

KENT COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD

March 18, 2021

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Kent County Water Authority was held on the 18th day of March 2021, at 3:30 p.m. at the offices of the Authority in West Warwick, RI, in the Joseph D. Richard Board Room and via Zoom with the board members.

Chairman Robert Boyer opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m. Board members, Chairman Robert Boyer, Treasurer Russell Crossman, Brian Kortz, Jeff Giusti, Scott Duckworth and Geoffrey Rousselle were all in attendance along with Executive Director/Chief Engineer David L. Simmons, Legal Counsel Patrick J. Sullivan, Esq., Director of Administration John Duchesneau and Director of Human Resources and Finance Michael Lanfredi. Administrative Assistant Nicole Campagnone was also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the regular board meeting, including the executive session minutes, held on February 18, 2021 were presented for approval. Mr. Giusti moved an amendment to a spelling correction of his name and approval as amended. Motion was seconded by Mr. Rousselle for approval of the minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Legal Counsel

CONE Receivership

Mr. Sullivan updated the board on the Center of New England receivership. He said there were no updates since the last meeting.

RIDOT-Pipe Gantry Issue

Mr. Sullivan advised the board that this matter is going along well, from a legal standpoint. He advised the board that the inquiry has shifted to the time of reimbursement from RIDOT. He said that he has asked RIDOT legal for an answer regarding the time of payment. He awaits an answer.

Mr. Simmons added up that they finished the piles. He said there were some hangups while driving the mini piles and that will result in about a one week delay in completion.

QDC Wholesale Connection – Approval and Signing of Agreement

Mr. Simmons updated the board on the Quonset Development Corporation project. He asked Mr. Sullivan to discuss the agreement. Mr. Sullivan went on to discuss the history of the agreement. He said he and Mr. Simmons and Ms. Shekarchi all commented and Mr. Sullivan revised the documents several times until they reached an agreement. HE went on to say that the final agreement was a ten (10) year initial term, with automatic renewals in five (5) year increments going forward, cancellable by either party with notice.

Mr. Giusti asked once the agreement was signed, when did the water flow begin. Mr. Simmons said they are installing a large meter. He said it should be completed by summer.

Mr. Duckworth thanked all involved for a job well done. He moved to authorize the Chairman to execute the agreement, and it was duly seconded by Mr. Rousselle.

Motion made and duly seconded, it was

VOTED: That KCWA approves the agreement and authorizes the Chairman to execute the same.

Director of Finance Report:

Closing Report March 2021 Cash Report

Mr. Lanfredi, Finance Director, explained and submitted the financial report. He reported on the Cash Receipts and Disbursements and Statement of Cash Location FY 2020-2021 as of February 2021 and Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance as of February 2021, attached as exhibit “A”, and a thorough discussion ensued with regard to the sales and revenue.

Mr. Rousselle asked if the +90 days delinquent was alarming. Mr. Lanfredi said it was, but they determine if it is collectible, such as vacant buildings and the like.

Mr. Duckworth asked about the relationship between the 90 + delinquent and the recent complaints in the press. Mr. Lanfredi didn't connect the two.

Mr. Rousselle moved, seconded by Mr. Duckworth, to accept the reports and attach the same as an exhibit and that the same be incorporated by reference and be made a part of these minutes.

Upon Motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously,

VOTED: That the Cash Receipts and Disbursements and Statement of Cash Location FY 2020-2021 as of February 2021 and Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance as of February 2021, attached as exhibit "A", be approved as presented and be incorporated herein and are made a part hereof.

PUC/DPUC MATTERS:

COVID-19 Updates - Continuity of Operations -PUC Dockets 5026

Mr. Simmons updated the board on this topic. He said they were still tracking data reported to the PUC. He said they were going along just fine. In March, 2021, they went back to full in person at all times. They were not open to the public just yet, as he wanted the office staff up to focus 100% on the new software transition.

Monthly Billing – Tariff Advice Filing and Petition for Relief to RIPUC

Mr. Simmons discussed the monthly billing rate petition. He said KCWA gave notice at the request of the PUC legal counsel. He said Coventry is proposed to be first. 95% of the meters have been replaced. Cycle 2 would be West Warwick and cycle 3 would be Warwick and East Greenwich. He also said he had an informal meeting with DPUC on the hydrant issue and that we were looking for a decision by July.

Mr. Boyer said he received a call from Rep. Serpa regarding private hydrants. She said she had a constituent that wasn't being billed and suddenly they were. He advised her that the PUC required them to bill all hydrants.

Mr. Simmons added that the PUC required that every hydrant to be billed. He said the city, town, and fire district hydrant costs dropped substantially as a result of the rate decrease approved in September by the PUC. He said ideally the cities and towns should have given the taxpayers back the money. Mr. Kortz asked if Mr. Simmons knew of any city or town to return the funds. Mr. Simmons said not to his knowledge.

RIWRB Presentation and approval of 5-yr update to WSSMP.

Mr. Simmons advised the board that he had a presentation scheduled for the Water Resources Board. He provided the extensive document to the board. He said the presentation is

good for new members too. He highlighted the document and its historical references. He said it also highlighted the new bill, leak detection, pipe replacement, among other things.

Chairman Boyer commented that the booklet was a long time coming. He said it was put together by David Simmons with a lot of time invested.

