

Hart County Water and Sewer Authority

Board of Directors Meeting September 19, 2022

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on September 19th, 2022, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Present were Board Members Bennie Harper, Marvin Justice, and Patti York; Director Pat Goran; Attorney Kim Higginbotham; Board Secretary/Treasurer Holly McBrayer; Board Member Larry Haley was absent.

Welcome

Approval of Agenda

Ms. York motioned to approve the agenda. Mr. Harper seconded the motion which passed 4 – 0.

Public Comments: remarks by invited guests

None

Approval of August 15th regular meeting minutes

Ms. York motioned to approve the August 15th regular meeting minutes. Mr. Justice seconded the motion which passed 4 – 0.

Financial report

Mr. Goran presented the financial report. He noted that the Authority had continued to purchase more water from the City of Hartwell due to ongoing concerns about the City of Lavonia's taste and odor issues. He also noted the \$500,000 transfer from the Operations account to the Georgia Fund 1 account per the Board's August vote. Mr. Goran suggested utilizing Authority funds for system expansion projects since we have a large amount of uncommitted funds available.

There was some discussion about increasing the required deposits for poultry operations.

Old Business

2020 Community Development Block Grant project update

Mr. Goran stated that all of the main lines had been installed; however, not all customers had been connected. He said that Allen-Smith Consulting would be asking for a completion deadline extension on the Authority's behalf. Mr. Goran stated that the Authority would hold some of the contractor's retainage until the punch-list has been completed.

New Business

Proposed fiscal year 2023 operating budget

Mr. Goran reviewed the proposed fiscal year 2023 operating budget based on current water rates. Mr. Goran explained that the current base fee for a ¾” residential meter is \$20 for the first 1,000 gallons used and the overage rate is \$3.63 per each additional 1,000 gallons up to 10,000 gallons per month. He explained that HCWSA’s overage charge is lower than neighboring municipalities. He recommended approving the budget as proposed without increasing rates at this time since the Authority’s costs and expenses had not increased much since last year.

After some discussion about the proposed budget, the ability to amend if necessary, and current rates, Mr. Harper motioned to approve the budget as proposed. Ms. York seconded the motion which passed 4 – 0.

Mr. Goran also recommended a 2.5% cost of living increase and a 2.5% step raise for each full-time employee. After some discussion, Mr. Justice motioned to grant a 2.5% cost of living increase and a 2.5% step raise for each full-time employee. Ms. York seconded the motion which passed 4 – 0.

Review of customer rates and policies

Mr. Goran recommended adding a “Non-Payment/Administrative” fee of \$25, an increase to the After-Hours fee to \$50 and removing the Re-Read fee entirely.

After some discussion, Mr. Justice motioned to not add a “Non-Payment/Administrative” fee but increase the Reconnection Fee to \$60, make no change to the current \$40 After Hours fee and remove the Re-Read fee entirely. Ms. York seconded the motion which passed 4 - 0.

Mr. Goran asked if the Board would like to continue to offer a discounted “Under Construction” tap fee, currently a \$200 savings. Mr. Goran also inquired about the tap payment plan following the tap fee increase. He suggested going forward to collect a \$250 initial payment and \$100 per month for 16 months for a total of \$1850. This method would include the \$75 water deposit plus a \$75 installment fee.

Ms. York motioned to continue with the Under Construction tap price with an increase to \$1,500 and to continue the tap payment plan with the total of \$1850 as proposed. Mr. Harper seconded the motion which passed 4 – 0.

Fiscal year 2022 audit engagement letter

Mr. Goran presented the fiscal year 2022 audit engagement letter from Burch, Crooms, and Company with an estimated audit fee of \$30,500, an increase of \$1,000 from the previous year, and an Authority Registration estimated fee of \$800 totaling \$31,300. After some discussion, Ms. York motioned to authorize Mr. Carlton and Mr. Goran to sign the engagement letter on the Authority’s behalf. Mr. Justice seconded the motion which passed 4 – 0.

Discussion of potential 2023 Community Development Block Grant target areas

Mr. Goran presented the findings from Allen-Smith Consulting regarding potential target areas suggested. The Board discussed Sanders mobile home park as a possible target area and agreed not to proceed.

Mr. Harper suggested Cokesbury Highway to Smith McGee Highway noting the benefit of a loop, and the Nuberg area.

Director's Comments

Mr. Goran stated that he would be on vacation from Friday, September 23rd to Tuesday, September 27th.

Mr. Goran said that HCWSA responded to 263 locates in August.

Mr. Goran informed the Board that Authority staff was looking into providing a dedicated toll free phone number for customer payments. He said the annual fee would be about \$2,000. The Board consensus was to proceed.

Mr. Goran informed the Board of some recent concerns with HCWSA's maintenance contractor.

Members' Comments

Ms. York said she will be participating in November's meeting via phone.

Mr. Justice inquired about the cost of pipe installation and average customer overage use.

Mr. Carlton asked Mr. Goran to provide cost per mile estimates to install various sizes of pipe at the most current prices and average overage usage for residential customers.

Upcoming Meeting – October 17th, 2022, and November 21st

Monday October 17th, 2022, and Monday, November 21st, 2022.

Adjournment

Ms. York motioned to adjourn, and Mr. Justice seconded it. The motion passed 4 - 0.

Wade Carlton, Chairman

Holly McBrayer, Secretary