

WEST MADISON UTILITY DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING JULY 14, 2020

that the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the West Madison Utility District was duly convened, held and conducted on July 14, 2020 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

Absent: Commissioner Valencia Buggs

Commissioner Letitia Reeves

Commissioner Scott Colson

Commissioner Evelyn Brown

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.

**RE: Approval of the July 14, 2020 Agenda**

Commissioner Colson motioned and Commissioner Brown second to approve the Agenda for the West Madison Utility District. The vote on the matter being as follows:

Commissioner Scott Colson Aye

Commissioner Larry Bennett Aye

Commissioner Letitia Reeves Aye

Commissioner Evelyn Brown Aye

The matter carried unanimously and the Agenda for the July 14, 2020 meeting is hereby approved.

**RE: Approval of Agenda Consent Items**

Commissioner Colson motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, Commissioner Brown second the motion. Consent Items listed as follows:

4. Acknowledgement and Acceptance of EOM RVS Report for June , 2020

5. Acknowledge and Acceptance of May 31, 2020 Financial Report

6. Acceptance and Approval of the June 9, 2020 Minutes

End of Consent Agenda Items

President Bennett asked for a motion to approve the consent items. Commissioner Colson motioned to accept and Commissioner Brown second. The vote on the matter being as follows:

Commissioner Scott Colson Aye

Commissioner Larry Bennett Aye

Commissioner Letitia Reeves Aye

Commissioner Evelyn Brown Aye

The matter carried unanimously.

**RE: Osborne Communications, LLC - Internet Services Presentation**

Mike Osborne and his son, Michael Osborne, provide Wi-Fi internet services to rural areas and small towns. Commissioner Colson had contacted them and requested that they come and make a presentation to the WMUD Board regarding the services they could provide. Mike Osborne stated that if they could use WMUD's elevated water tank to place their equipment, Wi-Fi would be transmitted through radio signals from their Canton tower. Customers using the services would have a small radio attached to their house and the equipment installed on top of the water tank would send out the Wi-Fi signal to those receivers. The

following Q and A occurred during the presentation.

Q. Is the equipment similar to those on a cellular tower?

A. No. The signals come from radio equipment air waves.

Q. Are there any satellite signals involved?

A. There is a small ground satellite box which houses the switch equipment.

Q. What are the typical monthly charges for a customer?

A. Monthly cost would be from \$50.00 to 100.00 per month depending on the speed the customer needs. There is no cap on data usage and they don't throttle the speed.

Q. Where would the equipment be located?

A. The radio equipment would be located on top of the elevated water tank.

Q. Would there be any cost to West Madison Utility to install the equipment?

A. Osborne Communications would be responsible for all installation and equipment costs.

Q. Does the weather usually affect service?

A. No, not unless lightning is involved.

Q. What is being offered to WMUD for Osborne Communications to use the elevated water tank?

A. Typically our site owners will use the internet service to pass their traffic and controller system for the utilities.

Q. Can you handle the Scada system that is used for the well to communicate with the elevated water tank?

A. We have the Scada system along with the Wi-Fi and TYP. IF WMUD allows Osborne Communications use of the elevated water tank to put their equipment, in exchange there will be no change to WMUD for its telephone, wireless and SCADA service which currently costs WMUD at least \$450.00 per month. It would take about 3 to 4 weeks to install and finalize the work.

Commissioner Bennett said the next step would be for Osborne Communications to draw up a contract with all requirements and specifications and present it to the Board. The Board will then have it reviewed by our lawyer; after his review we would contact them until everyone was in agreement regarding the terms and conditions within the contract. Therefore, at this time a motion will be made to move forward with the project of you presenting a contract to the Board. Commissioner Colson motioned and Commissioner Reeves second. The vote on the matter carried unanimously.

