

The Lowcountry Regional Water System Commission (herein referred to as “LRWS” of the “Commission”) held its regular meeting on at 4:00 pm on Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 513 Elm St West, Hampton South Carolina. The Commission conducted this meeting in electronic form. The meeting was advertised as prescribed by law.

**Commission Present:** Mr. Rocky Hudson, Brunson

Mayor Jimmy Bilka, Hampton

Mayor Nat Shaffer, Varnville

Ms. Peggy O’Banner, Yemassee

Mayor Horney Mitchell, Gifford

Mr. Clay Bishop, Hampton County

**Officers Present:** Mr. Brian Burgess, General Manager

Ms. Sara Craven, Secretary

Ms. Marlene Marchyshyn, Treasurer

Ms. Kari Foy, Engineer

**Visitors Present:** None

**Quorum Met:** Yes

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Rocky Hudson called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Invocation was given by Jimmy Bilka.

Pledge of Allegiance - Conducted by all.

3. **FOIA Compliance Report**

As required by Code of Laws of South Carolina, notice of this LRWS Commission meeting was posted prominently in the offices of the Commission at least twenty-four hours in advance. In addition, the local news media and all persons requesting notifications of meetings of the LRWS Commission were notified of the time, date, and place of such meeting, and were provided with a copy of the agenda at least twenty-four hours prior to this meeting.

4. **Adoption of the Agenda**

Moved by Clay Bishop, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to adopt the Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting August 25, 2020 and Special Called Meeting September 08, 2020**

Moved by Jimmy Bilka, seconded by Horney Mitchell to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2020 Regular Meeting. Clay Bishop abstained.

Moved by Peggy O’Banner, seconded by Jimmy Bilka to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2020 Special Meeting. Motion carried unanimously with Clay Bishop abstaining.

6. **Reports**

1. **Financial Report**

The financial report for the month of August was presented by Marlene Marchyshyn and is summarized below.

Total monthly revenue: $269,340.85

Total monthly expenditures: $231,364.65

Cash Account Balances

General Revenue: $238,847.26

Designated Purpose Funds: $80,710.41

Capital Improvement Funds: $119,324.23

Ancillary Town Charges: $54,065.78

Bond Funds & Reserves: $370,258.98

Deprececiation/Contingency Funds: $774,059.78

Unrestricted: $238,847.26

Restricted: $1,344,353.40

1. **Operations Report**

The Operations Report for August was presented by Brian Burgess and is summarized below:

The water system total gallons produced for the month was 24,719,607 with total gallons sold at 20,486,047. Total water unaccounted for was 4,233,560 with percentage inefficiency at 17%.

The wastewater system total gallons received was 37,433,872 with a total gallons treated at 18,003,559. Total percentage inefficiency was 52%.

Total active water services was 3,125 with total active sewer services at 2,810.

Service orders issued was 183 with 176 completed.

Total work hours were 2,466.66 with 4.66 hours overtime in administration, 44.5 hours overtime in Distribution and Collection and 10 hours overtime in Treatment.

There were no Workers Comp incidents and no loss time reported.

1. **Manager’s Report**

Brian informed the Board that LRWS has had another employee to leave do to the low wages. He interviewed a very promising candidate for a utility technician position. He made an offer but unfortunatly the candidate took a position with another company due to LRWS low wages for the positions. Due to the vacancies in staffing, we are having difficulties in performing DHEC required inspections and maintenance activities. Additionally, other maintenance and repairs of our system are being rescheduled and delayed. Brian expressed to the Board that the situation has become critical. System operations and safety to the employees and customers are being jeopardized. Brian will begin to utilize contract labor to fill the vacancies in our staffing to insure we can maintain system integrity and that operations can continue.

LRWS dealt with major damage to a water main and sewer manhole located on Wade Hampton Road in Hampton on September 14, 2020. Contractors for PRTC were laying fiber optic cable and plowed through an unmarked and unknown 6” water main and sewer manhole.

The SCRIA sustainability committee met on September 9th. It is expected that new rules and or regulations may be developed and imposed on water and sewer systems across the state in the future.

We have received positive comments from our customers and staff about the new renovations to the office lobby. The good news is that we were able to get it built for around $4000.00.

Brian attended the Economic Development Commission meeting on September 15th about the announcement of project “J”.

1. **Engineer’s Report-**

* The Sludge Dewatering Project should be completed next week. The contractor has less than 300 tons of sludge remaining to be removed.
* The attorney has completed easement documents for 6 out of 12 properties pertaining to the Gifford Waterline Extension Project. If we do not hear back from the other property owners the properties will have to be condemned.
* The LRIP tank repairs are complete and sandblasting has begun.
* We are still waiting to hear from EDA on funding for the Sewer Service Extension project.

7. **System Member Commissioners Report**

(A) **Town of Brunson**- The town of Brunson is continuing to work on the Beautification Project and the Preacher House.

(B) **Town of Gifford-** The town held another bid opening for the School Project. The town receive 2 bids however one bid was sent by email so it is not valid. The other bid was considered to be high. The Sidewalk Project had to be modified.

(C) **Town of Hampton-** An employee or their family member has tested positive for COVID-19. The town of Hampton is also having trouble keeping employees. They are short 2 people in the public works department. Mayor Bilka would like for the residents of Hampton to know that roll carts are only for household trash. The town will be excited to display its Christmas decorations this year. These decorations have been proudly made by hand.

(D) **Town of Varnville**- There have been cases of COVID-19 in the town’s employees. The town is not issuing permits for public events right now.

(E) **Town of Yemassee-** The town has passed a mask ordinance. The residents of the town honored their police officers by displaying blue lights on their porches. The town has asked the residents to decorate their doors for fall from September 19th to October 3rd. The CBDG Water/ Sewer Grant was approved for $861,970.

(F) **County of Hampton-** The airport will have its ground breaking ceremony tomorrow at 11:00 am. The hemp facility is moving forward. There is more interest in Hampton County real estate now thanks to all the new businesses.

8. **Old Business**

None

9. **New Business**

* 1. Brunson WWTP Upgrade and Sewer Rehab Project “Update”
     1. Brian discussed the project with USDA. The engineering costs for the project will be eligible for reimbursement. We will be looking at options to modify the old plans and creating new plans. The project may take 8 to 10 months to bid again.
  2. Wage and Compensation
     1. Marlene provided the Commissioners with a printout of salaries. The Board discussed the low pay range of the field employees and the issues LRWS is having in hiring and retaining employees. They agreed to meet in person at another time to discuss changing the pay range.

10. **Adjournment**

Moved by Clay Bishop, seconded by Horney Mitchell to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting then adjourned at 5:10.

Respectfully submitted by Sara Craven.