

**BRUNSWICK REGIONAL WATER & SEWER H2GO  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Bill Browning called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm, a quorum was present. The assembly was lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Present from the Board of Commissioners were members Bill Browning, Chairman, Ron Jenkins, Vice Chairman, Carl Antos, Secretary, Jeff Gerken and Trudy Trombley, present from H2GO was Bob Walker, Executive Director, Russ Lane, Assistant Director, Scott Hook, Finance Officer, Brenda Thurman, Customer Service Supervisor, and Teresa Long, Clerk to the Board.

**DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA:**

Chairman Browning opened the floor for any adjustments to the agenda. Mr. Bob Walker requested to add two items to the agenda, first at the beginning of the Executive Director's Report he asked to add a discussion on the Two Pines Lift Station upgrade quotes and at the end of his report a discussion on the consideration of community water stations. **Commissioner Gerken made the motion to approve the agenda as amended; Commissioner Jenkins seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

*Approval of Minutes: August 22, 2017 Regular Board Meeting:* Chairman Browning asked if there were any corrections needed for the August 22, 2017 Regular Board Meeting. Chairman Browning pointed out on page three a small typo which should have read bit instead of bid. **Commissioner Antos motioned to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the August 22, 2017 Regular Board Meeting Minutes with the cited correction; Commissioner Jenkins seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

**COMMISSIONERS REPORT:**

Commissioner Gerken said that on August 31<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> he attended the NC Rural Water Association Leadership Summit, he said that he filed a trip report on that with the board members and Mr. Walker. Commissioner Gerken said the most significant part of the discussion was a small sewer utility in the Winterville area, the director there talked about their experiences coping with hurricane Matthew, he said everything there was flooded, they had to bring in sandbags by boat to their sewer treatment plant.

Commissioner Jenkins said that he attended Belville's open house on Saturday, he said the building went up with no flaws, he said they did a good job and the building was state of the art.

Commissioner Antos said he went to the Belville open house and before that he went to a breakfast that was non-political, Dr. Larry Cahoon of UNCW gave a two hour talk on the conditions in the river. Commissioner Antos said H2GO or Reverse Osmosis was not mentioned. Commissioner Antos reported what Dr. Cahoon said, he said if you drink a liter of water at one part per trillion of GenX you will be swallowing  $1.82 \times 10^{12}$  or 1.82 trillion molecules of GenX. He said Cape Fear Public Utility has an average of about 45 parts per trillion of Genx in their water, there are about a trillion cells in a human body so drinking a liter of water per day at 45 parts per trillion of GenX allows every cell in your body to have an interaction with about 72 molecules of GenX, however he said they still don't have the studies to know if it is harmful or not. Commissioner Antos said then when you add up other fluorinated hydro-carbons that are present in the Cape Fear River you get hundreds of trillions of molecules in every liter you drink, enough for hundreds of fluorocarbon molecules for every cell in your body.

Commissioner Trombley said she had nothing to report.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Don Yousey of 1032 Maple Chase Drive, he said he heard of putting stand-alone reverse osmosis systems in the schools, he said that makes sense numbers wise because if you accept the perception that the water is dangerous which he said he does not but if you did, the stand-alone reverse osmosis systems would take care of the water that people are drinking or using for potable reasons, and all the other water that we waste would not be treated, he said if that is a good solution for the schools then it would be a good solution for the county, he said you could start a voucher program using the cost per house between \$200 to \$400 each, he said if 100 percent of the people you serve pick them up the cost would be four million dollars, you could stop charging extra fees and give back what is left over.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

*Discussion on the Two Pines Lift Station Upgrade Quotes:* Mr. Walker said we have a sewer pump station in the Woodridge area, called the Two Pines Lift Station, he said the concrete is starting to degrade in the wet-well and also the ductile pipe is starting to degrade. Mr. Walker said that Mr. Steve Hall, the Collections Supervisor would like to upgrade that particular lift station. Mr. Walker said he has two quotes, one from Carolina Civil Works in the amount of \$60,805.83, he said that included removing and replacing all the piping in the wet-well, new stainless steel pipe rails and stainless steel brackets to keep the pumps from sliding up and down in the wet-well, they will remove the yard piping and the check valves and plug valves in the valve vault and replace with a new valve vault, put in a new by-pass pump connection with an emergency by-pass plug valve and cam-lock disconnect installed on the valve vault, the wet well would be cleaned and installed with a raven epoxy liner to protect the concrete from further degradation from the hydrogen sulfide. Mr. Walker said he had gotten a similar quote from