#### **RE: Customer's Concerns and Issues**

- 1) Deputy Paul Cox, 114 Hidden Lake Rd, was there to inquire about putting a direct water line to his home. Currently his water line is T'd in with his neighbor's water line which causes him to have very low water pressure. Mr. Cox lives in the Hidden Lake area and it would take about 400 feet of pipe to reach his house from the main water line. To bore the pipe, permission would have to be received from his neighbor to allow WMUD to go under a gravel driveway. This would be the most cost effective method to bring a 2 inch line to his house. Mr. Cox's bill for installing this line would be an estimate of \$1,700.00. If WMUD cannot bore under the neighbor's driveway then the cost would go



up. Unfortunately, WMUD would have to share some of the cost because the pipe should never have been T'd in the first place when it was installed by WMUD years ago. KT will look into the work project and cost and let Mr. Cox know what can be done and the cost.

- 2) Carolyn Roberts was asked to return to the Board meeting in July so the Board could continue working on resolving the issue of raw sewage flowing out of manhole #33 into a private lake that she owns. Commissioner Bennett asked her if there had been any more over flows since the Board met with her in June. Ms. Roberts said no and that could be due to the work on sewer lines located on Livingston Vernon Rd. Commissioner Bennett turned the floor over to Morgan Sims, the Engineer.

Mr. Sims said he and KT had met to discuss some possible short term solutions: a) there is a large junction box on at Hickory and Pecan Street. The box is filled with a lot of settlement and debris which would cause water flow blockage. This box should be cleaned out and it could act as a temporary storage capacity in the system; b. raise manhole #33 which is located at the intersection of St. Charles and Pine Street. Manhole #33 is only 18 inches deep. There are two other manholes adjacent to #33 and they could also be raised. Commissioner Bennett asked Mr. Sims if he knew the elevation on the manholes and how much height increase would affect the customers in the area. Mr. Sims said he did not know. A survey breakdown with a few other steps would have to be done before he could estimate the price. Commissioner Colson wanted to know what will raising the manholes do hydraulically when the elevation goes down stream at a manhole that is only 18 inches. Mr. Sims said that was one of his main concerns also. The main issue is storm water coming into WMUD system. When heavy rain enters into the system #33 is very shallow and fills up quickly and this is what causing the sewer overflow. If you go to the manhole located on Livingston Vernon it is a lot deeper. Commissioner Colson wanted to clarify why we were raising the manhole and asked if it was to keep ground water from getting in. Mr. Sims said no, it was to keep sewer from coming out. Ground water is coming into the system from all over because the system is old. Mr. Sims and the Board reviewed a map diagram which shows the layout of manholes in the infected area. In June, after the Board meeting was adjourned the Board members went over to see manhole #33 which is alongside of the Roberts' lake. The joint seals on the pipes are so old that there is seepage coming into system. Therefore, you get ground water and storm water entering into the system. Commissioner Bennett said we need to go back and find where the seepage is coming in. Mr. Sims said that could be done but it is not a short term solution that can help immediately to eliminate the problem. Commissioner Bennett said he was afraid that raising the manhole two or three feet would cause a back-up into Ms. Roberts' house and that is something we don't want to have happen again. Mr. Sims said manhole #35 is quite deep so any manholes that we raised could have a check valve put on it. Going back, we should definitely do step #1 of cleaning out the large junction box. Commissioner Reeves wanted to know how much it would cost? Mr. Sims could not give a definite price at this time.

Ms. Roberts said, so what the Board is saying she would have to wait once again and see if what is being proposed will actually work before she can have her lake repaired! "What you all are being more concerned about is how this will impact the community, but what about me? If I have to wait then the winter months will be here and that means I will have to wait another year to have the lake fixed. I'm trying to have it fixed while the dry season is here. You all have to understand, people in the community are blaming me for the sewer smell. They have called the health department and the news people on me for a problem that is not mine, but the problem is West Madison Utility. So now you all are saying, 'first you have to clean something out, then wait to see if that will work; next if you raise the manhole it may cause problems down the line', so I've got to wait again to see if something will benefit the community. Is that what you all are saying?" Commissioner Reeves responded by saying "no, what we are saying is that first we must clean the pit out,



then Morgan will have to run the numbers to see if raising the manhole will work.” Ms. Roberts asked if there was any way we could move the sewer line. Commissioner Reeves said “oh no, you are talking hundreds of thousands of dollars that we just don’t have. WMUD doesn’t have that kind of money.” Ms. Roberts said she understand and that she, “also don’t have that kind of money” to keep dealing with what she is dealing with. “For many years I have been coming to the Board asking for help. I know this is a new Board but something must be done. I understand all that you all are saying about the money, but you mean to tell me that just by raising the sewer it would cause a lot more problems? I don’t understand how.” Commissioner Bennett explained that by raising the manhole it will raise the fluid level in the system.

