



**GreenvilleWater**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Field Operations Community Room  
517 W. Washington Street,  
Greenville, South Carolina  
March 1, 2022  
8:15 a.m.**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

Vice-Chairman James W. Bannister, Debra M. Sofield, Mayor Knox H. White, and Wil Brasington. Absent: Chairman Phillip A. Kilgore. 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, Purchasing Manager David Freeman, Safety Manager Steve Lee, and Attorney Adam Bach.

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

**1. WELCOME**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments were presented.

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice-Chairman Bannister 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 February 1, 2022, the Water Resources Report, the Finance Update, New Development, and New Annexations. Commissioner Sofield moved, seconded by Mayor White, to approve the items of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Vice-Chairman Bannister invited Legislative Liaison Bob Knight to provide a legislative update. Mr. Knight mentioned the House of Representatives passed a budget, the normal recurring budget plus the one-time money accumulated over a couple different years which totaled about \$13 billion. The ARPA bill has passed the House of Representatives and the Senate as a separate version. There will be discussion as to which version will be used in conference. The differences are relatively minor, except one which is important to Greenville Water. Letters were sent by Greenville Water to the Governor and the leadership of both




the Ways and Means Committee and the Finance Committee regarding the 60/40 split between large and smaller utilities. There is a chance the bill will come up during the week.

Mr. Knight mentioned notable items in the budget which were \$25 million for PFAS and \$50 million to SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) for water quality. There was no mention made of what the \$50 million was for specifically.

## **5. UNITED HOUSING CONNECTIONS**

Vice-Chairman Bannister welcomed United Housing Connections (UHC) Chief Operating Officer Paulette Dunn to present on UHC's program. Mr. Bereskin introduced Ms. Dunn providing background as to how Greenville Water and UHC's collaboration came about. Ms. Dunn shared the program is a non-profit that has been around for 25 years connecting people who are at risk for homelessness or currently homeless with safe, sustainable, and affordable housing. UHC has a team that works in coordination with the City of Greenville, city merchants, the entire downtown area, as well as the Upstate of South Carolina. There is a taskforce that meets monthly to deal with issues of homelessness on the streets. It takes a coordinated effort and working with others who already have established treatment programs. The UHC team goes out every day of the week. The team works with Triune Mercy Center, United Ministries, shelters, and outreach programs.

UHC did not set out to create a program like others, but one that addresses needs that were not already provided for




### **UHC PROVIDES --**

Transitional housing for homeless  
Short-term rental assistance  
Low- income housing rentals for:  
Homeless Seniors  
Veterans Families  
Mentally & physically disabled  
People battling substance abuse issues  
Domestic violence victims

Evidence based housing solutions that include:  
Budget management  
Home care/maintenance  
Employment services  
Life planning / goal setting

Oversight for Upstate Continuum of Care – coordinating and supporting homeless assistance programming in 13 counties



Greenville Water and UHC will be collaborating on a work placement program through the Phoenix Center, an addiction treatment center in Greenville, to provide jobs for graduates of UHC's program. The graduates will be matched with employers that best fit the needs of both. This will help the graduates to integrate back into society.



Commissioner Sofield asked how much space is available to work with the program. Mr. Bereskin explained the program will begin on a trial basis to see if it will be successful. The first candidate will work in Field Operations so they will be in a team environment. If it is successful, Greenville Water will look to expand.

## **6. STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN RESOLUTION**

Vice-Chairman Bannister called on Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey to present a State Revolving Fund loan resolution. Mr. Robey explained in November 2021 the City Council adopted an ordinance authorizing Greenville Water to borrow up to \$175 million over the next five years. In the ordinance, authority was delegated to the Commission to take all actions related to executing a borrowing of the State Revolving Fund loan program. The first action under that authority will be to adopt a resolution declaring Greenville Water's intent to apply to the program for the Adkins Water Treatment Plant raw water line project.

Mr. Robey asked the Commission to consider adoption of the resolution. Mr. Bereskin asked Mr. Robey to confirm the interest rate for the loan is locked in at 1.5%. Mr. Robey confirmed. Commissioner Brasington moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to approve the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX ADJUSTMENT TO SALARY SCHEDULE**

Vice-Chairman Bannister asked Director of Human Resources Richard Posey to present on a consumer price index (CPI) adjustment to the employee salary schedule. Mr. Posey began by providing background on enhanced employee benefits that began in January 2022 including:

- \* Low-cost family health insurance
- \* \$3,000 Contribution to the Health Savings Accounts (HDHP only)
- \* 401(k) Contributions
- \* Total Compensation impact:
  - \* \$4,500 per team member
  - \* On average, an increase of 8%

Mr. Posey thanked the Commission for approving these excellent benefits.

The CIP is currently trending at 7.4% which is having a huge impact on everyone but has a much heavier impact on the lowest paid team members. For immediate action, Staff recommended increasing each pay range band by 7.4% effective 3/1/2022. The change would enhance recruitment and retention of new team members, the pay range would remain competitive for new hires, and the change would allow capped employees to continue to receive annual merit increases instead of a merit bonus. The next immediate step would be to enlist Evergreen Solutions, LLC to perform a salary survey to measure external equity.

