

Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of St. Mary Parish Water and Sewer Commission No. 4, State of Louisiana, taken at a meeting held on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at the St. Mary Parish Water & Sewer Commission No. 4 Office Building at 900 Main Street in Baldwin, Louisiana. Mr. Willie Scott called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., roll call answered by the following members: Mr. Joel Authement, Ms. Jenny Darce, Mr. Anthony Darden, Mr. William Gray, Mr. Benjamin Grimm, and Mr. Willie Scott as present. Ms. Stephanie Milton was absent. Commission staff present was Ms. Tamba Verret and Mr. Brian Mitchell. Engineer: Mr. Nick Molaison. Guest: Rev. Craig Mathews, Jennifer Ronsonet.

Mr. Darden made the motion, motion seconded by Mr. Gray, to approve and dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting. Motion Passed.

GUESTS:

Rev. Craig Mathews inquired relative to the board's policy of handling customer payment plans and inquired as to how often a customer can be placed on a payment plan. Mr. Scott explained that this customer has been on a payment plan since the beginning of the board's existence and that was the reason he did not allow the office to put the customer on another payment plan. The customer has a leak that has not been taken care of and his bill is extremely high due to the leak.

Rev. Mathews questioned if the board has a written policy relative to one board member being given the authority to make decisions without board approval. He suggested making a cap that determines how often a customer can be put on a payment plan, instead of one board member making that decision. Mr. Scott advised that there is no written policy, but explained that as President, he is at the office every day and making decisions because they can't wait until the board meeting once a month. Mr. Darden agreed that it has always been the policy that the President makes these decisions. Rev. Mathews again questioned the written policy and requested that that board work on adopting a written policy. Grimm moved that the board add an item to the next agenda relative to the policy. Mr. Authement explained the item should be added to the agenda for the next meeting since it is not pressing.

Ms. Verret inquired how to handle the situation with the customer on the payment plan. The customer advised that the leak is fixed. Mr. Brian Mitchell inquired if anyone took a detail? It was determined that Mr. Mitchell would go to check the customer's meter in the morning. Mr. Mitchell will inform the office if the leak is fixed so they can adjust the sewer portion and set him up on a payment plan. If the leak is determined to be outside of the home, it is not going into the sewer system and he shouldn't be charged for that.

ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Mr. Molaison updated the commission on the Water Sector grant projects. Southern Constructors submitted their first pay app for the Raw Water Intake Upgrades project. Everything is installed on the flood side of the levee as well as the south side of the canal to behind the plant. The contractor started making the bore under the canal today and should pull the pipe through tomorrow. All that will be left for this project is to go over the levee, the VFDs, and electrical at the pump station.

Mr. Molaison informed the commission on the Phase 3 project. He explained the Office of Community Development needs to approve the Conditional Notice to Proceed so the contractor can order their materials. Mr. Mitchell inquired relative to the valves being used on this project and Mr. Molaison explained that Addendum No. 2 to the bid package specified that butterfly or plug valves would be used.

Mr. Scott inquired if the Army Corps of Engineers had contacted Mr. Molaison relative to a line being moved and the Corps paying the cost? Mr. Scott informed that he had spoken with Jeff Dunlap about moving it to deeper water so we wouldn't have to touch the line anymore. Mr. Molaison stated that he had not spoken to the Corps about this.

Mr. Mitchell stated that they haven't removed the storage building yet at the plant and the area where they will put the filters is currently being used as a storage area. Mr. Molaison explained that he will submit a full schedule to the commission once the Conditional Notice to Proceed is approved.

There being no other business from the Engineer, Mr. Darden made the motion to accept the Engineer's Report; motion seconded by Ms. Darce, to approve the Engineer's report. Motion Passed.

PRESIDENTS REPORT:

Mr. Scott informed the commission that he and Mr. Mitchell will meet with Ms. Kimberly Walden of the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana to discuss a potential \$150,000 grant opportunity available through the Water Sector program that could be used to replace the meters in the Town of Baldwin.