Carmichael Construction, he said they are at \$58,000 for the same scope of work. Commissioner Trombley asked if the project was put out for bid and did it not have to be advertised, Mr. Walker said this was done under the informal bid process but he does have two bids. **Commissioner Gerken motioned to accept the bid from Carmichael Construction in the amount of \$58,000 to upgrade the Two Pines Lift Station, Commissioner Jenkins seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

*US 17 Water Transmission Line Update:* Mr. Walker said this was the 18 inch line that was installed on Highway 17 in the last year, he said it was complete and was put into service two weeks ago. Mr. Walker said our crews bled the lines out several times however we still got some calls from customers complaining about cloudy water due to air being in the water, he said he told them to put a glass of water on their counter and within about 15 minutes the air would come out and the water would be clear, he said that problem cleared up within three days, he said the service is up and running.

*US 17 Interceptor Sewer & Regional Pump Station Updates:*

*Interceptor Sewer;* Mr. Walker said of the US 17 Interceptor Sewer and Regional Pump Station Project, the contractor for this project is on site, the manholes were to be delivered today and he will start installing the manholes and pipe tomorrow.

*Regional Pump Station;* Mr. Walker said the Regional Pump Station Contractor which is Carolina Civil Works will be on site mobilizing in October. Mr. Walker said these two projects should be operational by July 2018.

*RO Water Project Construction Updates:*

*RO Equipment Procurement;* Mr. Walker said the first project that was bid was the Harn RO Equipment Skids, he said the shop drawings have been approved, the fabrication has begun this month.

*Well Construction;* Mr. Walker said all the pilot holes on all the well sites both in the Pee Dee and the Black Creek Aquifers have been completed, he said what they found through their data logging and sand analysis was that the wells are very similar to the first set of wells that were put in on well site #1. Mr. Walker said they have installed the casing and the screen at well site #5 in the Pee Dee and they are going to do a 24 hour test next Monday, he said we were hoping to get 600 gpm out of that well but they are going to test at 750gpm. Mr. Walker said of the #3 Pee Dee the well casing and screens are being installed next Wednesday and they have the pit casing installed at well site #2. Mr. Walker said that Skipper's Well Drilling are moving along and things are looking pretty good.

*RO Plant Site:* Mr. Walker said the RO plant site contractor has just mobilized on site, they have some erosion control measures installed and they are going to start installing their de-watering stock where they come in and they trench in this de-watering stock about ten feet deep and they pump the water out to the roadside ditch. Mr. Walker explained what de-watering means, he said they have to artificially lower the ground water table so that they can excavate the site and bring back engineered fill.

*September Billing Inserts:*

Utility of the Future Today-National Award; Mr. Walker said we have just sent out a billing insert for our Utility of the Future Today, he said the Wilmington Biz did an article on H2GO receiving this national award. Mr. Walker said he will be going up to Chicago the first week in October for that award ceremony and also to check out the vendors there concerning our new specifications for the vac-truck that we have budgeted for this year.

*RO Project Endorsement-Robert Bowcock:* Mr. Walker said the other billing insert we had was an RO Project endorsement by Robert Bowcock who is the water treatment expert associated with Erin Brockovich. Mr. Walker said we appreciate Mr. Bowcock's input on our project, he said that endorsement was made available to our customers.

