

BRUNSWICK REGIONAL WATER & SEWER H2GO
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2024

OFFICIAL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ronnie Jenkins called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.; a quorum was present. The assembly cited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Present from the Board of Commissioners were members Ronnie Jenkins, Chairman, Barry Laub, Vice Chairman, Rodney McCoy, Secretary, Commissioners Steve Hosmer, and Bill Beer. Present from H2GO was Russ Lane, Assistant Executive Director-Operations, Scott Hook, Assistant Executive Director-Administration, Ken Brown, Finance Director, Jennifer Philips, Deputy Finance Director, Sara Meyer, Human Resource Director, Brenda Thurman, Customer Service Manager, Adrianna Weber, Engineering Director, Lloyd Brown, IT Manager, and Deana Greiner, Clerk to the Board. Also present was Mr. Steve Coble with Coble Law Firm.

It was said that Mr. Bob Walker, Executive Director, was absent due to a family emergency.

DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA:

Staff asked that the board add a service contract for McGill Environmental Services to the Finance Director's report. Commissioner Hosmer made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. A vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

PERSONNEL HANDBOOK WORKSHOP:

Mrs. Sara Myer, Human Resources Director, shared a presentation on various benefit changes within the current Employee Handbook. Mrs. Myer explained that the purpose of today's meeting was to present to the board proposed changes; she said they will be given the opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns, and hopefully vote on these changes in October. A copy of the presentation is hereby incorporated and made a part of these minutes as Exhibit A. Mrs. Myer started the presentation by explaining that the purpose of these changes was to help maintain competitiveness while retaining employees. Mrs. Myer proposed under the longevity, changing the number of years as being vested from 7 years to 5 years; she said this would be more in line with the State Retirement System. Under paid holidays, it was proposed to add Juneteenth and one Personal Day. Mrs. Myer explained that Juneteenth was a new federal holiday, and Personal Day could be used for an employee's birthday, or non-recognized religious holiday/event. There were changes proposed to the vacation accrual rates to allow new employees to accrue vacation time quicker. Bereavement Leave was added to include 3 days off for extended family and 5 days off for immediate family; it was said this is separate from vacation time.

Parental Leave was added to allow time off for fathers to be off after the birth of a child; it will also help compensate for short term disability for mothers. It was said the short-term disability only covers a mother for the birth of a child. Civil Leave was added to pay employees for being on jury duty.

Mrs. Myer also presented to the board a pay classification table for each job position in H2GO; she explained that all current pay rates fall within the pay scale of the job classifications. Mrs. Myer explained that each year this scale will be adjusted according to any COLA raises given; she said it will be a valuable tool during budget time in determining pay raises year to year.

RECESS:

Commissioner Beer made the motion for the board to take a 30-minute recess for lunch; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Commissioner McCoy made the motion for the board to re-convene the meeting; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Beer made the motion to approve the consent agenda which consisted of the July 17, 2024, Regular Board Meeting Minutes, the July 23, 2024, Special Board Meeting Minutes, Towns at Seabrook Phase 1 Deed of Dedication, the July 1-31, 2024, Check Register, and the July Financial Statement. A vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT:

Commissioner Laub mentioned there was an employee from H2GO working across the street from him; he explained that he went and talked with the individual and was told that they were happy with how the commissioners treated our employees.

Commissioner Beer mentioned that there was a customer asking him about the Water Restrictions and asked about the possibility of this reoccurring next year. Mr. Lane spoke up and explained that we would remain on the State 2 restriction while the skids were being cleaned. It was said this was a precautionary measure. It was said that as far as next year, the likelihood of a restriction is something to be determined. There was a brief discussion on the wells and pumps and the capacity of the aquifers. It was said that there were many factors that could affect the need for restrictions, such as weather conditions, demand on the system, maintenance controls, etc. It was said that staff were working towards expanding the plants operations such as obtaining new well sites, finishing the ASR wells, and installing another skid. Members of the board expressed concerns about the aquifers and whether we would have enough capacity. Members of the board expressed their concerns about maintaining the integrity of the aquifers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chairman Jenkins opened the floor for public comments. No patrons were present.

OLD BUSINESS:

Resolution 2024-08-01 Electronic Records and Imaging Policy and Procedures: Mrs. Greiner explained to the board that when they approved the Electronic Records and Imaging Policy last month that they were supposed to do it by resolution. Commissioner Beer made the motion to approve Resolution 2024-08-01 Electronic Records and Imaging Policy and Procedures as presented; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

None discussed.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

It was said that Mr. Walker had nothing to report.

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT-OPERATIONS:

Mr. Lane stated that he had nothing to report.

