



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
407 W. Broad Street, Level 2,
Greenville, South Carolina
September 6, 2022
8:15 a.m.

GreenvilleWater

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

Chairman Phillip A. Kilgore, Vice-Chairman James W. Bannister, Debra M. Sofield, and Wil Brasington. Absent: 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 Human Resources Richard Posey, Director of Strategic Initiatives Dr. Jane Arrington, Director of Engineering Mark Hattendorf, Manager of Facilities and Maintenance 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 August 2, 2022, the Water Resources Report, the Finance Update, New Development, and New Annexations. Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to approve the items of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore called on Legislative Liaison Bob Knight to provide an update. Mr. Knight stated the Senate was meeting on the abortion bill, which should be pushed out the next day. This debate was the only thing going on currently. The budget is still looking extraordinarily strong in South Carolina. More money was given to the Board of Economic Advisors in the last month, in addition to the \$713 million of ARPA funds yet to be distributed.

Applications are now in for the Adkins Water Treatment Plant Parallel line and the Town of Pelzer Regionalization project. The applications were not due until September 12, 2022, but due to the great work by Greenville Water Staff, the applications were submitted early. These SCIIP grants are expected to be awarded in the first or second quarter of 2023.

5. BUDGET UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore asked Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey to present the mid-year operating budget adjustments. Mr. Robey explained 2022 has been a difficult year to manage a budget due to lingering effects of COVID plant shutdowns in China, high transportation costs, inflation rising to a 40-year high of 9%, and the Ukraine conflict indirectly impacted chemical prices. These effects have caused supply chain disruptions such as material and product shortages, extremely long lead times and pricing volatility. Mr. Robey reviewed the supply chain, repair, and maintenance budget adjustments. The established biennium operating budget practices include bringing information to the Commission during the first year regarding needed adjustments.

No action was required by the Commission, the adjustment details were provided for information only and were addressed under the authority of the CEO through the operating budget policy. Budget adjustments are only for significant items which Greenville Water was not able to plan for.

6. CROSS CONNECTION CONTROL POLICY UPDATE

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Director of Engineering Mark Hattendorf to present a proposed policy update for Cross Connection Control. Mr. Hattendorf explained cross connection control, what causes backflow incidents to occur and backflow prevention in the Greenville Water system. In 2005 DHEC added policy language specifically to address low hazard residential irrigation systems and their backflow prevention requirements, authorizing public governing bodies the authority to adopt backflow specifics. The utility was required to have a written policy adopted by the Commission, specify the device type used on residential irrigation and have a testing/replacement requirement.

Mr. Hattendorf provided an example of a dual check meter setter which Greenville Water has been installing on all new accounts and restored services since 2007. The device is owned and maintained by Greenville Water. There are approximately 14,000 other back-flow devices on accounts installed prior to 2007. Customers must have these devices tested every five years. Greenville Water wants to get these out of the ground, so customers no longer have to pay for testing. Mr. Hattendorf proposed a system wide standardization with 15 years to convert all residential accounts to dual check meter setters. These setters will be converted in one of three ways:

- 70 per year replaced during inlet service line renewal by GW field Ops (10% irrigation)
- 70 per year replaced by contractors (10% main replacements & ISR)
- 800 per year replaced as part of new equity program

Residential compliance will be improved due to the existing double check valves being replaced prior to the next testing date. The new device will be maintained by Greenville Water which will ensure 100% compliance once the program is complete. Commissioner Sofield requested an insert be sent out in bill mailers to explain this change.

Chief Executive Officer David Bereskin explained the reason for the policy change is twofold: First, testing every five years is troublesome for customers who have the irrigation systems

with the double check valve assemblies and is inequitable because customers installing irrigation since 2007 have been able to bypass the testing due to the dual check setters being installed on their irrigation systems. Second, it is a terrible task to track the backflow testing for the community. This policy change will free up Greenville Water's two cross connection control operators to focus on commercial/industrial backflow testing.

Mr. Hattendorf recommended keeping the commercial backflow requirements as they are, with one change which was to step-up the testing requirement notification and enforcement to improve compliance. Commercial devices are found on fire lines and irrigation systems where DHEC leaves zero wiggle room on these requirements. The database for all devices is kept in Greenville Water's Customer Information System.

Currently Greenville Water does not assess any charges for late test results or non-compliance and there is no interruption of service. Staff proposed commercial accounts receive an additional certified letter notification of non-compliance 30 days after test date, incorporate a monthly fine of \$100 until compliance is met, and collaborate with the fire marshal up to and including temporary closure of the non-compliant facility or operations. Commissioner Brasington asked how common it would be annually to have to resort to a certified letter of non-compliance. Mr. Bereskin responded notification of non-compliant accounts via certified letter would be around 25%, fire marshal involvement would be around 3 to 5 accounts per year. Chairman Kilgore asked if a \$100 fine is enough to get the attention of commercial account holders. Commissioner Sofield recommended escalating penalties the longer the account remains in non-compliance. Commissioner Brasington recommended establishing more significant/severe recourse for high hazard customers.

Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to authorize Greenville Water staff to change the notification schedule/testing to include:

- 1st notice 45 days before the due date
- 2nd notice 10 days before the due date informing of a \$100 fee to be assessed on the next bill if the device is not tested by the due date
- 3rd notice, certified letter informing the device has not been tested in the allowed timeframe, the account is subject to being turned off, and the fine will increase by \$100 per month until the testing is complete, and the device meets requirements.

The motion passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Brasington, to adopt dual check meter setters as the standard residential low hazard irrigation backflow device with a 30-year replacement schedule and require existing double check valve assemblies to be tested every 15 years. The motion passed unanimously.

7. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Mr. Bereskin reminded everyone of the Conservation Voters of South Carolina (CVSC) Green Tie Luncheon on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, where CVSC will present Chairman Kilgore with The Harriet Keyserling Conservation Advocacy Award.

Mr. Bereskin and Dr. Schmidt met with Attorney Randy Lowell of Burr & Forman LLP to discuss electrical rates from Blue Ridge Electrical Cooperative at the Adkins Water Treatment Plant which appear to be around 33% higher than Duke Energy rates. Dr. Schmidt and Facilities Maintenance Manager Allen White began an energy audit with an outside firm who provided a list of recommendations, with one recommendation being solar.

American Water Works Steel Plant division has a grand opening which Greenville Water has been invited to due to being the first to get pipe out of the new manufacturing process. This division utilizes a new process of pipe coating.

Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to enter Executive Session for the purpose of receiving legal advice regarding possible litigation. 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 10:00 a.m.



Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman



Kimberly Haulter, Executive Assistant