

Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority
Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2020

Chairman Wilbanks called the May 14, 2020 Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority Board Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members present include: Chairman Dylan Wilbanks, Vice Chairman Nichols, Board Member Don Clerici and Board Member Wade Johnson.

Also present: Attorney Paul Smart, and Authority Staff: Eric Klerk, Karen Johnson, Judy Smith, Joey Leslie, Mark Dudziak, Hope Weeks and Miles Glenn.

Visitors: Richard Minish, Customer

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chairman Nichols made a motion to approve the March 12, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes.

Member Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objection and all board members present voting.

Financials and Operating Reports

Finance Director Smith presented the quarterly financial reports.

Visitor

Richard Minish addressed the Board regarding a refund of his water connection fee. He explained that he purchased this water connection fee on March 12, 2020 in order to build his home.

Mr. Minish said due to circumstances with Covid-19, he is not financially able to build at this time and is requesting a refund of the water connection fee. He said a building permit was not pursued and the tap has not been connected.

Manager Klerk said our contract states the fee is non-refundable and he is concerned about setting a precedence.

Chairman Wilbanks is also concerned about taking an action that would set a precedence. He did accept a motion.

Member Johnson asked if language could be written such as “due to circumstances”.

Attorney Smart said you could change the language this one time, but he too is concerned about setting a precedence.

Member Clerici asked if we have made the water connection. Mr. Minish said “no”, the connection has not been made and there is not a permit.

Member Clerici moved to return the water connection fee based on the fact that no work has actually occurred on the subject property and that in the time since Mr. Minish paid the fee, he has subsequently learned of, and been impacted by, the effects of the Covid-19 virus, which may not necessarily apply to much of anybody else who doesn’t have similar timing.

Member Johnson seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Nichols was opposed.

The motion carried.

New Business

Proposed Revisions to the Water Services Agreement

Manager Klerk discussed the proposed revisions to the Water Services Agreement. He stated in the past, customers have had to come into the office to sign up for water service. Manager Klerk said we now we have the ability to allow people to sign up using our forms online.

Manager Klerk said it has become difficult to require customers to provide a separate easement document. The document has to be notarized then staff has to take it to the County for recording. Manager Klerk said a simpler way is to just insert easement language into the contract documents. He said Section 10 is where the easement language has been added.

Manager Klerk has requested the Board to approve this amendment along with some minor language changes in Section 1 and Section 6, where the actual dollar amounts have been removed and “refer to the rate schedule” has been added.

Vice Chairman Nichols made a motion to approve the revisions to the Water Services Agreement.

Member Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objection and all board members present voting.

Proposed Social Media Policy

Manager Klerk said staff feels the need for a baseline standard for a social media policy. He said this would be an easy way to reach out to our customers with information like a boil water notice and our annual Consumer Confidence Report.

Addressing Vice Chairman Nichols concern about deleting the comments, Manager Klerk said we are a public agency so even though we will hide the comments, the comments section has to be retained as long as required by Georgia Open Records Act law.

Finance Director Smith added that in addition to the public notices, this would also be a good public relations tool. We would be able to provide our customers and the public with helpful information.

Attorney Smart pointed out the policy states the Facebook pages are for information purposes only and any open records request must be submitted in writing.

Vice Chairman Nichols said on Page 3, we might want to reconsider the target of no more than 5 posts per week. He also had questions on the Personal Social Media Policy for JCWSA employees.

Attorney Smart said their HR attorney looked at this section and the language is more of an advisory position.

Chairman Wilbanks feels as long as everyone is acting in good faith and using common sense, he does not have a problem with the policy.

Member Johnson made a motion to adopt the proposed Social Media Policy.

Vice Chairman Nichols seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objection and all board members present voting.

Managers' Report

Highway 124 Water Tower: Actual construction and piping is complete and surfaces are prepped and ready for priming in accordance with the Tnemic Company.

SPLOST East Jackson/334: The project is complete except for soil and erosion cleanup and the pump station's manufacture's start-up, which is scheduled for next Tuesday the 19th.

SPLOST Pleasant Acres: Pipeline installation has been underway

SPLOST for the Ebenezer Loop Line/ Lewis Roberts as well as the line work in the Southwest Jackson area are in the design stages by our in-house engineers. These projects are scheduled to be publicly bid this coming July. So far we have had 48 sign-ups for service.

Middle Oconee Wastewater Plant: We have received our new NPDES Discharge Permit, increasing our capacity immediately to 800,000 gallons per day. After about one year of increased and successful sampling and analysis, capacity increases to 1.25 MGD. Construction is nearing substantial completion, June 27th.

Our Auditors are expected to do our annual audit presentation to the Board at our June Board meeting.

The new JCWSA website is being launched this coming Monday. It is much easier to navigate than the existing one.

With there being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Karen Johnson,
Board Secretary