

Nov 14 2017 minutes (2)

WEST MADISON UTILITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
November 14, 2017

BE IT REMEMBERED that the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the West Madison Utility District was duly convened, held and conducted on November 14, 2017, in the Kearney Park Community Center at 443 Livingston Vernon Road, Flora, MS, as follows to wit:

The President of the Board, Larry Bennett, presided and called the meeting to order.

The following members were present:

Commissioner Larry Bennett	Commissioner Louvella Lawson
Commissioner Evelyn Brown	Commissioner Letitia Reeves
Commissioner Scott Colson	

The Board President announced that the members of the Board present constituted a quorum and declared the meeting duly convened. Commissioner Brown opened the meeting with a prayer.

In RE: Approval of the November 14, 2017 Agenda:

Commissioner Colson motioned and Commissioner Brown second, to approve the Agenda for the November 14, 2017 meeting for the Board of Commissioners of the West Madison Utility District. Comm. Reeves asked that the addition of old surplus meters waiting to be approved for disposal be added to the Consent Agenda. The approval for surplus Meters was duly noted and the motion was made by Comm. Brown and second by Comm. Colson. The vote on the matter being as follows:

Commissioner Scott Colson	Aye
Commissioner Larry Bennett	Aye
Commissioner Letitia Reeves	Aye
Commissioner Louvella Lawson	Aye
Commissioner Evelyn Brown	Aye

The matter carried unanimously and the Agenda for the November 14, 2017 meeting is hereby approved.

RE: Approval of October 10, 2017 Minutes and the End of Month Report

Commissioner Scott Colson	Aye
Commissioner Larry Bennett	Aye
Commissioner Letitia Reeves	Aye
Commissioner Louvella Lawson	Aye
Commissioner Evelyn Brown	Aye

Commissioner Scott motioned and Commissioner Colson second to approve the Minutes for October 10, 2017 meeting and the EOM report. The vote on the matter being as follows:

Commissioner Scott Colson	Aye
Commissioner Larry Bennett	Aye
Commissioner Letitia Reeves	Aye
Commissioner Louvella Lawson	Aye
Commissioner Evelyn Brown	Aye

The matter carried unanimously and the Minutes for October 10, 2017 and the EOM Report was approved.

Comm. Bennett asked for motion to be made on the approval on the following Consent Items:

4. Financial Statement;
 6. Declare Brother DCP-9045CDN Copier/Printer, serial #U61875Hoj54-3219 surplus property and dispose of accordingly
 7. Acceptance of Brief Synopsis Of 10/13/2017 Madison County Wastewater Authority Meeting
 8. Acceptance of Supreme Court Case #2016-CC-00897-SCT Open Meetings Act
- Comm. Colson motioned and Comm. Brown second for approval. The vote on the matter carried unanimously.

RE: Customer Issues

Willie Ellis had two questions, one was how to become a WMUD Board Commissioner? Comm. Bennett told her the Commissioners are elected by the Board of Supervisors. (2) when a customer's bill is unusually high can arrangements be made to pay on installment? Ms. Ellis said she came into the office and asked Charity the receptionist, if she could make arrangements to pay her bill on an installment plan. Charity said she could not make any adjustments on bills. Ms. Ellis commented "you mean to say there is no type of accommodations that can be made for people who can not afford to pay all of an exceedingly high bill". "what if a customer had a bill of \$1,000.00 and came into the office to make arrangements to pay that bill because they did not have that amount of money"? Since partial payments can not be made, the water is turned off which in-turn will add a late fee and water turn-off fee to be added onto the bill. There must be a better system to try and accommodate customers other than to come to a Board meeting for bill payment approval. Comm. Bennett said that WMUD does have a "Hardship Form" and can make arrangements for "installment payments". A customer must present their request at the Board meeting and once the Board members have discussed and approved the installment payments arrangement, the customer will be notified. Ms. Ellis responded that the office personnel should know the options that are available for customers. KT said he was aware of Ms. Ellis situation but neither he nor Charity are in the position to make changes that are different from the guidelines of the Board's policy. Charity was relaying the instructions that the Board has set in place. Customers must pay their bills in-full by the 10th of each month and any other arrangement must be decided by the Board members. Comm. Bennett asked Ms. Ellis if there was any specific request that she would like to make in regards for people paying bills. Ms. Ellis said, let customers know the bill pay options. Also, if the bill is out of the norm and there is not a habit of making late payments, I think that the 20.00 late fee should be waived or decreased. Comm. Bennett said, WMUD do make agreements with customers to make installments payments and we don't charge a late fee on the installments. KT said from time to time there will be customers with high bills. Charity does not have the authority to make any agreements and his answer will always be "come to the board meeting to discuss".

