

**MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
ST. MARY'S COUNTY METROPOLITAN COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 24, 2015**

The regular session of the meeting commenced at 3:05 p.m. In attendance were Commissioners Willing, Russell, Gaskin, Pessagno, and Thompson. MetCom staff in attendance included Bundy, Cullins, Elberti, Sullivan, Meiser, Edwards, Jarboe, Gilman, Smouse, and Comeau-Stanley. Others present included Michele Keplinger (*Local Government Insurance Trust*).

Chairman Willing welcomed everyone and performed a brief introduction of the new Executive Director, Scott Bundy. With a review of the agenda, Chairman Willing noted a slight change in presentation order to move ahead the Training Grant Award presentation.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA

Commissioner Russell moved to approve the draft Agenda, as modified. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Gaskin moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented, and to hereby approve all matters contained upon the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Russell seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Russell moved to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2015 meeting. Commissioner Gaskin seconded the motion. Commissioner Pessagno noted one minor correction needed on page six. Pending that change, Chairman Willing called for the vote and motion carried 4-0.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSURANCE TRUST (LGIT) TRAINING GRANT AWARD

Ms. Michele Keplinger, LGIT Representative, provided a brief overview of LGIT's Training Grant program to prevent loss control and noted that MetCom has received three training grants totaling \$11,985 over the past year, which include Tower Climbing Safety and Rescue training (\$6,000), Signal Person, Rigging, and Crane training (\$3,300), and Confined Space Awareness training (\$2,685). Ms. Keplinger advised that LGIT is pleased that MetCom is taking advantage of the program and presented Chairman Willing with a \$2,685 check.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Bundy advised the Board that he has spent the last week and a half learning about MetCom operations, which included meeting and working with staff, touring facilities, reviewing budgets, as well as a review of the Task Force report, which he noted was very comprehensive and complimentary of MetCom. Mr. Bundy indicated that he was briefed on several topics, to include the St. Clements Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Marlay-Taylor Wastewater Treatment Plant ENR Upgrade Construction status.

Mr. Bundy advised that in light of the Veteran's Day holiday office closure on November 11, staff suggests that the meeting date be changed to November 19. Chairman Willing queried the Board members and hearing no objections from those present, advised that the date change is acceptable.

In closing, Mr. Bundy noted that he is happy to be here and looks forward to working with the Board and staff.

Chairman Willing made brief mention of the letter received from the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC) regarding the August 27 Board action to maintain the connection moratorium at St. Clements Shores. Chairman Willing reported that a response was prepared and sent to the CSMC and a copy sent electronically to all Board members today. A printed copy was presented for the Board members review.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Interactive Voice Recognition System

In Mr. Fehn's absence, Ms. Edwards presented a review of the Interactive Voice Recognition System, including the associated purchase and maintenance costs, along with details related to the enhanced system features and functionality. Ms. Edward cited that implementation of this system would allow customers to access and pay their water & sewer bills over the telephone, a function that is not currently an option.

Discussion ensued amongst the Board members and Ms. Edwards regarding the anticipated number of customers who would potentially use this service, current online bill payment options and number of users, annual maintenance fee for the system, bank imposed credit card transaction fees, and questions regarding use of this system by other jurisdictions and utilities. Commissioner Pessagno noted his objection to this system and indicated that we should encourage more customers to pay online.

Commissioner Russell moved that the Commission accept the Selectron Technologies quote, in the amount of \$51,000, for the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) software, licenses, hardware and professional services necessary to implement and use the IVR system. This is a sole source purchase as Selectron Technologies is a third party, preferred partner with SunGard Public Sector. Hearing no second to the motion, Chairman Willing announced that the Motion fails.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Interview Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy

Ms. Cullins presented the Interview Travel Reimbursement Policy, as requested by the Board following the last round of high-level interviews.

Commissioner Russell moved to approve and adopt the Interview Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy, as discussed, effective immediately. Commissioner Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

CHIEF ENGINEER'S REPORT

A. Presentation of FY 2016 Capital Improvement Budget Amendment to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County (CSMC)

Mr. Elberti advised the Board of the presentation made on September 15 to the CSMC in conjunction with a FY 2016 Capital Improvement Budget Amendment for the Patuxent Park, Phase 3 Water and Sewer Replacement Construction Project. Mr. Elberti noted that the amendment, previously approved by the MetCom Board on August 27, was approved by the CSMC and provides additional funding for the project through the transfer of funds from Water Contingencies into Sewer Contingencies.