Commissioner Gerken asked if the billing insert had already gone out, Mr. Walker reply was yes. Commissioner Gerken said he has a comment about that and he read a summary of some communication from Mr. Bowcock today. "Mr. Bowcock said he does not understand the project. He said that Mr. McGill approached him when he and Erin Brockovich were in town. He does not endorse the project with this letter. This letter was intended for the Board's eyes only and Mr. McGill actually got back to him with at least one iteration saying 'you have to make this less complex, you have to dumb this down because it is for the board.' It went through several iterations with his staff and he has not had a chance to review the final copy. He reiterated that it is not an endorsement of H2GO's project. Mr. Bowcock strongly endorses Granulated Activated Carbon as the method for cleaning up the pollution in our water supply, and he has asked that I get in contact with him tomorrow to talk about this." Commissioner Gerken said that if the billing insert has already gone out there is a possibility that "the legs will be cut out from under it." Commissioner Jenkins asked Mr. Walker if Mr. Bowcock had related this information to him. Mr. Walker said the only information that he got from Mr. Bowcock was this endorsement letter in which Mr. Bowcock did sign and did say it was for our customers. Commissioner Gerken said that you can get a signature on a letter without the person actually reading it and actually signing it, he said that Mr. Bowcock communicated with "us" today and said that he has not had a chance to review the final copy and he wanted us to send him a copy of it. Commissioner Gerken reiterated that it is not an endorsement of H2GO's project, Commissioner Gerken said this is a Mr. McGill project, a scheme from beginning to end. Commissioner Jenkins told Mr. Walker that the endorsement letter from Mr. Bowcock was a valid letter because it was sent directly to Mr. Walker and to this agency. Commissioner Trombley said she saw a problem with the letter because it refers to 25,000 people that we serve, Commissioner Jenkins said that 25,000 was our total population. Commissioner Trombley said that if we check into this with Mr. Bowcock we may need to write some type of statement of correction next month. Mr. Walker said he was not aware of any of the conversations that Commissioner Gerken had with Mr. Bowcock, he said he has a valid letter from Mr. Bowcock that explains his position on our project. Commissioner Gerken questioned whether or not this was a valid letter. Commissioner Jenkins asked if Mr. Bowcock's signature was on the letter, Mr. Walker said it was, Commissioner Jenkins said it had to be a valid letter if Mr. Bowcock had signed the letter, he said when his signature goes on something it is valid. Commissioner Gerken said there are people who have their staff sign for them and there are people who have robo-signature technology. Chairman Browning asked Commissioner Gerken if Mr. Bowcock wrote him a letter with his signature that could be seen. Commissioner Gerken said he did not have one but he would talk with Mr. Bowcock about that tomorrow. Commissioner Jenkins told Commissioner Gerken that he wanted to see a valid signature on what he had just said versus the

letter that Mr. Walker received from Mr. Bowcock with a valid signature, he said that as an administrator if anyone of his staff put his signature on a document that leaves his office it becomes a valid document because that person has been charged to do just that and nothing else and it is a valid document, no question. Commissioner Trombley asked if Mr. Bowcock intended that letter to be disseminated to the customers. Chairman Browning said the letter does not say for the board only, it was written to Mr. Walker. Commissioner Jenkins said he apparently did because he signed the letter and he knows that this agency is in the water distribution business. Commissioner Gerken said that was the end of his comments.

*Discussion on the Consideration of Community Water Stations:* Mr. Walker said at the last board meeting we had some discussion on this and a presentation by Emily Donovan. Mr. Walker said that he was asking approval from the board to allocate \$200,000 so that we can place community water stations in the community, he said he would like to move forward with this if possible. Commissioner Trombley asked if there was any organization in Brunswick County like the one in New Hanover County that had offered to donate water to the community. Mr. Walker said there was none. Commissioner Jenkins commented on a statement made earlier in the meeting by Mr. Yousey who said maybe H2GO should put RO water systems in everyone's house, he told Mr. Yousey that he was glad that he was supporting Reverse Osmosis, he said that H2GO is in a position to put RO water into the schools, he said there must be an underlying reason behind the schools not accepting the RO systems from H2GO. Commissioner Jenkins said that the schools do not want our RO systems put in because they are saying the county water is safe to drink, he said if the schools did accept the RO systems, it would create problems throughout the county because the county is saying their water is safe to drink. Commissioner Trombley said she also had a problem with allocating money to a project with a lot of unknowns, where, how much, how extensive, she said she would like to have more information before voting on a project like this. Chairman Browning said at the last meeting when Ms. Donovan made her presentation, even Commissioner Gerken voted to consider it. Chairman Browning said if the county agreed that something needed to be done at the schools that would not be good public relations for them. Commissioner Trombley asked if we would put RO systems in at the senior citizens homes, she asked where would it end. Commissioner Antos stated that the county is dead set against putting RO systems in the schools even though they are suing Chemours. Commissioner Trombley said we just need to have more information on this, she also said she does not have a problem with the county water. Commissioner Jenkins said that he does have a problem with the water, she said she does not believe in using children as a way to push the agenda. Chairman Browning said Ms. Donovan along with the former mayor of Wilmington made a presentation concerning the installation of reverse osmosis systems in our schools at our last meeting, he said they brought a proposal to us that they had proposed to New Hanover County, he said he understood there was a positive reaction from New Hanover County. Chairman Browning said they unfortunately proposed their plan to us before they went to Brunswick County Superintendent of schools, he said he thought they wanted to have something to tell them before they went to the county schools, and we agreed to investigate the matter. Chairman Browning said Brunswick County cannot say we should put these in the schools and not do something for everybody else. Commissioner Gerken said the county water is safe and the superintendent of schools said the water is safe. Chairman Browning said H2GO is just offering an alternative to our customers which we think might be better, he said it will not hurt the county at all. Commissioner Gerken said Mr. Yousey said that you could put an RO system in every home in the county or at least everyone in the H2GO service area for four million dollars, he said that is considerably less than \$35 million and it would only treat the