Dianne Ingram had an issue with the \$20.00 late fee. Mrs. Ingram bill was \$95.20. However, her check was made out for \$95.10. Ms. Ingram said she had to pay a \$20.00 late fee because her bill was ten cents short. When she spoke to Charity via phone, Charity said she would have to pay the late fee or her water would be turned off. Mrs. Ingram said, "do you think I am going to let my water be turned off over ten cents"? I asked Charity if the ten cents could be added to my next bill and she said no. I overheard one of the Board members say "too bad she was ten cent short, she's going to pay that \$20 dollars or we are going to cut her water off". "Yes ma'am, yes sir", that is what the Board member said, so if you're going to be professional people, then you need to speak professional. You need not just talk off the top of your head" because \$20 dollars for ten cents, that is ridiculous. Comm. Lawson said at the last meeting (September) we did discuss what dollar amount would be allowed before charging the \$20.00 late fee. Comm. Bennett said it was discussed but the Board did not make a final decision and it was tabled until all Board members were present. Mrs. Ingram wanted to know how could she get a copy of the past minutes. Comm. Reeves said she would need to make a written request and Evelyn Brown the Board Secretary could give her

Nov 14 2017 minutes (2)

a copy. Mrs. Ingram stated she had been asking for minutes and this is the first time anyone had mentioned that she must put the request in writing. Also if the Board had made these rulings about late fee why was the customers not notified. Comm. Bennett said when the secretary takes minutes then distribute to Board members that does not necessarily mean all items have been approved just because they were discussed in the meeting.

The following customers were on the Agenda but were no-shows:
Phyllis & Kennedy Walker, Shetavia Campbell, Elbert King, Arthur Henderson
Jessika Lewis & Kendrick Hudson and Joyce Taylor.

While the Board meeting was in session, Joyce Taylor called in to request that her water bill be waived because her water had been off for the past month.

(It should be noted that her water was cut-off to accommodate insurance claim repairs being done on the home and her contractor turned the water off).
Ms. Taylor did not understand how she could have a bill when she did not have any usage. However, the water usage report shows that water has been used over the past month. Comm. Bennett explained that customers whose water had not been turned off for non-payment would still be charged the minimum rate of \$45.00.

RE: Wavering of Late Fee

Comm. Bennett opened the floor up to discuss when and if a customer did not pay their bill in full, what amount of bill balance would be allowed before the \$20.00 late fee was applied to the customer bill. Further discussion was made between the Commissioners, however, there was no agreement on a dollar amount and it would be tabled until next meeting. Comm. Lawson stated that if a customer had made a payment on a bill then that cannot be considered a late payment but it is a partial payment and should not be given a late fee. Comm. Lawson stated that she had information on Lake Lorman policy and would bring it to the next meeting. Comm. Brown commented that to charge customers a \$20.00 late fee for anything under a dollar was total ridiculous. Comm. Reeves then responded that in her work, (16 Section) when people only pay part of their payment, the remainder is still considered delinquent and as with 16th Section leases, it still allows for foreclosure. Comm. Reeves also stated that Bear Creek had advised her that they charged late fees if anyone does not pay their balance in full. Comm. Brown interjected that real estate contracts are different than utilities agreements. Comm. Bennett said more information will be needed before finalizing.

