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The Lowcountry Regional Water System Commission held its regular monthly meeting at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, in the large conference room at the Hampton County Adminstrative Center in the Town of Hampton, 200 Jackson Avenue East, Hampton South Carolina. All meetings are open to the public (except for information, if any, to be discussed in Executive Sessions) and all interested parties are invited to attend.

**Commission Present:** Chairman Rocky Hudson, Brunson

Mayor Nat Shaffer, Varnville

Ms. Peggy O’Banner, Yemassee

Mr. Noah Alexander, Hampton County

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

Ms. Marlene Marchyshyn, Treasurer

Ms. Kari Foy, Engineer

Mr. Blake Hodge, Field Operations Manager

**Visitors Present:** None

**Quorum Met:** Yes

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Rocky Hudson called the meeting to order at 4:18pm.

2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Nat Shaffer gave the invocation.

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 Peggy O’Banner, seconded by Nat Shaffer, to adopt the agenda with the removal of item 10-C under New Business. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to approve the minutes for the August 22, 2023, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

6. **Public Hearing**

**A) FY 2023-2024 Operating, Renewal & Replacement and Extension and Expansion Budgets**

**B) Amendments to Water, Wastewater and Industrial Park Fire System Connection Schedule of Rates**

There were no members of the public in attendance at the time of the public hearing. No motion was made.

7. **Reports:**

**A) Financial Report**- The financial report for August was presented by Marlene. She reported that there had been a few unexpected maintenances and/or repairs that had been done during the month of August including the Mixon Street sewer issue that was discussed in last month's meeting and a sewer cleaning at Guess Drive, Rotunda Drive, and Alpha Genesis in Yemassee.

Moved by Peggy O’Banner, seconded by Nat Shaffer to accept the financial report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**B) General Managers Report**- Brian reported the loss of an employee, Sophia Magwood who had been with LRWS since startup in 2013. He talked about the Gifford Water System Improvement project and the amount that LRWS had paid for easements. Some properties were condemned, and the owners were paid for the easements. CDBG required a review appraisal to be done. After having some issues trying to get the review appraisals, LRWS reached out to Nathaniel Shaffer Appraisals for assistance. Brian told the Board that he wanted to make that information transparent to them and suggested that the Board consider passing a resolution at a future meeting to be able to accept Nathaniel Shaffer Appraisals services as a vendor for future purposes.

**(Staff Reports)**

**1**. **Deputy General Managers Report**

**2. Human Resource Managers Report**

1. Marlene provided the work hours for the month of August. She reported that there were no workers comp incidents or loss time and that LRWS had hired one new employee in August.

**3. Billing Managers Report**

**4. Engineers Report**

Kari provided an update on the progress of ongoing projects.

1. Brunson Pump Station Upgrades- Two of the three pump stations have been complete. Startup has begun at the Hannah and Brabham Street pump stations.
2. Yemassee Water & Sewer Improvements- The town is working on acquisition of easements for new water lines.
3. The Gifford Lift Station Rehab- Project is complete except for punch list items. We are waiting on an electrical item to be finished.
4. The LRIP Lift Station Upgrade Project- We are still in search of additional funding and bid negotiations.
5. Jackson Avenue Elevated Tank Rehab- Bids will be received in October.

Other projects going on include the Mixson St. Sewer repair, CMMS Implementation Kick Off, and the Pretreatment program development.

**5**. **Field Operations Managers Report**

Blake provided a report of the work done since the last meeting. He reported that some of his crew had been out of work with Covid.

**6**. **Treatment Operations Managers Report**

**8**. **System Member Commissioners Reports**

A. Town of Brunson- The Preacher House project is coming along. The Town Hall is being remodeled.

B. Town of Gifford-Not in attendance.

C. Town of Hampton-Not in attendance.

D. Town of Varnville- Thirteen homes qualified for demolition with the CDBG Demolition Project grant funds that the town applied for. The town will have a regular election in November.

E. Town of Yemassee- The town will have a regular election in November. There are four people running for two seats. The Shrimp Festival went well.

F. Hampton County-The County signed a contract to keep the Administrator onboard for another three months. In addition, they hired four other administrative individuals. Repairs were made to the Hampton County jail and the Recreation Center.

**9**. **Old Business**

**A)** **Update On SCIIP Funding Strategy**

Brian provided a screen presentation to show the Board the different areas of the SCIIP project and provide a better understanding of what is being done under SCIIP (SC Rural Infrastructure) funding and what is being done under USDA-RD funding. He pointed out the area where the water line will come down highway 68 to Simmons, Riley, and Cochran streets and to the tank, and loop around the south side. He also discussed the Hampton-Varnville Interconnection & Sewer Improvements, Proposed Highway 601 Force Main Extension, and the Highway 601 Sewer Pump Station. The estimated cost of the overall project is $24,885,735. LRWS is required to provide a 15% match. The match cannot be used from federal grant funds. Brian told the Board that the bank loan of $2,543,160 would include part of that match as well as providing Engineering for the entire project.