B. FY 2016 Capital Improvement Budget Amendment

Mr. Elberti performed a review of the needs and modifications associated with the proposed FY 2016 Capital Improvement Budget Amendment, citing that it provides funding for the planning and design for the expansion of the St. Clement's Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), as directed by the Board at the August 27 Commission meeting. Mr. Elberti noted that funding would be provided from the Sewer Capital Projects New Customer Reserves Fund and if approved by the MetCom Board, approval would be sought from the CSMC. Mr. Sullivan added that MetCom sent a request to Mr. Shire, St. Mary's County Department of Land Use and Growth Management, to consider a report to MetCom that would identify the scope of the expansion area. Brief discussion ensued amongst the group.

Commissioner Russell moved to amend the FY 2016 Capital Improvement Budget, as recommended by the Commission's Chief Financial Officer, to:

- 1) Provide funding in the amount of \$70,000, necessary to add a new project to the FY 2016 budget, entitled, St. Clement's Shores WWTP Expansion (Project #2151SF); and**
- 2) Reduce Sewer Contingencies by \$70,000; and**

Further move that the said budget amendment be contingent upon a corresponding approval by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County. Motion seconded by Commissioner Thompson. Motion carried 4-0.

C. St. Clements Shores WWTP Upgrade Design Proposal

Mr. Elberti performed a review of the scope of the St. Clements Shores WWTP Upgrade Design Services, citing engineering evaluation and report on the upgrade and expansion of the plant through data gathering, technical evaluations, schematic design, and cost estimates. Mr. Elberti noted that there would be a draft report prepared to document the results of the technical evaluations and a one-day workshop conducted to review the report and gain input from MetCom on potential treatment/disposal sites for further field and hydrogeological testing. Mr. Elberti indicated that a final report will be generated to incorporate all data and will include recommendations for immediate and mid-term improvements. Mr. Elberti noted that Dewberry, the engineer recommended for this study, has the history on this project and is more than capable to perform the

work. Mr. Elberti made clear that this is the initial evaluation for a plant upgrade and not the design of the plant upgrade. Discussion ensued amongst the group regarding the extent of the work included in the proposal and Commissioner Pessagno provided a commentary on his desire to seek out other engineers to provide a proposal for this work, as it is his preference that Dewberry not perform the preliminary or follow on work. Mr. Elberti reiterated the need for the data gathering and technical evaluation, which will be useful to other engineers if the design work is solicited for bid. Additional discussion ensued on the required completion of the work within six-months, to accommodate the Board's approved action of this effort at the August 27 meeting.

Commissioner Thompson moved to accept and approve the proposal dated September 14, 2015, from Dewberry Consultants LLC, of Baltimore, Maryland, in the amount of \$54,828.13, under the Engineering Services Contract #12-12-E, for the services required to perform an engineering evaluation and feasibility report for and upgrade and expansion of the St. Clement's Shores WWTP, under Project #2151SF, as recommended by the Chief Engineer; and Further move that the said acceptance and approval be contingent upon approval of a corresponding FY 2016 Capital Improvement Budget Amendment, by the Commissioners of St. Mary's County, to add Project #2151SF. Commissioner Russell seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-1. Commissioner Pessagno opposed the motion.

COMMISSION MEMBERS' TIME

Chairman Willing advised that a list of questions and discussion topics were forwarded to the Board by Commissioner Pessagno, which were later passed along to staff for input. Chairman Willing noted that staff's input was distributed in advance of the meeting and he hopes all Board members had an opportunity to read and consider the material, as it is his intention today to review and discuss as many of the items as time will allow. Commissioner Thompson noted that he believes that it is incumbent upon the Director to direct the Board in what he sees as a better way to proceed and as he has only just begun here, he thought that this discussion would be tabled until the Director has had some time to evaluate things. Commissioner Pessagno indicated that he is simply looking to discuss these matters and although he does not have an opinion on any of the items, he would like to form one from the discussion.

Extensive discussion ensued amongst the Board members, Mr. Bundy, Ms. Meiser, and various staff member present on the following items outlined in the above referenced document:

- Employment Contracts
- Adopt Debt Limit
- Issuance of Bonds/Term
- Dress Code for Commissioners
- Capital Improvement Budget/Capital Improvement Project Process
- Joint Meeting with Commissioners of St. Mary's County
- Contract Employees
- Timing of Budget Approvals

Following discussion, Commissioner Thompson inquired about consideration given to a quarterly billing model versus monthly billing. Chairman Willing and staff members cited the recent Rate Study and provided background information in support of monthly billing. Additional discussion ensued regarding online billing and Mr. Bundy noted his desire to encourage paperless billing to reduce costs.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **Commissioner Russell moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:51 p.m. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**



Laura Comeau-Stanley, Corporate Secretary