

**MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
ST. MARY'S COUNTY METROPOLITAN COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 25, 2014**

Following a half-hour work session on the Rate Structure, the regular session portion of the meeting commenced at 3:06 p.m. In attendance were Commissioners Willing, Gaskin, Mueller, and Pessagno; MetCom staff in attendance were Ichniowski, Meiser, Cullins, Shick, Elberti, Sullivan, Fehn, Edwards, and Comeau-Stanley. Others present were Jason Babcock (The Enterprise), and Mr. & Mrs. Perry Rothwell.

Chairman Willing welcomed everyone and performed a review of the meeting agenda.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA

Commissioner Gaskin moved to approve the Agenda, as presented. Commissioner Mueller seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Mueller moved to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented, and to hereby approve all matters contained upon the consent Agenda. Commissioner Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gaskin moved to approve the minutes of the July 24, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Pessagno seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

A. Executive Director Position

Ms. Cullins performed a brief review of the draft advertisement prepared for the Executive Director position for the Board members and solicited input for additions and changes. Commissioner Mueller suggested that we identify the number of employees in the organization to the advertisement. Ms. Cullins detailed the available and recommended advertising venues, length of ad, and associated costs for each. Brief discussion ensued amongst the Board and staff on several of the publications, associations, and on-line advertising resources.

Commissioner Mueller moved to approve the position advertisement and the advertising, venues for the position of Director, as discussed and recommended by the Human Resources Director. Motion Seconded by Commissioner Gaskin. Motion carried 3-0.

Ms. Cullins provided a brief overview of the proposed schedule, citing that the advertisement will run for two months, resumes will be reviewed, and interviews scheduled. Ms. Cullins noted that if resumes are not received from qualified applicants, a re-advertisement will then occur. Ms. Cullins indicated that for any out-of-town applicants, Skype interviews could be conducted prior to traveling here for an interview. Ms. Cullins advised that future discussion is needed amongst the Board

members regarding travel expenses for interviews and relocation costs, should one or more out-of-town candidates be deemed as the best qualified and selected for the position.

Chairman Willing made quick mention of a letter he received a copy of from Ms. Sabo, St. Mary's County Chief of Staff and Director of the Human Resources Department, regarding the County Commissioner's decision to close the County's offices in observance of the extended Christmas and New Year's holidays on Wednesday, December 24, Friday, December 26, and Friday, January 2. Chairman Willing advised that the County is authorizing these additional days of paid holiday leave for their employees. Chairman Willing indicated that in the past, MetCom has often followed the County's lead on these matters and it was noted that MetCom offices are already scheduled to be closed on December 24 in exchange for the Columbus Day holiday.

Brief discussion ensued amongst the Board and Mr. Ichniowski, including a mention of the same action taken last year by the Board. Chairman Willing noted that he is inclined to support following the County on this, in light of both falling on Fridays and in consideration of staff doing an exceptional job all year long. Chairman Willing sought input from Board members and Commissioners Gaskin and Mueller noted their preference to forego any action on this matter until we have more Board members present to discuss. Chairman Willing advised that the matter would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

CHIEF ENGINEER'S REPORT

A. Automatic Meter Read (AMR) Water Meter Project, Phase 2

Mr. Ichniowski initiated the presentation with an overview of the last action taken on this item, which resulted in a failed vote to accept an engineering proposal for Phase 2 of the Automatic Meter Read (AMR) Water Meter Project. Mr. Ichniowski noted that following the meeting, Chairman Willing suggested that we take another look at the project and staff submitted a letter to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) requesting to use the existing project to accomplish the work associated with Phase 2 under a no cost change order. Mr. Ichniowski advised that MDE has issued verbal acceptance of the request.

For the benefit of the Board members, Mr. Ichniowski provided a brief overview of the budget, project costs and potential savings through the completion of work under a change order to Phase 1. Mr. Ichniowski identified options for consideration moving forward with this effort and discussion ensued amongst the group on the benefits of utilizing the existing contractor for the work under the change order option. Mr. Elberti noted that the contractor has agreed to perform the additional work on the project and would continue at the same costs.