RE: Operators Report

1. KT report pointed out that there were no violation to report for water or the wastewater systems both were in compliance.
2. Unfortunately, there has been an increase of grease solidifying in the pipes due to the weather turning cold. This in-turn has caused an increase in the amount of times the Mr. Collier has had to come out and flush the drainage pipe system. During the winter months this will be an ongoing issue that can not be traced to anyone in particular.
3. The water loss is way down and there is no particular reason for the dramatic decrease in water loss. Although a lot of small water leaks have been repaired, that does not equate to the large amount of water that has stopped being used. KT said he will continue to try and locate where the large amount of usage was and where it is going to. Comm. Reeves asked if meters could be put in out-lying areas to monitor how much water is being pumped.
4. Grinder Station has been installed and inspected by Madison County and Entergy. Unfortunately, Entergy has not turned on the power to the pump and could not say exactly when they would do so. The dilemma is all of this stuff is installed and there is no power to the station is still going thru our system free-flow. He

Nov 14 2017 minutes (2)

in stalled a back flow. If a big rain should, come it will hit the back flow and can't come back into the house. The water from Carolyn's house then instead of continuing on into the system goes into the basin. After the rain stops since there is no power it will fill up the basin if there would was power to the system and going into our system free flow it will flow out of the basin. If there was power to the basin it would only pump when it rains. Should it stay that way do you want the pump to run all the time. The septic tank was put in to catch any sediment from the pump. He is recommending to leave the pump as is and only use power when it is needed.

5. KT introduce Mr. John Jordan to the Board because his issue is related to flushing. Thru no fault of his, the water going into his home is of poor quality. Mr. Jordan recently built a new home at 721 Kearney Park Road. Mr. Jordan is at the end of a long large line of about 14,000 gallons of water in the line before it gets to his house. He uses about 3,000 gallons per month. What this means is his water is old and stagnat before it gets to him. so KT had to put in a flush hydrant and let it run for about a week. The problem is we have to do this two or three times a week which is more than we are comfortable with. This is the only way to keep it flushed and be able to give him good quality water. Comm. Bennett asked is there a way to run another line to his house? KT said yes, but the line would have to go thru customers property that lived in the woodlands. The line would require a bore and possible easment rights to run the line. The next closet place is Simmons Church. we would have to cross the parking lot to run the line. The easiet would be to come from the woodlands. Comm. Bennett said we need to find out what it will take; and KT said he would continue to work on it and would let him know something within the next week.

6. KT requested that the Board specify how much a person needs to pay on the bill after the hardship agreement has been approved. There is no specific time line to pay off a back bill. Further investigation will need to take place before a price can be decided.

7. Kearny Park Estate had put up a depost for 138 Renfro. KT wanted to make sure he was understanding WMUD policy that each house must have a deposit (water-turn-on-fee) before service can be made to that house. He was asking this question because a landlord had put up a deposit for one house and wanted to use that same deposit for another house. Comm. Bennett stated that each house must have a deposit because deposits are non-refundable.

RE: Firesafe Filing Cabinets

Comm. Reeves made a request to purchase firesafe filing cabinets at a price of \$6,000 plus dollars. The cabinets would be used for pertinet files that must be kept indefinitely. Some files that are in the Community Center Closets would have to go into files and the older files will be put into boxes. Comm. Reeves said she has already scanned many documents and has at eight more boxes of files that need to be filed at her office at West Madison School Distrist. Comm. Brown and Comm. Lawson gave objections to having to pay such a high price for filing cabinets. One of the customers reminded her that WMUD recently made an issue about cutting cost and now we want to spend a large amount on fire proof cabinets. Comm. Bennett asked for a motion to be made which was made by Comm Reeves and second by Comm. Colson. The vote was as follows:

Comm. Reeves and Comm. Colson	voted Aye
Comm. Brown and Comm Lawson	voted Nay
Comm. Bennet was the tie breaker	voted Aye

the matter passed with a quorum vote of three (3) to two (2).

RE: Join MS Surplus Property

This was already discussed in a previous meeting that since it cost nothing to join we should join. Comm. Reeves motion and Comm. Scott second. The vote on

the matter carried unanimously.

