

COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS
Minutes of July 10, 2008

A regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Works was held on Thursday, July 10, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., in the Boardroom at 121 West Court Avenue.

In attendance:

Gene P. Hancock	Steve Reeves	Vickie Gorham	Stacia May
Michael G. Monaghan	Carlos Cometto	Denise Ogletree	Bill Patrick
Henry O. Watts	Jeff Meredith	Vicki Knott	Jay West
	Jeff Chapman	Curtis Burnett	
	Jeff Auman	Melinda Bishop	

- I. Chairman Monaghan called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Commissioner Hancock.
- II. Chairman Monaghan gave the statement of compliance with the notification provision of the Freedom of Information Act.
- III. New Business:
 - A. Manager Reeves presented a recommendation to renew a maintenance agreement with ESRI at a cost of \$21,079 for GIS program software, all of which was purchased through ESRI.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hancock to approve the renewal agreement as recommended; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Watts, and unanimously approved.
 - B. Manager Reeves recalled a presentation at a previous meeting on mobile tablet PC usage by GST Consulting and subsequent discussion of a mobile work order system. He presented a recommendation to approve a purchase order at a "not to exceed" amount of \$45,000 to GST Consulting so that programming of the initial phase to develop the program could commence.

A motion was made by Commissioner Watts to approve a purchase order as recommended; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hancock, and unanimously approved.

Chairman Monaghan commented on the need to look closely at various costs associated with CPW's computer efforts, and particularly with

consultant services in order to determine whether there might be a need to hire more people. Mr. Auman responded that currently the majority of consulting is for programming of either GIS or the AS400 billing system and finance, and no other outside consultants had been used in over a year. Mr. Auman reminded the Commissioners that an additional staff person was hired for programming and daily IT work, and noted that he had since been brought up to speed and that should help with costs going forward. He stated that the biggest consulting expense now was with the AS400 programming adding that ASI's best programmer had gone out on his own and works for CPW at a lesser rate. Mr. Auman recalled that they looked into hiring a programmer some time ago and could not justify the cost to get the level of programmer needed. He noted that he was still working with the new employee toward doing more in-house programming, and could possibly foresee hiring additional programming staff around the 2009/2010 timeframe. Chairman Monaghan commented that it looked like a pretty fancy programmer could be hired for the \$200,000 currently being paid to consultants. Mr. Auman responded that on the AS400 side with ASI, there is a team of people with a lot of expertise in different areas such as billing cycles and work orders, and others who work with finance, credit cards, and gas rebates. He continued that typically programmers tend to be knowledgeable in a couple of areas and a team is necessary to cover everything. Mr. Auman stated that he was working toward covering some of the areas where in-house programmers could be justified and the long-range plan would move more in that direction. He added that he was not sure we would ever be at a point of not needing any outside consultants because to get people at all levels of expertise would cost more than what we are paying now. Mr. Auman offered to provide the Commissioners with more detail later. Chairman Monaghan requested that staff continue to look at ways to reduce consultant costs. Manager Reeves recalled that they had looked into it during the last budget year at which time market research was done and they found that after adding in benefits, the cost to hire that type of person would be more than what was being spent on consultants at that time. Commissioner Watts requested further review of the information with Mr. Auman after the meeting.

IV. Other Business:

1. Manager Reeves distributed copies of the audit report to the Commissioners and asked for dates to have an audit presentation. The Commissioners were in agreement to have the presentation at the next regular meeting on July 31.