**B) Update on LRIP Sewer Pump Station Rehab Project**

Brian gave an update on the LRIP Sewer Pump Station Rehab Project. The pump that is there now is not functioning very well and is about 25 years old. This project was designed and bid out, but the bids received were over one million dollars leaving a minimum still needed for the project at about $199,000. LRWS has looked at strategies for funding and has reached out to Dominion Energy for assistance as well.

**C) Update on Town of Yemassee Mixon St Emergency Sewer Main Repair and Replacement Project**

Brian provided an update on the Mixon Street Emergency Sewer Repair and Replacement project that was approved by the Board in last month's meeting.

During last month's meeting, Brian and Kari also discussed an area between Josselson and Bing Street (Moore’s Park) that was in need of sewer line replacing and relocating. This property was purchased by a developer who wants to subdivide the parcel and build five homes. There are two sewer lines that cross the parcel that would need to be relocated. One of the lines crossing the parcel is failing and would need to be replaced. LRWS has been talking with the developer and contractor. The developer has agreed to pay $30,000 towards relocating the lines. LRWS will pay the remaining $30,000.

**10**. **New Business**

**A) Resolution 2023-11 Amendment to Schedule of Water and Wastewater System Schedule of Rates**

Board members were provided with a copy of the amended Water & Wastewater Schedule of Rates, Exhibit 1. The amended schedule of rates for water would be increased by 16.41% for both the meter base charge and the consumption charge. The amended schedule of rates for sewer would be increased by 5.15% for both the meter base charge and the consumption charge. The LRIP/SCIC fire sprinkler fee would also be increased by 16.41%.

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to approve and adopt Resolution 2023-11 Amendment to Schedule of Water & Wastewater System Schedule of Rates. Motion carried unanimously.

**B) Resolution 2023-12 Final Reading and Adoption of Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget, Capital Improvement Renewal & Replacement Budget and Extension and Expansion Budget**

Brian presented two versions of the proposed 2023-2024 Operating budget to the Board. The first one was $3,819,889.53 and did not include the bank loan for the SCIPP project funding. The second proposed budget in the amount of $4,029,069.95 would include the bank loan for the SCIIP project funding and would require an increase in rates for both water and sewer. Both proposed budgets included 3.3% COLA plus 2% for special skills such as licenses. With the presentation of both budgets, Brian discussed the existing and proposed rates for water and sewer. The Capital Improvement Renewal & Replacement budget for both budgets presented was $300,000.

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Noah Alexander to approve and adopt the 2023-2024 Operating Budget in the amount of $4,029,069.95, Capital Improvement Renewal & Replacement Budget in the amount of $300,000, and Extension and Expansion Budget. Motion carried unanimously.

**C) Resolution 2023-12 Banking Proposals to Satisfy SCIIP Grant Match Requirements**

Removed from the agenda.

**D) Resolution 2023-13 Engineering Services Task Orders #5, #6, #7 and #8 Thomas & Hutto**

LRWS was awarded a grant in the amount of $10,000,000 from SCRIA and is in the process of applying to the USDA/RD program for a grant of approximately $18,000,000. Both grant funds are part of a divisional construction project to construct and install an elevated tank at the SC Industrial Campus and a sewer system extension. LRWS will seek non-federal matching funds to meet grant requirements and use the funds to pay engineering services provided by Thomas & Hutton's Task Orders 5, 6, 7, & 8 in the approximate amount of $2,450,000.

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to approve Resolution 2023-13 authorizing Brian Burgess, General Manager, to execute engineering task orders 5,6,7, &8 with Thomas & Hutton.

**E) Intergovernmental Agreement Hampton County School District**

Brian and Kari provided a screen presentation of the property where the new school will be built. The school will provide the property for the sewer pump station. The pump station will be owned and operated by LRWS. Additionally, LRWS is looking at reimbursing the school district for the cost of the water line and engineering services which are included in the Task Orders 5,6,7, & 8 with Thomas & Hutton. This will be the portion of the line that serves LRWS’ loop. LRWS will operate and maintain that portion as well.

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to give Brian permission to proceed with the Intergovernmental Agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

**11. Public Comments**

None

11. **Adjournment**

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to adjourn. The meeting was then adjourned at 5:37pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Marlene Marchyshyn.*