water that we would drink. Chairman Browning said the RO Plant is going to be the first intervention into a new source of what we have found out to be safer water to distribute to our customers, he said if you have a choice which water would you choose and they cost the same would you not choose the safest water. Chairman Browning said that he was on Brunswick County's Utility Operations Board for ten years, he said he may try to get back on that board and share the information that he has learned now. Chairman Browning took the conversation back to the question that Mr. Walker had. Mr. Walker said he was looking for board approval to allocate \$200,000 for community water stations. **Commissioner Trombley made the motion that we do not allocate the money, Commissioner Gerken seconded the motion, the vote was two ayes by Commissioners Trombley and Gerken and three nays by Antos, Jenkins and Browning.** Commissioner Antos suggested that Mr. Walker come back to the next meeting with a preliminary plan for the community water systems. **Commissioner Gerken motioned to table this discussion until the October meeting, Commissioner Trombley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.** Commissioner Trombley requested Mr. Walker to look into having other public and private agencies contribute towards this plan. Mr. Walker said he will bring back more information on the plan.

### **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Lane said that he has the new electronic meter reading equipment on order, he said the electronics for meter reading that we have now, the transmitters and the receivers are not communicating, so he is upgrading the equipment in the meter reading car, he said we will not have to touch the meters. Mr. Lane said this will work if we want to get a fixed base system later on. Mr. Lane said Sensus has agreed to give us a free propagation study and they will be able to tell us how many towers we would have to have, he said if we did go to that fixed base system, we could hit a button here in the office and read all the meters, he said the new meter reading equipment will allow us to do that. Mr. Lane said the new trucks may be here next week. Commissioner Jenkins asked Mr. Lane how far along had we gotten with the fire hydrant painting project, Mr. Lane said we did not get very far this year because of all the rainy weather.

### **FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT:**

*Check Register:* Mr. Hook asked the board if they had any questions regarding the check register. No comments were made.

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER'S REPORT:**

None

### **ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

Mr. Coble stated he had nothing to report in open session.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

*Commissioner Gerken "Motion to permanently archive the recordings of all future meetings and to make the recordings of the regular sessions available to the public via the web page":*

Commissioner Gerken said he had received from the clerk the Standards for Water and Sewer Authorities and Sanitary Districts regarding record retention, he said he talked to The Town of Leland and they record all their meetings and put them on the web via U-Tube, but for some reason the state of North Carolina has decided that sanitary districts should get rid of recordings of meetings as soon as the minutes are approved. Commissioner Gerken said what he was looking for was in the April 18, 2017 meeting in which Commissioner Trombley talked about the lack of any trip report on the site visits made to other reverse osmosis plants, Commissioner Gerken said at some point Mr. Walker said he kept the trip report in his head, he said he wanted to get the exact wording and since the recordings have been deleted all he has is his recollection and the recollection of others, he said item 47 in the record retention schedule says that for projects you should retain in office records with historical value permanently, any reports, etc. regarding projects and item 55 says that reports concerning the performance of a department program or project as well as those created for planning purposes should be retained, a copy of annual and bi-annual reports should be kept permanently, he said that is hard to do when the report is in someone's head. Commissioner Gerken said that he withdraws his motion.

### **INFORMAL DISCUSSION:**

None

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF PERSONNEL PURSUANT TO NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6) and CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS PURSUANT TO NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (5):**

**Commissioner Gerken made the motion for the board to enter into executive session to discuss issues of personnel pursuant to NCGS143.318.11 (a) (6) and contract negotiations pursuant to NCGS143-318.11 (a) (5); Commissioner Jenkins seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

**Commissioner Gerken made the motion for the board to resume open session; Commissioner Jenkins seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

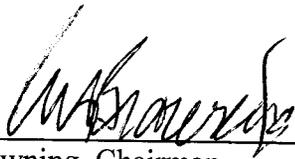
There was nothing to report out of Executive Session.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:**

Chairman Browning announced that next regular board meeting will be October 17, 2017 at 6 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

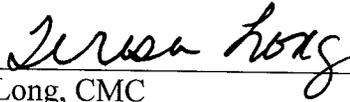
**Commissioner Antos made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 pm, it was seconded by Commissioner Jenkins, and the motion carried unanimously.**



Bill Browning, Chairman



Carl Antos, Secretary



Teresa Long, CMC  
Clerk to the Board

10-17-2017

Date of Approval