Commissioner Sofield moved, seconded by Mayor White, to approve the increase to each pay range band by 7.4% and to enlist Evergreen Solutions, LLC to perform a salary survey. The motion passed unanimously.

## **8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

In response to Commissioner Brasington's request for a report on main breaks, Mr. Bereskin invited Chief Operations Officer Jeff Boss to provide statistics. Mr. Boss began by presenting the American Water Works Associations (AWWA) benchmark for breaks which is 10 breaks per 100 miles of pipe. Greenville Water has approximately 3,000 miles of pipe in the ground, with an average of 1.85 breaks per 100 miles in 2018-2021. This is well below the benchmark for comparable municipalities/utilities. The greatest number of breaks occurred in 2017 where Greenville Water had 40 breaks of 6 through 12-inch pipe within one month due to extreme cold. The recent breaks on the cast iron pipe were believed to be caused by construction in the area due to the way the pipe was installed, or a tap was not bedded correctly. Staff is looking at different inspection methods and different bedding methods for anyone who uncovers Greenville Water pipes.

The most damage is caused by 10-inch to 30-inch pipe. In 2018 there five breaks in this size range, with 68 breaks in 8-inch pipe and smaller. In 2019 there were a total of 48 breaks with only one large pipe break. Data for 2020 is not complete due to the cyberattack. In 2021 there were 67 small breaks on 8-inch pipe and below, and 6 breaks on 10-inch through 30-inch. There has not been an increase in breaks, these were just two that made the news. Greenville Water is still well below the AWWA benchmark for breaks.

Mayor White agreed the breaks on N Markley St and E Coffee St were areas of heavy construction, adding the bigger concern would be older areas like downtown in general. Mayor White asked what the condition is of pipes in the oldest area of all in Greenville. Mr. Bereskin explained all the large mains seem to come through the City of Greenville because the city is a hub where service started. There has been a lot of construction downtown and in the past, there have been times where the cast iron mains were tapped versus cutting the main for a new solid cast iron sleeve. Every time a cast iron main is cut, the condition of the main is assessed. This pipe looks like it is brand new. To the naked eye, there is no deterioration or pitting. It looks like it just came out of the factory even though it is from the 1930s through the 60s. As a result, there has not been a major replacement program. In the future, Greenville Water is going to change to cutting in Ts and making taps for large commercial and residential structures with a solid connection point and then backfill with one sac slurry mix instead of trying to compact underneath the connection.

Commissioner Sofield commented that the public is curious because of the new industry coming into downtown where the construction crews are using jackhammers, does Greenville Water have staff involved as these high rises are being built. Mr. Boss responded if there is a piping conflict or location issue, typically Greenville Water will require the developer to move or re-route the pipe. The most important part of maintaining the pipe is maintaining the bedding around the pipe. Therefore, Greenville Water is looking into requiring a slurry mix for the backfill for taps. Another new possibility is structural lining for cast iron pipes. The pipe can be taken down a mile at a time and then lined. Boston has taken to lining pipes, but Boston has a bigger issue where their pipes tuberculate. As Mr. Bereskin stated, Greenville Water pipes are in great condition. Commissioner Brasington asked if there is anything the City of Greenville could do to help provide advanced notice of scope and significance of upcoming development so Greenville Water can add data to predictive modeling or perform pre-emptive work. Commissioner Sofield added the



Commission is interested in knowing how much Greenville Water Staff is on the ground when some of this groundbreaking takes place and who is monitoring the construction crews when they are blasting for projects. Mr. Bereskin stated Greenville Water is involved for the water lines, but not with blasting. The City of Greenville issues those permits. Mr. Boss gave an example where Greenville Water did require a developer to change a project by Fluor Field. Greenville Water has a large main through the area. The developer was going to build the structure right up to the easement, but Greenville Water stood firm and required the developer to move away from the easement. A recommendation was made to ask the City Fire Marshal to add notifying Greenville Water to his checklist when approving blasting. Mr. Bereskin thanked Commissioner Brasington for the City's willingness to work together and stated the City of Greenville Public Works and Police departments helped greatly on the two recent breaks in the downtown area.

Mr. Bereskin announced State Revolving Fund Intended Use Plan (IUP) Funding and ARPA Funding applications are due March 14, 2022. Greenville Water is moving forward to submit applications.

Mr. Bereskin and Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Bob Schmidt will attend the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies Water Policy Conference in Washington, DC. Mr. Bereskin, Dr. Schmidt, and Mr. Knight will be meeting with Senators to discuss two major project applications.

The required public relations event for the North Saluda 319 Grant project was held March 9, 2022, at the North Saluda watershed. The area neighbors invited to the event showed support for the project. Commissioner Sofield thanked Greenville Water staff that was responsible for preparing the event and recommended making it an annual event.

#### **9. COMMISSION COMMENTS**

No comments presented.

#### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 9:00 a.m.

  
James W. Bannister, Vice-Chairman  
Kimberly Haulter, Executive Assistant