Ms. Verrett explained the funds can be used for water transmission lines up to \$150,000 to construct waterline extensions, repair breaks or leaks in existing water distribution lines and address related maintenance necessary to replenish the water supply.

Mr. Scott informed that one of the commission's trucks was sent to the shop, but the mechanic advised the motor and transmission are both shot so we will not repair the truck. They sent the truck that had originally needed the motor into the mechanic shop for repairs. Mr. Scott also reminded the commission that we just purchased one other truck. The commission will need to declare the first truck surplus to auction it.

Mr. Scott advised the commission that the credit card had fraudulent charges on it, but they disputed the charges and have cleared up the matter. That credit card was canceled, and we have received the new one. Mr. Authement questioned if that was why the credit card bill was so high when he questioned it a few months ago. Ms. Verrett stated that there were charges for flights around the country on the credit card that were fraudulent and removed from our account.

Mr. Scott advised the track feed printer is extremely outdated, but this is the printer that works with our software. If we get a different printer, all our software programs would have to be changed. Ms. Verrett explained that the office just purchased a years' worth of billing cards that will only work with this track feed printer.

Mr. Scott is researching companies for online billing payment, but our current billing program is not compatible with any of them, and we can't afford to purchase new software. He will continue to look for a program we can use.

The commission was included in the emergency declaration for the saltwater intrusion. Mr. Scott spoke with a representative from the Governor's Officer of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) office and requested an extension for the commission. Approval of the extension is still pending.

Mr. Scott discussed the commission's equipment and storage area. He suggests the commission build a closed-in storage building to keep the equipment out of the weather.

Mr. Scott informed the commission that the employees have requested a 12-14 ft dump trailer. When the commission needs limestone or shells, we have to purchase it from the contractor; if they have a dump trailer, they can get the material from the parish yard. Mr. Scott also explained that the commission will need to include a new truck purchase in next year's budget because we currently only have one truck that can pull the excavator.

Mr. Authement inquired relative to the lawnmower and cutting grass at the water plant. Mr. Mitchell explained the lawnmower at the sewer plant is 72 inches and too big to cut around the water tanks. A 30-inch lawnmower may need to be purchased in the future after the construction is completed at the water plant.

There being no other business from the President, Ms. Darce made the motion to accept the President's report seconded by Mr. Darden. Motion Passed.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT:

Mr. Mitchell informed the commission that both lake pumps and motors are scheduled to be delivered the first week of April. He explained that a representative with Instrument Controls Equipment (ICE) has been on site setting up the new VFDs to control the raw water. Mr. Mitchell informed that he spoke with Mr. Jeff Dunlap about relocating the raw water intakes; Mr. Jeff Dunlap believes they should be moved but this is still pending approval from the Corps of Engineers. The Water Treatment Plant and Distribution Systems were in complete compliance with all Health Department requirements,

along with the Total Organic Carbon samples for February 2024. The Wastewater treatment Plant and Collection Systems were in complete compliance with all DEQ requirements for February 2024. There being no other business from the Superintendent, Mr. Gray made the motion to accept his report seconded by Mr. Darden. Motion Passed.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT AND PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Ms. Verret presented bills and discussed with the Commission. There being no other business from the Administrator, Mr. Darden made the motion to accept her report seconded by Mr. Gray. Motion Passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Update on Water Sector Program (ARPA) Grant – Nothing new to report.
2. Discussion of Sewer Rates – the letters went out to the customers following the last meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Creation of New Title for Administrative Personnel and Appropriate Pay Rate - Mr. Scott discussed with the commission that Ms. Ronsonet will be trained in additional office duties, such as payroll and billing, to assist Ms. Verret. Mr. Darden moved to re-classify Ms. Ronsonet as the Office Assistant with a pay increase of \$200 per pay period, seconded by Mr. Gray. Motion passed.

There being no other business before the commission, Mr. Darden made a motion to adjourn seconded by Mr. Gray. Motion Passed.

NEXT MEETING DATE: April 17, 2024

Willie J. Scott, President
Jenny R. Darce, Secretary/Treasurer