed, there is construction debris over the hole, the meter location is in a driveway, et cetera. A specific time/date is decided upon by the builder/plumber so there is no surprise as to when Greenville Water will arrive. If the area does not meet with Greenville Water's specifications, thereby requiring extra trips, the service inspection fee is applied and must be paid before Greenville Water will attempt the meter set again. The service inspection fee is currently \$40. Mr. Boss reviewed the costs for a turn down which totals \$191.13 and the subsequent return trip to set a meter that has been turned down which totals \$276.94. After reviewing the costs, Staff proposed increasing the inspection fee to \$275 to cover associated costs. Commissioner Sofield recommended making an allowance for the current meter sets that have been turned down, giving the customer 30 days to pay the service inspection fee of \$40, but after 30 days those fees will also be increased to \$275 as with all new turn downs.

Chairman Kilgore asked for a motion to approve the change in the rules and regulations to reflect current practice regarding the base charged discussed earlier. Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to change the rules and regulations to memorialize Greenville Water's current practice. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Kilgore for a motion to approve the service inspection fee increase to \$275. Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to increase the Inspection Fee from \$40 to \$275 for meter sets that do not meet Greenville Water's specifications resulting in being turned down. The motion passed unanimously.

9. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Chairman Kilgore invited Mr. Bereskin to provide the Chief Executive Report. Mr. Bereskin spoke of a significant area of dead trees noticed by Chairman Kilgore at the Table Rock Watershed. According to Watershed staff there are four reasons for the issue with the trees. They are the Pinnacle Mountain Fire, woolly adelgids attacking hemlock trees in the area, natural death, and the major cause being the F2 tornado that hit the area a year ago. Chairman Kilgore asked if the death of the trees could bring about any degradation in water quality. Mr. Boss responded there has not been any turbidity increase. The area appears to be far enough away that runoff is filtered before it gets to the water.

Mr. Bereskin stated peers across the State of South Carolina had been discussing which entities have been charging late fees during the COVID-19 Pandemic and when to start back for those who had held up late fees. Mr. Bereskin announced to the Commission that Greenville Water would start charging late fees as of July 1, 2020 and begin disconnections for non-payment beginning the first billing cycle in August 2020. Mr. VerDouw added that calls have continued being made to customers notifying them of past due balances.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Chairman Kilgore asked Commission Attorney David Ward to give a last opinion as this was his last official meeting as Greenville Water's General Counsel. Mr. Ward responded it had

been a great 50 years and presented Chairman Kilgore with a copy of the Mueller Record of Greenville Water which speaks of the history of Greenville Water through 1963, a copy of the history of Greenville Water by John Hawkins, and a copy of the Greenville Century Book written in 1893 by S.S. Crittenden that came from the Estate of Former Commissioner W.C. Cleveland. The Commission thanked Mr. Ward for the gifts, adding they will be kept in a place of honor.

Chairman Kilgore asked Mr. Ward to join him as he presented a resolution recognizing Mr. Ward for his commendable service during his fifty years as General Counsel for the Commissioners of Public Works of the City of Greenville, South Carolina. Following the presentation, a motion was made by Commissioner Sofield, seconded by Vice-Chairman Bannister, to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously. A copy of the resolution honoring Mr. Ward will be placed in the permanent minutes of the Commissioners of Public Works of the City of Greenville, South Carolina.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 9:50 a.m.



Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman

Kimberly Haulter, Executive Assistant