

**BRUNSWICK REGIONAL WATER & SEWER H2GO
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15, 2020**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ronnie Jenkins called the meeting, located at H2GO via Zoom, to order at 6 p.m.; a quorum was present. The assembly was led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Present from the Board of Commissioners were members Ronnie Jenkins, Chairman, Steve Hosmer, Vice Chairman, Rodney McCoy, Secretary, Bill Beer and Barry Laub, present from H2GO was Bob Walker, Executive Director, Russ Lane, Assistant Director, Scott Hook, Finance Officer, Tyler Wittkofsky, Public Information Officer, and Teresa Long, Clerk to the Board. Also present was attorney Steve Coble.

DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Beer motioned to approve the agenda as presented, the motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Hosmer made the motion to approve the consent agenda which consisted of the August 18, 2020 meeting minutes; a vote was called and the motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT:

Chairman Jenkins requested prayers for his longtime friend and political partner, Bobby Brown and his wife as Mr. Brown has been very sick.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chairman Jenkins opened the floor for public comments, none were given.

OLD BUSINESS:

Sensus FlexNet Customer Portal System-Charlie Daniels, Ferguson Meter & Automation: Mr. Daniels gave his presentation; he said this would be another extension of the software that we are currently are using for the FlexNet System, for the water meters that have been installed. Mr. Daniels first pointed out why a Customer Portal System would work for this utility, he said with this, customers would be able to monitor their own water usage, he said during installation of the meters, they could tell that customers had been tampering with the lids on the meters, obviously

trying to see what their usage was, he said the customers would get high alarms and other notifications that the office staff gets now, he said it would save office staff a lot of time. Mr. Daniels said this would allow customers not only to monitor their usage but set up their own usage alarms, he said it would help people with rentals to monitor usage and stay on budget, he said customers would have around the clock access to this portal. Mr. Daniels said customers would be able to see historical data on the portal, he said customers can set up alerts for burst water pipes and leak alarms, he said with our current system, office staff already gets these type of alarms. Mr. Hook said the cost is \$27,000 for the first year and the ongoing software support is \$7,200 per year, he said when the amount of customers go up the cost will increase a little. Commissioner Laub asked if we could test the system out before committing. Mr. Daniels said he has data from other Utilities that use the system that he can share with the board, he said the most recent is the City of Dunn, NC and he said he also installed this at Winston-Salem, NC. Commissioner McCoy asked what percentage of customers actually use the system. Mr. Daniels said about 20 percent use the portal. Commissioner Laub asked about how often is the system down. Mr. Daniels said it was minimal, it will go down for updates, usually after hours for a short time, he said the system has been operating here since March and there have not been any significant issues with down time. Commissioner Laub expressed concern with security, Mr. Daniels said there is no way anyone can get in our system this way, he said it is a customer read only portal. Mr. Daniels said customers do not have to opt in, it will be optional, he said if H2GO does not want to use the portal after the first year, we don't have to pay for the support. Chairman Jenkins said he could see a lot of benefits of having this portal.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Walker said we did get LGC approval, we closed on the loan last week and we are ready to award contracts and the contracts have been recommended by The Wooten Company, they are as follows:

Water Supply and Treatment System, Contract 2 Award-Carolina Civilworks; Mr. Walker said this contract is for raw water supply lines and finished water supply lines, he said the lowest responsive bidder was Carolina Civilworks and the bid was \$5,998,430.26. **Commissioner Laub made the motion to approve the Water Supply and Treatment System, Contract 2 Award to Carolina Civilworks, the vote was unanimous and the motion was approved.**

Water Supply and Treatment System, Contract 3 Award-Carmichael Construction; Mr. Walker said this contract is for the RO Plant discharge, getting the concentrate discharge out to the river and for the river diffuser, he said the low bidder is Carmichael Construction Company of Southport, NC, in the amount of \$3,455,901. **Commissioner Laub made the motion that Contract 3 be awarded to Carmichael Construction for the amount of \$3,455,901, a vote was called and the motion was approved unanimously.**

Water Supply and Treatment System, Contract 4 Award-MB Kahn Construction; Mr. Walker said this was for the RO water treatment plant, all the site work, all the piping, installation, the building, and all the pre and post treatment training, and the amount is \$21,400,000. Mr. Walker said this bid is about five million dollars more than the bid that was received three years ago. **Commissioner Laub made the motion to award Contract 4 to MB Kahn Construction of Columbia, SC in the amount of \$21,400,000.** Commissioner Beer asked how much more will we have to spend. Mr. Walker said we still have the well contract, it is still a valid contract and we still have a contract with Harn RO for the procurement of the RO equipment, the membranes,

the feed pumps, the startup of the equipment itself. Commissioner McCoy asked if we had a completion date, Mr. Walker said it should be completed by the end of 2021. **A vote was called for the motion on the table, the motion was approved unanimously.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Sensus FlexNet Smart Meter Installation Update; Mr. Walker said that all meters are installed and everything is working, he said that the Project Manager from Ferguson, Mr. Daniels will give a report on the smart meter update. Mr. Daniels said we are complete with the water meter change out, he said they are about six weeks ahead of schedule, he said they are now in their clean up phase, going through the system optimizing everything, making sure they didn't miss anything, he said the meters are reading at a 99% read rate which is great, he said they installed over 15,300 meters. Mr. Daniels said that before this project, the meters were being read by drive-by which took several weeks and now it takes about five minutes to get the reads. Commissioner McCoy asked if there were any problems with the meters during the hurricane. Mr. Daniels said that the antennas are in tack and there were no issues, he also said that we could use the old drive-by system if we needed a backup. Mr. Walker said we are going to follow up after the hurricane clean up to make sure everything is in tack, especially in Olde Towne where there was so much damage. Mr. Daniels said the smart meters worst enemy is lawn mowers, Mr. Walker said that in the near future he would most likely come up with a policy requiring homeowners not to cover over those antennas on the meters.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Lane said he had nothing to report.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT:

Check Register; Commissioner Beer said there was a \$33,000 check paid to Ward and Smith, Mr. Coble said he would have to look at the bill to see what it was for. Mr. Walker suggested that if any of the board wanted to review that bill to come into the office and Mr. Hook would provide that information.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER'S REPORT:

None

INFORMAL DISCUSSION:

Water Supply and Treatment System Groundbreaking Ceremony, October 7, 11:00am; Mr. Walker said that Mr. Wittkofsky has put this event together and it will be on at the plant site by invite only, he said former board members and other public figures in the community will be invited. Mr. Walker said we will do a public tour of the facility when it is complete. Mr. Walker said that Mr. Wittkofsky has put together a press release and if the date and time is acceptable to the board that will be sent out. Mr. Wittkofsky said it will not be a press release since it is not open to the public but the invites will go out and they will go to the media. Mr. Walker directed Mr. Wittkofsky to put out a press release with an update on the RO Plant, that we have the funding, we've awarded the contracts and that construction is about to start.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Commissioner Beer made the motion for the board to enter executive session to discuss Contract Negotiations, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) and Personnel Issues, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6), the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hosmer motioned to return to open session, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hosmer made the motion to increase Mr. Walker’s salary to \$147,000, the motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:

Chairman Jenkins announced that the next Regular Meeting would be held on October 20, 2020 at 6:00pm.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Laub made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm, the motion carried unanimously.

Ronnie Jenkins, Chairman

Rodney McCoy, Secretary

Teresa Long, CMC
Clerk to the Board

Date of Approval