ENGINEERING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Townes at Seabrook Phase 1 Performance Guarantee Release Commissioner Hosmer made the motion to approve the release of the performance guarantee for the Towns at Seabrooke Phase 1 as presented; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT-ADMINISTRATION:

AIA Grant Policies: Mr. Hook presented to the board the following policies: Internal Control Policy, Property Management Policy, Record Retention Policy, Civil Rights Policy, Eligible Use Policy, Allowable Cost Policy, Procurement Policy, and Conflict of Interest Policy. Mr. Hook explained that these policies only pertained to the grant monies received for the AIA Grants. Mr. Hook explained that it was required by DEQ and that he used their templates to create these documents. It was said that Mr. Coble has reviewed them and has no additional comments. Commissioner McCoy made the motion to approve the following policies: Internal Control Policy, Property Management Policy, Record Retention Policy, Civil Rights Policy, Eligible Use Policy, Allowable Cost Policy, Procurement Policy, and Conflict of Interest Policy, as presented; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Purchase of Meters-PO 25-00249

Purchase of Meters-PO 25-00229 Mr. Hook presented to the board two purchase orders to purchase meters. Commissioner Beer made the motion to approve the purchase order 25-00249 and 25-00229 as presented; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Monthly Report: Mrs. Myers reported to the board that we had two new hires this month, one will be working with Mr. Brown as an IT Support Specialist, and one will be working on Mr. Earley's crew as an Instrumentation & Electrical (I&E) Superintendent. Mrs. Myers stated that we now have 72 employees.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT:

Capitol Ford Vehicle Purchase: Mr. Brown reported that there were 5 new vehicles put in this year's budget; he presented to the board the quote from Capitol Ford for these vehicles. Mr. Brown explained that this quote was based on the State Contract Price. Commissioner Laub made the motion to approve the purchase of 5 new vehicles from Capitol Ford as presented; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Willow Creek Service Contract Amendment 2: Mr. Brown presented to the board an amendment to the Willow Creek Service Contract; he said the amendment was to cover some additional work needed at the Cross Creek offices. Commissioner Hosmer made the motion to approve Amendment 2 of the Willow Creek Service Contract as presented; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

McGill Environment Contract: Mr. Brown presented to the board a service contract for McGill Environmental Services; it was said that because this contract was above the spending thresholds that it needed board approval. It was said that this was the company that handles the sludge removal at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Commissioner McCoy made the motion to approve the McGill Environmental Services as presented; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Mr. Coble stated he had nothing to report.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION:

The board continued their conversation from the Commissioner's Report. Commissioner Hosmer spoke on the capacity and integrity concerns regarding the aquifers; he explained that DEQ actively monitors both. It was said that recently the County was denied withdrawal from the aquifers. There was a brief discussion on knowing our limits and how we could manage this for future growth. It was suggested that we schedule a workshop later to further discuss these items.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Commissioner Beer made the motion for the board to enter executive session for the purpose of Consultation with Legal Counsel, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3); to discuss Contract Negotiations, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(5); and to discuss Personnel, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6), a vote was called, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hosmer motioned for the board to return to open session; a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

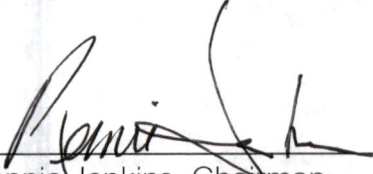
There was nothing to report out of the executive session. Commissioner Beer made the motion to purchase 11.4 acres from the Ezra Dale Estate for Well Sites 7 and 8 in the amount of \$117820.00 as presented, a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:

Chairman Jenkins announced the next Regular Board Meeting to be September 11, 2024, to be located at the Training Room of the Reverse Osmosis Water Treatment Plant, at 5 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner McCoy made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:34 p.m., a vote was called, and the motion was carried unanimously.



Ronnie Jenkins, Chairman




Rodney McCoy, Secretary



Deana Greiner, CMC Clerk to Board

9/11/24

Date of Approval



Employee Fringe Benefit Enhancements

Presented to the Board of Commissioners
August 20, 2024

Introduction

Why are these changes important?

- Attract Top Talent
- Enhance Employee Retention
- Foster Stability

Longevity Schedule

Current Schedule

- 7<10 years of service 1%
- 10<15 years of service 1.5%
- 15<25 years of service 2.25%
- 25+ years of service 3.25%

Proposed Schedule

- 5<10 years of service
- 10<15 years of service
- 15<25 years of service
- 25+ years of service

Paid Holidays

Current Paid Holidays

- New Years Day
- MLK
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- 4th of July
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving and Day After
- 3 Days for Christmas

Proposed Additional Paid Holidays

- Personal Observance Day
- Juneteenth

Vacation Accrual Rates

Current Accrual Rates

- 0<2 years 56 hours
- 2<5 years 96 hours
- 5<10 years 144 hours
- 10+ years 192 hours

Proposed Accrual Rates

- 0<2 years **120 hours**
- 2<5 years **160 hours**
- 5<10 years **200 hours**
- 10+ years **240 hours**

Bereavement Leave

Current Policy

Allow employees to use vacation or sick leave for bereavement.

Proposed Policy

- 3 days of bereavement leave for extended family
- 5 days of bereavement leave for immediate family

Parental Leave

Current Policy

- We currently do not offer parental leave. We do pay for Short Term Disability.

Proposed Policy

- Up to 4 weeks of paid leave for the birth, adoption, or foster child placement.

Civil Leave

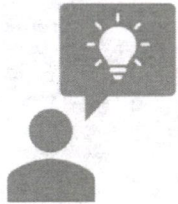
Current Policy

- Allow employees the time for civic responsibilities using their personal time.

Proposed Policy

- Paid leave for Jury Duty
- Use of personal time for voting.

Conclusion



In conclusion adding these benefits is a strategic investment in our employees that will yield long-term rewards. These changes will position the organization as a leader in the industry.



Next Steps, we will be requesting the Board to take action on these proposed changes at the September Board Meeting.