



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
Roper Mountain Science Center
Environmental Science and Sustainability Center
402 Roper Mountain Road,
Greenville, South Carolina
May 4, 2021
8:15 a.m.**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

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

Greenville Water Senior Staff in attendance:

Chief Executive Officer David H. Bereskin, Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey, Chief Operations Officer Jeff Boss, Director of Water Resources Jeff Phillips, Director of Strategic Initiatives Dr. Jane Arrington, Director of Engineering Mark Hattendorf, Director of Administration, Sustainability and Compliance Dr. Bob Schmidt, Director of Human Resources Richard Posey, Director of Business Services Gary VerDouw, Manager of Field Operations Wayne Benson, Public Relations Manager Emerald Clark, CIP Manager Jon Sherer, Controller Brian Bearfield, and Attorney Adam Bach.

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

1. WELCOME

Chairman Kilgore welcomed everyone to this special edition of the Greenville Water Commission meeting as it was held in the new Environmental Science and Sustainability Center hosted by the Roper Mountain Science Center and Mr. Thomas Riddle. Mr. Riddle welcomed Greenville Water Commissioners and Staff and shared his appreciation for Greenville Water's part in helping the facility to become what it is today, adding the exhibits, particularly the water story is due in large part to Greenville Water's generosity and guidance. Chairman Kilgore thanked Mr. Riddle for his welcome adding it was a privilege to be a part of not only educating youth on the environment and sustainability but also workforce development.

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 April 6, 2021, the Water Resources Report, the Finance Update, New Development, and New Annexations. Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Brasington, to approve the items of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Legislative Liaison Bob Knight to provide a legislative update. Mr. Knight mentioned a few items of interest in the State budget. The Senate finished budget preparations and now the House of Representatives is taking a second, more detailed look. The rural infrastructure fund got another \$4.1 million, and the water and sewer regionalization fund got \$5 million. South Carolina had an unexpectedly great year, so there is a lot of money available in this year's budget. Statewide water planning got \$3 million to complete the Pee Dee and Broad River basin studies in the Senate version of the budget.

Greenville Water's retirement proviso was put into the House of Representatives and Senate versions of the budget. The House will look over the budget again but there is hope it will remain in the budget. At the time of the meeting there was a hearing taking place on one of the retirement bills that professes to give other options to state employees in their retirement choice. Mr. Knight and Chief Executive Officer David Bereskin met with a State Representative from Beaufort who has pushed an alternative retirement plan and committed to help try to move the bill forward in the coming year.

5. PAYMENTUS INSTANT PAYMENT NETWORK SOLUTION

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Paymentus Regional Account Executive Mr. Chris Wease to present on Paymentus' instant payment network solution proposed for Greenville Water. Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey opened the presentation by introducing Mr. Wease and Paymentus to the Commission. Paymentus is the company that manages payment capabilities on www.greenvillewater.com. The options and choices available with Paymentus will bring Greenville Water to the next level in bill payment, delivery of bills, and bill format. This will open up a lot of customer choice and strengthen security, not only the security of customer information but also transactional data. This solution will also automate back-office processes that are currently performed manually.

Mr. Wease began by sharing Paymentus' history and sharing some of the names of top companies in North America that have chosen Paymentus. Local governments and utilities make up the vast majority of all their clientele. This solution is very secure. Encrypted tokens are used to manage and process payments so security can be managed on behalf of all clients.

In recent years Paymentus noticed an emerging trend of customers using digital wallets for electronic payment transactions, such as PayPal, Venmo, Apple Pay, Google Pay, et cetera. The digital wallets are convenient, fast, and secure. Customers have a real comfort level with them. Paymentus has incorporated these advanced payment methods into a complete platform as a native part of the solution to expand payment methods and options for Greenville Water customers. This makes it possible to deliver and a customer to pay an electronic bill several different ways. The bill can be sent directly to a customer's PayPal application, bill notifications can be sent through Amazon's Alexa device, reminders and payments can be sent by text, e-mail, phone, et cetera to give customers the capability to decide how to be notified about a bill, how to be reminded about a bill, and what payment method is most convenient. All interaction is managed on one platform. Mr. Wease walked

everyone through the web experience which is easily managed on phones, tablets, or computers.

Mr. Bereskin reviewed two key takeaways which were the capability for customers to select their payment date and warnings to keep customers from overpaying on an account. Commissioner Brasington recognized Mr. Wease pointed out with all the options there may be an opportunity to capture cost savings by enticing more people to move away from traditional paper bill paying and asked if this had been forecasted. Mr. Robey explained that moving customers from paper bills has been an initiative since 2011. Currently 40,000 customers receive bills in an electronic format. At this time, it is hard to quantify what the growth amount will be. Certainly, when more choices are provided there is some level of expected growth. The use of these new payment methods will open an untapped market. Greenville Water will remain at the same transaction price, with no cost increase per transaction associated with this platform.

6. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore called on Public Relations Manager Emerald Clark to update the Commission on initiatives in public relations. Ms. Clark invited Commissioners to enjoy the interactive games created for the Water Story exhibit of the Roper Mountain Science Center's Environmental Science and Sustainability Center. Director of Strategic Initiatives Dr. Jane Arrington and Ms. Clark worked for two years to get the exhibit up and running, making significant progress with lots of contributions from Greenville Water team members. There is work still to be done, but everything should be complete by the grand opening on May 27, 2021.

Ms. Clark is working on bringing branding and recognition into the Field Operations Facility by developing a history wall which will cover the 100-year history of Greenville Water. There will be historical blueprints, old pipes, and other featured items. Additional scope will be shared as the project moves along.

In 2019 the Commission approved all Greenville Water employees to receive eight hours towards volunteer time off. Utilizing this benefit has included volunteer activities with Naturaland Trust, TreesUpstate, Save our Saluda and Habitat for Humanity. Due to the pandemic the activities have been outdoor activities. Future activity includes a Habitat for Humanity event on Friday, May 28th.

Operation Round Up Good Neighbor Program is a new program being developed that will allow Greenville Water to support customers even further. The policy is in draft stage, with an expected roll out in Fall 2021. This will provide funds to be administered by a third-party agency, such as United Way, for times of crisis or an emergency. The program will allow the round-up of monthly bills for a monthly contribution or for a one-time donation. Mr. Bereskin explained that a framework would be set up and brought to the Commission for approval.

Another initiative is the Greenville Water Customer Survey. The survey will focus on the customer service aspect to determine how Greenville Water is managing, interacting, and what services are being provided. The survey will be short, with no more than ten questions.

It will be available on www.greenvillewater.com, shared on all social media platforms, and a QR code will be available at all events. There will be a quarterly drawing with a prize pack.

7. 2020 YEAR-END AUDIT REPORT

Chairman Kilgore called on Mr. Larry Finney of Greene Finney, LLP to provide Greenville Water's financial audit presentation for year ended December 31, 2020. Mr. Finney reviewed Greenville Water's responsibility and Greene Finney, LLP's responsibility in an annual financial audit. The audit resulted in an unmodified opinion, the best opinion to be received. Mr. Finney congratulated Mr. Robey and the Accounting staff on a job well done during challenging circumstances.

Chairman Kilgore thanked Mr. Finney for the report and congratulated Mr. Robey and Staff. The hard work by everyone is appreciated.

8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Mr. Bereskin thanked the Downtown Greenville Airport Director Mr. Joe Frasher, who worked with Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Bob Schmidt and Chief Operations Officer Jeff Boss through Mr. Gene McCall of McCall Environmental to provide Greenville Water with a good opportunity for a spoils site for the next ten to twenty years.

Mr. Bereskin asked to schedule a meeting with the Infrastructure Committee to discuss two options for the pipeline from the Adkins Water Treatment Plant to the Cedar Rock tank. The discussion would involve pipe materials and sizes to finalize the pipe design.

In December of 2020 the Trump Administration authorized \$10 million to arrive in South Carolina for the aid of water and wastewater utility bills for struggling customers throughout South Carolina. To date the money has not been received. Greenville Water was supposed to receive around \$880,000. Mr. Knight says the money is still in Washington and has been told it will take time to process the distribution to the states. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Corona Virus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the Biden Administration will provide money to local city governments for several purposes. Greenville has been allocated \$19.2 million. Simpsonville, Fountain Inn, Travelers Rest and Mauldin have all received \$9.6 million. One of the four categories of projects the funds can be used for is water and wastewater infrastructure. Greenville Water hopes to work with the cities to get some of the infrastructure replacement dollars for water projects.

Presently, Greenville Water has 106 employees that have received COVID-19 vaccinations and will all be through the two-week waiting period after receiving the second vaccination on Thursday. This accounts for around 45% of the workforce. Mask restrictions will be loosened in areas where employees are vaccinated. Non-vaccinated employees will continue to wear masks inside and outside.

Director of Engineering Mark Hattendorf is working on a permit application with Brown and Caldwell for the intake pipeline to replace the two lines under the causeway. Mr. Robey has made application to the State Revolving Fund to see if Greenville Water qualifies for low

interest state funds. At the time of application, the rate was 1.6 percent. The project is expected to be between \$8 - \$12 million.

Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Brasington, to enter Executive Session for the purpose of considering legal matters. The motion passed unanimously.

(Executive Session)

Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Brasington, to go out of Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken.

9. COMMISSION COMMENTS

No comments presented at this time.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 9:30 a.m.



Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman



Kimberly Hauser, Executive Assistant