Mr. Giusti said it should be put on the website after the presentation. Mr. Simmons said they had to be careful of showing the public about the assets for security reasons.

Point of Personal Privilege & Communication:

Chairman Boyer addressed the board regarding Mr. Simmons' response to the billing dispute. The chairman said Mr. Simmons represented KCWA with a tremendous show of strength. He said the end result is that they believe Mr. Simmons. He said half the battle was to have a loud voice. He also commended Mr. Duchesneau and Mr. Lanfredi for their work during the dispute.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CHIEF ENGINEER'S REPORT

GENERAL:

Muni-link Utility Billing/CIS Update-Deployed February 1, 2021

Mr. Simmons explained that KCWA was involved with a lot of back and forth. He said it was so much work that staff had done to ensure accuracy, it was delayed for a few days. He said the roll out must be exactly correct. He said the billing dispute highlighted some shortcomings in the old systems, but as hard as it was to go through, it made the Authority stronger. They will continue to grind it out.

New water bill design launching Cycle C-West Warwick-March 2021

Mr. Simmons said the discussed the new bill roll out with the board. He said of 8000 bills sent, 591 had a meter change out during the software transition requiring a second bill reflective of the usage on the old meter being removed as requested by members of General Assembly since last cycle. Mr. Kortz asked if there would be one bill for the old meter and one for the new. Mr. Simmons said the majority of the bills would have the old meter and new meter readings all displayed on one bill and go in the same envelope, with an insert. All meter change outs that were not able to include the specific detail of the change out were put on the second bills sent out in a separate envelope and a letter stating why they were receiving the bill for usage on the old meter at the time of change out.

There was a discussion of an automated attendant to deal with customers, and Mr. Simmons said he preferred personal customer service. He said if they get inundated, they can revert to that system.

Mr. Kortz asked if the online bill will look the same as the mailed bill. Mr. Simmons said he would like to create a database where the bills can live and have a link on the website.

Meter Change Out Program-Update Status.

Nicole Campagnone advised the board that as of March 12, 2021, 16,258 meters had been installed. 15,587 were installed by Thielsch Engineering and 671 by KCWA staff. She said the job was 67.4% complete. Mr. Simmons said the number of people making appointments is rising. He said they have mailed out post cards and placed door hangers to have people call them. He said there were about a 2-3% hold outs.

ONGOING PROJECTS:

CIP- Water Main North/South Interconnection High Service Update.

Mr. Simmons said we had discussed the bridge gantry in legal matters. He said he received a call from a Coventry council person regarding the paving. He said when the winter cycle is done, the repaving will begin. He said they are all RIDOT roads, and the roads will be in better shape than when this project began.

IFR 2021-Startup

Mr. Simmons said startup would be in about one month. He advised the board of the location of the work including Frenchtown Rd., Division Rd., Signal Ridge Way. He said the project is critical, including the PRV and instant notification of any problems, unlike how it is now. He said some homes now have psi of 20-30. This project will increase the pressure and open the market up for new customers.

East Greenwich well Treatment Design

Mr. Simmons said the project was on the way to final design, and for bid ready documents.

LAND ACQUISITION – Progress Update

Due Diligence Progress Update

Chairman Boyer led the discussion about some disappointments he had with the project. He thought Condyne was dragging their feet on the project and that KCWA has yet to get a ALTA survey. He said that Atty. Sullivan is now doing the title report. He said he and Mr. Kortz had a meeting with Par Engineering and Vision 3 scheduled. He hoped that in two week we would be in a better place.

Mr. Kortz echoed the Chairman's comments. Mr. Sullivan advised that the matter needs to go before the PUC and that he and Ms. Shekarchi may need to get an extension if things don't move quicker.

Pursuant to RIGL Executive Session 42-46-5(a)(1) relating to discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons. Probationary employment status

The employee, who had been previously notified of this executive session scheduled and also notified of his option to have this meeting in open session, was asked if he wanted executive session or open session. Mr. William Murphy opted for open session. The meeting remained in open session.

Mr. Simmons said he cannot say enough good things about Mr. Murphy. He said his work product was great. He said he was the primary pant operator at Mishnock, a very complicated plant. He said he highly recommends full employment.

Motion made by Mr. Rousselle, duly seconded by Mr. Giusti, to extend an offer of full employment to William Murphy.

Motion made and duly seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: That KCWA offers full employment to William Murphy.

Pursuant to RIGL Executive Session 42-46-5(a)(1) relating to discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons. Probationary employment status

The employee, who had been previously notified of this executive session scheduled and also notified of his option to have this meeting in open session, was asked if he wanted executive session or open session. Mr. Shane McGrath opted for open session. The meeting remained in open session.

Mr. Simmons said Mr. McGrath is a field employee. He said his strong suit is that he is a great carpenter. He built the vestibule. Mr. Simmons said he does a great job in all aspects. He said he highly recommends full employment.

Motion made by Mr. Rousselle, duly seconded by Mr. Giusti, to extend an offer of full employment to William Murphy.

Motion made and duly seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: That KCWA offers full employment to Shane McGrath.

There being no further business before this board, on motion duly made by Mr. Rousselle, seconded by Mr. Kortz and carried, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Dated: April _____, 2021

Patrick J. Sullivan
Legal Counsel