Additional discussion ensued on the reprogramming of funds already borrowed for Phase 2, which would occur after the next Capital Budget cycle. Following discussion, Board members in collective agreement that the change order route seems to be the best way to proceed and Chairman Willing requested that staff work out the details and bring a change order back for the Board's consideration and approval at the next meeting.

CHIEF OF FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS REPORT

A. Grinder Pump Package Units Purchase

Mr. Sullivan advised the Board that as part of the Capital Improvement Budget process over the past two years, we have been identifying and replacing our oldest grinder pump units and to date, ninety-four (94) have been replaced, primarily on St. Georges Island. Mr. Sullivan presented the board with a request to purchase eighty-one new grinder pump packages for this fiscal years' project from the lowest priced vendor. Following questions from Commissioner Pessagno, Mr. Sullivan provided an explanation of the discrepancy between the purchase price and the amount budgeting, citing that the budget price includes installation and purchase of retrofit grinder pumps, which will be presented as a separate contract item for the Board's consideration at a future meeting. Mr. Sullivan provided details on the deteriorated state of the older fiberglass vaults and the complete vault replacement using plastic composite units.

Commissioner Mueller moved that the Commission accept and award the procurement of eighty-one (81) Simplex Package Grinder Pump Units to Crane Pumps and Systems, Inc. of Piqua, Ohio, for the total price of \$178,524.00, as submitted in their quote dated August 25, 2014. Commissioner Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion failed 2-0-1. Commissioner Pessagno abstained.

PUBLIC FORUM

Chairman Willing acknowledged Mr. Perry Rothwell and offered him the opportunity to address the Board. Mr. Rothwell greeted the Board members and advised he is here regarding a policy issue on billing of water service fees. Mr. Rothwell explained that his son owns a rental property, which he helps manage, and there were renters in the property who were not keeping up with the utility bills. As such, the water was turned off and a final bill issued following the eviction of the tenants in March, which Mr. Rothwell came to pay last week. To his surprise, in addition to the final bill, he had a bill for service charges from after the interruption of service through the current billing cycle, as he was told that our policy is that charges for water service to the site are billed monthly, whether the water is on or interrupted. Mr. Rothwell explained that he would like an explanation from the Board on why that is.

Chairman Willing advised that water service charge is to pay for the system-at-large, specifically to the maintenance and operational costs of the system. Mr. Ichniowski referred to an email that he send Mr. Rothwell this morning, which explains that much of the cost of our existing rate structure is for fixed fees for getting water out of the ground and the conveyance of same to properties. Mr. Ichniowski noted that the Commission is currently looking to modify our rate structure, which would not occur until July of 2015. Ms. Shick commented on the what the fees are anticipated to be under the new rate structure, but noted that in addition to service charges, all customers pay the system improvement charges for both water and sewer, which are paid for replacement and future upgrades to the system.

Ms. Meiser advised that under the current rate structure, the service charge includes 18,000 gallons of water, whether used or not. Furthermore, the service charge represents your property's contribution of the operation and maintenance of the system that serves the property, which happens to include up to 18,000 gallons of water; it is the share for making that service available to the property's curb.

Minutes

Regular Meeting, 09/25/14

Page 4

After extensive discussion amongst the group on the matter, Mr. Rothwell indicated that did not know that service charges continue after the service is turned off, but he now better understands this and thought it important to come before the Board to gain this insight and give them a homeowner's perspective. Mr. Rothwell thanked the Board for their time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Pessagno moved to go into Executive Session at 4:05 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter. Commissioner Mueller seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

The meeting reconvened into Regular Session at 4:29 p.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS' TIME

There were no items to address at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, **Commissioner Pessagno moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m. Commissioner Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.**

Laura Comeau-Stanley, Corporate Secretary