



GreenvilleWater

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
Field Operations Community Room
517 W. Washington Street,
Greenville, South Carolina
October 5, 2021
8:15 a.m.**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

Chairman Phillip A. Kilgore, Vice-Chairman James W. Bannister, Debra M. Sofield, Wil Brasington, and Mayor Knox H. White. 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, Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Bob Schmidt, Director of Water Resources Jeff Phillips, Director of Strategic Initiatives Dr. Jane Arrington, Director of Engineering Mark Hattendorf, Director of Human Resources Richard Posey, Director of I.T. Billy Cooper, Controller Brian Bearfield, Manager of Field Operations Wayne Benson, Public Relations Manager Emerald Clark, Facility Maintenance Manager Allen White, Internal Auditor Jacob Polson, 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

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 September 7, 2021, the Water Resources Report, the Finance Update, New Development, and New Annexations. Commissioner Sofield 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 recalled at the September Commission meeting he informed the Commission that the Legislature had decided not to return. The only possibility of return would be to handle redistricting in December. The American Relief Plan Act (ARPA) funds could be moved into the regular budget process next year which realistically moves the decision for where these funds go to May 2022. Mr. Knight stated Mr. Bereskin had done a great job getting the utilities together to work toward an agreement. At that time the decision was to be made in October, but unfortunately it has been delayed. A well thought out plan with a good methodology was developed, and it was well received by many. Since the delay has been

announced new folks are speaking out about improving the plan. Productive meetings have been held on the subject, including a meeting with Senator Thomas Alexander, as well as other throughout the Legislature. Notably this week, Legislators heard from Representative Murrell Smith who stated he is absolutely looking for utilities to provide leverage for ARPA funds. The danger for water utilities is deciding not to stick with providing leverage, then the Legislature could say they are not funding a bunch of water projects just to give money out to water utilities around the state. This is a dangerous topic, that could cause the amount of money dispersed to be lowered substantially or could just take the funds out all-together. Mr. Knight added there are other utilities who will leverage moneys, for example broad band companies. The hope is the water utilities will remain united through the delay.

5. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECT UPDATE AND ROAD MAP

Chairman Kilgore called on Director of Information Technology Billy Cooper to give an update. Mr. Cooper started with an I.T. major system overview using a flow chart to point out systems and portions of systems that need updates or replacement. The Major Systems Projects included items such as replacement of Greenville Water's public facing website. The site is older and cannot be upgraded. The I.T. department is currently evaluating alternatives. Future projects include items such as infrastructure and security, which are parts of an ongoing effort as the cyber world is always changing.

Chairman Kilgore asked if customers could access a payment portal through Greenville Water's website. Mr. Cooper answered yes. Mr. Bereskin added the new Paymentus platform will now allow customers to be able to use Alexa, PayPal, and Venmo to pay their water bills. Customers will also be able to schedule payments. When a payment is scheduled past the due date, a message will pop-up warning of a late payment charge.

Commissioner Sofield gave a shout-out to Mr. Cooper thanking him for always being so helpful with I.T. questions that come up.

6. 2022 & 2023 BIENNIUM OPERATING BUDGET

Chairman Kilgore invited Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey to present the 2022 & 2023 Biennium Operating Budget. Mr. Robey referred to the Guiding Principles provided by the Strategic Plan used when developing the operating budget which emphasizes the following areas:

- Improving system reliability
- Protecting water resources
- Maintaining competitive pay and benefits for the workforce
- Investing in technology and strengthening the I.T. infrastructure, as well as information security
- Being an active and engaged member of the community

The touchstone for Greenville Water as the budget is prepared is the financial policies adopted by the Commission. The primary focus for the presentation was the 2022 budget. Mr. Robey reviewed the budgeted revenue and operating expenses pointing out part of the emphasis in the budgeting process is cost containment, budget management, maintaining

growth, but at the same time making sure Greenville Water can provide effective and efficient services.

The Capital Improvement Program budget will be presented in the November Commission meeting. Currently the rate model/financial forecast did not indicate a rate adjustment either for retail or wholesale rates.

Commissioner Sofield moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Bannister, to approve the Biennium Operating Budget for approval. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Kilgore congratulated the budgeting team's accomplishments, adding it pleases the Commission that there is not a rate increase yet again, totaling 7 years with no increase. Mr. Bereskin thanked the Finance team who did a great job leading the process, which went very smoothly.

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Mr. Bereskin stated in preparing the budget there was a very comprehensive look at the vehicles and equipment determining what will need to be replaced. Greenville Water has a new team member who helped to build the spreadsheets. Mr. Bereskin introduced Mr. Jacob Polson Greenville Water's new Internal Auditor.

Mr. Bereskin shared good news on a not so good subject. The wash water tank at Adkins has been experiencing roof decay and was up for replacement. An engineering consulting firm was brought in to develop different courses of action that ranged in price from \$600,000 to \$1,500,000 to replace the wash water tank or temporarily replace the tank while a permanent fix was resolved. The decision was made to bid out a replacement of the concrete dome structure. A local contractor was the low bidder who came in at \$790,000. A kick-off meeting was held to talk about the urgency of the schedule to perform the work in a short timeframe because the tank could only be out of service 14 to 20 days because the filters would have to be backwashed. At the end of the process, the engineering team members and Chief Operations Officer Jeff Boss came back to recommend another look at a different solution which was putting in a pressure reducing valve in the tunnel in Adkins that will take the clean water that is pumped up to the two 20 million gallon tanks and reduce the pressure to allow staff to backwash directly which allows for more time to perform a tank solution if that is the recommendation. Greenville Water is looking at saving approximately \$400,000 by moving to the alternate suggestion. Chairman Kilgore asked who came up with the suggestion. Mr. Bereskin answered Director of Engineering Mark Hattendorf, Director of Water Resources Jeff Phillips, and team members. Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the team taking the initiative to develop an alternate suggestion.

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

(Executive Session)

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

8. COMMISSION COMMENTS

No comments presented at this time.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 9:45 a.m.



Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman



Kimberly Haufer, Executive Assistant