RE: Fire Hydrants

KT suggested removing several fire hydrants that were old and not near any buildings being used over on Hunt Street. He suggested that someone could possibly run a hose to these hydrants and get free water. Comm. Reeves said the hydrants had been in that location since the 1940's, and did not work. Comm. Colson wanted to know the cost of having to remove the fire hydrants. KT gave an estimate of about \$200.00. Comm. Bennett said for KT to get an idea what it would cost just to put a lock on the hydrants versus taking them out. Putting a lock on the hydrants could signify if the hydrants are being used because the locks would be broken off, if someone had tampered with the hydrant. This matter will be tabled until KT can give more information about cost of removable.

RE: Community Center

Comm. Colson had received a sticky note stating the Community Center was not clean. In turn, Comm. Lawson was notified about the building not being clean and about the trash can and trash being scattered in back of the building. Comm. Lawson contacted Kenny King to confirm if his clean up duties included cleaning up in back of the Community Center. Mr. King said no that was not part of his agreement. An event was held on 11/9 while Comm. Lawson was not in town. Therefore, on 11/10, Comm. Brown went over to see if the Community Center needed cleaning which it did not. On Monday 11/11, she went into the Community and spoke to the Director asking if there was any issue with the building being dirty that morning. There were no issues to report. The following concerns were discussed at the meeting:

- Comm. Lawson reiterated that cleaning outside of building was not her responsibility and she had her brother to come help her pick up the trash and bring the trash cans back on the front of the building. Booking and taking the payments for the Community Center was her responsibility. Comm. Bennett said Tony Battle was suppose to pick-up garbage.
- Marie Green reported that Monday thru Friday the Senior Citizens were responsible for cleaning. On Monday, when they return, they should not have to come in and clean the building.
- No toilet paper, hand soap, paper towels, mops or brooms were not found when Comm. Brown inspected the building on 11/10.
- Anyone renting the building for an event should pay the non-deposit fee of \$75.00 within five days. If not paid, the date would be cancelled.
- Anyone using the building for a repass would be responsible for cleaning the building. There are no exceptions for anyone to rent the building without a deposit.
- Comm. Bennett and Comm. Colson did not understand about community customers using the building for repasses; they were not aware that this was being done for the community. It was explained to them that for years paying WMUD customers who died, family members would reserve the building for family and friends to meet and have a meal after the funeral. Comm. Bennett said he wanted to go on record that anyone using the building for a repast and did not clean, then they can not use the building. Comm. Colson said he had a problem since there was no formal voting on letting the community use it for the repass.
- Comm. Brown explained that the repasses are held on a Saturday afternoon only if the building is vacant. The repast event usually last 2 to 3 hours. The problem arise when there is an event on a Sunday night. The building may not be available for clean-up before 9 or 10 p.m. that night. There is no cleaning company that will come out on a Sunday night to clean a building.
- When Dorothy Bennet was cleaning the building there were no issue with the building being clean each day.

Nov 14 2017 minutes (2)

- Board commissioners discussed approved and voted that Dorothy Bennett would be asked if she would like to clean the building after each event.
- Purchase new curtains for the Community Center. Comm. Colson said that had been approved already and one of the Board members needed to go purchase them.
- Some one had rented the building in October left a \$100.00 for an event but did not pay the balance. Comm. Bennett said in the future all events must be paid in full before the event. This matter will be discussed further.
- Closet and locks. The Board need to have a place to lock files. The senior citizens may have to change closets with WMUD.

RE: Minutes

Mrs. Willie Ellis has made a request to receive minutes from January thru November 2017.

OLD BUSINESS:

Comm. Lawson wanted to know if KT was paying rent for using WMUD office. In July when the office was closed it was done so to save money on telephone electric and internet service as well as saving money on a salary for the one employee (this was a cost-cutting decision).

Comm. Bennett explained that we had contracted him to do our billing for \$1,500.00 per month. He said the Board had never said the office would be closing. Comm. Brown disagreed and said if the Board recalled that KT taking over the billing aspect would be reviewed in six months. Also, closing of the office was done without putting any specific plan of operations on paper. KT said, to ease the transaction of not having an open office, he would have someone to be in the office only during the 10th of the month and at cut-off time to take payments.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business to discuss. Comm. Colson motioned meeting be adjourn and Comm. Brown second.