

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
ST. MARY PARISH WATER & SEWER COMMISSION NO. 4

June 20, 2024  
Baldwin, Louisiana

The Board of Commissioners of St. Mary Parish Water and Sewer Commission No. 4, State of Louisiana, met on this date at the St. Mary Parish Water & Sewer Commission No. 4 Office Building at 900 Main Street in Baldwin, Louisiana, with Commission President Mr. Willie Scott presiding and the following members present: Mr. Joel Authement, Ms. Jenny Darce, Mr. Anthony Darden, Mr. William Gray, and Mr. Benjamin Grimm. Ms. Stephanie Milton was absent.

Others in attendance at this meeting include Commission Staff: Ms. Tambra Verret, Office Administrator and Mr. Brian Mitchell, Superintendent; Engineer: Mr. Nick Molaison with Miller Engineers & Associates; and Guests: Ms. Kristen Segura; Mr. Russell Cremaldi, Attorney for the Commission; Mr. Jason Akers, Bonding Attorney for the Commission; and Mr. Arnold Watson.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT/ENTERTAIN GUESTS:**

Ms. Kristen Segura addressed the Commission relative to issues with sewage backing up into her house on Deslignes Road during heavy rain. Mr. Brian Mitchell explained that the pump has been repaired and an additional pump has been installed in that area to alleviate this. He also informed that RP Sewer Services cleaned out all the manholes and that a big issue is residents flushing rags and wipes down the toilet, which do not break down in the pipes and causes major blockage.

Mr. Arnold Watson addressed the Commission relative to his employment and requesting to be placed on administrative leave with back pay. Mr. Watson stated he was not allowed due process for an investigation relative to his injury.

Mr. Scott questioned Mr. Russell Cremaldi, Attorney for the Commission, on whether this should be discussed in an open meeting due to the active litigation with Mr. Watson. Mr. Cremaldi advised the Commissioners not to discuss items relative to Mr. Watson's employment status; the Commission has a separate attorney who is handling this matter. Mr. Cremaldi stated Mr. Watson is allowed to make his statements during Public Comment, but again advised the Commission not to enter into discussions without the employment attorney present.

Mr. Watson made several accusations related to the Commissioners and the employees of Water & Sewer Commission No. 4, including falsification of records and retaliation for reporting incidents. Mr. Cremaldi reminded the Commission that no retaliatory action be taken against Mr. Watson or any other person who may come forward with allegations of wrongdoing. Mr. Cremaldi suggested a competent and independent investigation be made relative to the allegations of testing and falsification of records. He also recommended that any person who has any connections to the allegations seek legal counsel.

Mr. Grimm requested the Commission schedule an Executive Session to discuss these matters. Mr. Cremaldi suggested that a Special Meeting be held as soon as possible with an item on the agenda relative to the Executive Session to comply with Open Meetings Law.

Mr. Scott recognized St. Mary Parish Councilman J Ina, who represents Council District No. 2 which includes a portion of Water & Sewer Commission No. 4 area.

### **ENGINEER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Molaison updated the commission on the Water Sector grant projects, which are moving along according to schedule. The demolition of the building is complete. Mr. Mitchell requested Mr. Molaison advise him before the contractor will be on site as items need to be relocated from the project site to the storage building. Mr. Molaison agreed to provide Mr. Mitchell with an updated schedule from the contractor.

Mr. Grimm questioned if the Drainage District had taken care of the issue at LaGrange-Robicheaux Road discussed at last month's meeting. Mr. Scott informed that the Commission would install a valve on each end in the event the line breaks.

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

### **PRESIDENTS REPORT:**

Mr. Scott advised that the attorney for the PFAS Class Action Lawsuit believes there should be a settlement coming this fall.

Mr. Scott explained that FEMA has been in contact with the office regarding the Saltwater Intrusion emergency declaration and the Commission's Request for Assistance. Documents related to the emergency have been submitted and there will be a follow up meeting in a few months to determine the amount of reimbursement.

Mr. Scott informed the Commission on an issue with several customers on St. Peter Street in Jeanerette and their water service with the City of Jeanerette.

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

### **SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT:**

Mr. Mitchell presented his Superintendent Report for the month of May 2024. The Water Treatment Plant and Distribution System were in compliance with all Health Department requirements, along with Total Organic Carbon samples. Mr. Mitchell informed the Commission that the transfer pump arrived onsite. He advised that the Disinfection By Products (DBPs) were over the limit for St. Peter Street and Yokely Road; however this is not a violation since the running average remains below the limits.

Mr. Mitchell reminded the Commission of the discussion last month related to the installation of a hydrant at the Franklin Fire Department Training Center. He advised there is a four-inch manual meter stored at the plant and requested to use this meter on the fire hydrant.

Mr. Mitchell informed the Commission that we earned a letter grade of 'A' for 2023 from the Department of Health and Hospitals. He also advised that DHH requested we add the webpage to the water bill. The Department of Health is requiring a full inventory of the lead service lines in our district by October 16, 2024.

Mr. Mitchell informed the commission that all wastewater analysis passed for the Chitimacha Trail Plant and the St. Peter Plant.

There being no other business from the Superintendent, Mr. Gray made the motion to accept his report, seconded by Mr. Darden. Motion carried.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT AND PAYMENT OF BILLS:**

Ms. Verret presented bills and discussed them with the Commission. Ms. Verret advised that she received the reimbursement from the last Water Sector grant request, has paid the vendors, and will submit the next reimbursement request to the state.

Ms. Verret informed the commission that she received the new St. Mary Parish Personnel Policies.

Many customers in Jeanerette did not receive their bills until a few days before the due date; this was due to an issue with the postal service.

There being no other business from the Administrator, Mr. Darden made the motion to accept her report, seconded by Mr. Gray. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Update on Water Sector Program (ARPA) Grant: Discussed earlier in the meeting
2. Discussion of Sewer Rates: We are still waiting for Louisiana Rural Water Association to do a survey before taking any action.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Ms. Verret explained it is a reassessment year and the Commission has the option to roll forward or roll back to what we adopted last year. There was discussion relative to this and the publication requirements. The Commission will need to take action on this item at the August meeting.
2. Mr. Jason Akers, Bonding Attorney for the Commission discussed the General Obligation Bonds and advised the Resolution will allow his office to begin the procedure to issue these bonds.

Ms. Verret read the following into the record:

**RESOLUTION**

A resolution authorizing the incurring of debt and issuance of One Million Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,700,000) of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2024, of St. Mary Parish Water and Sewer Commission No. 4, State of Louisiana, and providing for other matters in connection therewith.

Mr. William Gray moved that the Resolution be adopted. Mr. Anthony Darden seconded the motion, which carried following a 6-0-0-1 Roll Call vote:

YEAS: Mr. Authement, Ms. Darce, Mr. Darden, Mr. Gray, Mr. Grimm, Mr. Scott  
NAYS: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: Ms. Milton

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

**NEXT MEETING DATE: July 17, 2024**

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