2. Manager Reeves reported that drought restrictions were being imposed throughout the upstate and noted that Greenwood is not yet at a stage where any action is needed. He added that voluntary cutbacks could certainly be considered due to a pretty significant drop at an early stage of the summer in the lake where it is down 1.8 feet from full stage, which is 1.7 feet lower than this same date last year. Commissioner Watts asked about enacting voluntary restrictions. Manager Reeves stated that right now he did not necessarily recommend voluntary restrictions but it would not be inappropriate. He noted that if we do not do it now, unless there is significant rainfall we would certainly be doing so within the next thirty days. He stated that upstate had been designated as an extreme drought area but had yet to impose even voluntary restrictions. Mr. Chapman stated that the northwest portion of South Carolina is extreme as defined by the state climatologist. Each individual water area has their own trigger levels and we have not even met our moderate trigger level, which is a lake elevation of 433. He recalled that last year as a show of support to the rest of the area, CPW went into voluntary water restriction use and that was never rescinded so we are still listed as voluntary on the DNR site. Mr. Chapman stated that once we hit the 433 moderate trigger level, then we go to the newspaper and DNR with the voluntary request to achieve this type of reduction on domestic. According to our plan, at the moderate level we would no longer install irrigation taps. Chairman Monaghan asked if any reduction in usage was seen after going to voluntary. Mr. Chapman noted that there was no appreciable reduction noticed; however, it was hard to tell with the adding of new customers in comparison to last year at this time. He explained how the tributaries feeding into the stream are so far below their normal eight-year levels with what they have experienced in the past, and the county is still obligated to send so much water downstream to meet the 7Q10 for aquatic life so we are dropping somewhat, but comparatively speaking, counties north of us are at six or seven feet below stage. Mr. Chapman referred to an article about Lake Mead which the Hoover Dam holds being down about 100 feet and runs a 50% chance of running completely dry by the year 2021. With Lake Lanier in Atlanta at historically low levels, this is a national situation. He noted that we have plenty of capacity in Lake Greenwood right now for projected community growth over the next twenty years. Manager Reeves stated that any designation for voluntary cutbacks at this point in time is not a requirement but is just being a good citizen and shows good stewardship on our part. Chairman Hancock stated that we live downstream of one of the largest cities in South Carolina and that is where our water comes from. Mr. Chapman noted

that when they go to water restrictions, that cuts our flow even more. Manager Reeves suggested monitoring the situation very closely for the next three weeks at which time an update would be provided at the July 31 meeting.

3. Manager Reeves referred to a memorandum from Ms. Ogletree on suggested guidelines to proceed with a collection agency for past due accounts. He stated that some questions were included in the memorandum on how to approach it in the beginning. He stated that one question was with whether to include Metro. He noted that certainly, they should pay a portion of the programming cost and fees since we would be collecting their past due accounts in the collection. Chairman Monaghan stated that they are automatically participating whether by choice or not. Manager Reeves noted another question about whether the customer would pay the collection fee. He stated that when we go through the set-off debt collection program, the customer is charged all of the appropriate administrative fees and from a staff standpoint, we would recommend that occur here as well. Chairman Hancock stated that it is legal to do that. Manager Reeves noted another question with how far we go; would we take people to court, and what limit would be set before going to court to collect. He asked the Board for direction and comments on the procedures as outlined. Chairman Monaghan requested additional time to review the memorandum. Commissioner Watts inquired about customers with active accounts and small delinquent accounts and specifically how there could be an active account with delinquent accounts. Ms. Ogletree responded with an example where someone might have a business account or a personal account and then move and put it into someone else's name, those would be two separate accounts and one of them may have been delinquent. She stated that they are going through those and combining them because they are truly one household and belong to one family. Commissioner Watts noted that they would be in different names and Ms. Ogletree responded that was correct. Chairman Monaghan stated that he was absolutely opposed to a final billing and not continuing to bill a customer after they are delinquent. Ms. Gorham explained what is meant by a final bill as being where the final bill would bill the customer up until the day the services are turned off, and was not to mean it would be the last notice they get, but a final bill covers up to a specific date that they move out. He noted that the memo stated that the change could save \$2,000 in postage. Ms. Gorham stated that savings would occur should the Commissioners approve not sending notices after a certain time period. Manager Reeves recalled a previous discussion at which time the suggestion was to continue to bill the customer even after the final billing

for no more savings than would be realized. Chairman Monaghan noted that some places say on the bill that they will charge 1% after sixty days.

4. Mr. Jay West reported on a helicopter visit the previous day with the biggest of the box stores. There was a utility line issue that was not a CPW utility line that had been remedied. He stated that if the economy holds, they are looking at September but those things are out of their control. He noted that some inquiries from other large retail developers had come in to the city. He reported on \$50 million in investment this year with about half in the city, and they are almost positive to start the next two months with approximately \$75 to \$100 million worth of investments.

V. Executive Session

A motion to go into *Executive Session* to discuss legal, contractual, and personnel matters was made by Commissioner Hancock, seconded by Commissioner Watts, and unanimously approved.

- VI. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Approved: _____, 2008

Secretary