Morgan said surveys must be done to get a true and accurate picture of what it would take resource wise, project time line and labor cost. Commissioner Colson made a motion that asap the work begin on cleaning out the pit on Hickory and Pine Streets. Commissioner Reeves second the motion. Vote on the matter carried unanimously. The Board agreed that the next steps should be: a) finding all the manholes to see if it could be determined where the storm water was coming into the system ; b) contact the Mississippi Rural Water Association and ask for assistance to smoke test the sewer lines; and c) contact Board of Supervisor to assist with repairs. Commissioner Bennett said we would let Ms. Roberts know when the clean out of the pit will start, then follow up with her regarding raising manhole or lowering the pipes (#33 & #34).

#### **RE: Engineer’s Report**

The SRF project is moving a bit slower than what he would like to see. One thing that happened is the pipes somehow got changed to foreign made material. Under the SRF regulations all materials must be materials made in the U.S. Since some of the pipes were produced from outside of the U.S., they had to be removed and the U.S. material installed. Even though there has been a lot of rain it did not stop them from work in replacing the pipes. The work is being bonded under J. Beardon Construction and J. Beardon is sending Morgan the notices for pay requests. As soon as Morgan found out about the foreign made pipes, he contacted J. Beardon and told him about the materials not meeting required standards. J. Beardon responded and said he did not know about the switch in the pipes. Morgan stated that before payment is recommended, Morgan’s inspector will need to do a visual inspection with the pipes saying domestic. Commissioner Scott wanted to know when was he going to get money to pay the invoices. There is paperwork in the office where the insurance company has signed off on it.

Commissioner Bennett wanted to know how soon could the Board have paperwork back from him that will show some action the Board can take? In other words, we don’t want to be sitting here a month from now getting a status report on how we are coming along getting this information. If we could get an email two weeks from now that will give us some time to review and get a plan together. Morgan said it won’t be him but someone else from his office would go out there and he will need someone from KT’s office to be with the person to help show locations of the manholes. The Board should have something in about one week. Morgan stated since the Field Representative is working with the project six days a week, 8 plus hours a day should he be paid out of the SRF funding? Commissioner Colson said to his understanding the 50K that we paid out of pocket is figured in the loan and we should get it back from SRF. Morgan said when you see an invoice to be signed it will also have a contractor’s invoice and the engineer’s invoice as well. Morgan gave an outline which showed work that can be done. Morgan said any manhole that does not have a cover then KT would need to replace the cover. Commissioner Bennett said KT already have full authorization to replace any manhole cover.

Morgan suggested that any work that is done on the elevated water tank should be specified in the contract especially any materials that will be installed on top. A structural engineer should sign-off on any materials that is to be added on the tower.

**RE: Operator's Report**

Currently there are no compliance issues to report with either the State Health Department or MDEQ. All water samples submitted to the Health Department passed the bacteriological standards

As Morgan stated we have been conferring with one another to find resolution for sewer issues on manholes #33, 34, 35. The annual Health Department inspection will occur on July 23, 2020.

Account #188 J.P. Barrs in-care-of- Jacqueline Barrs. Both of these tenants are deceased and the niece wants to have the water put in her name. KT said to his knowledge we don't have a protocol for a niece to transfer the water into her name but we do have an heirs policy. Commissioner Colson wanted to know if the house was in her name? KT said he did not know and to his knowledge she just wanted to put the water in her name (Katina Palmer). She will not be moving into the house. Commissioner Bennett said if we allow this then we would need to change our policy stating that heirs other than parents and children could put the water in their name or we could make this a one time exception. If this is going to be a one time exception then a motion will need to be made. Scott Colson made a motion for this one time change, to let her change the water bill into her name with the contingency that there are no children laying claim to the property. Commissioner Reeves second. The matter was voted on unanimously by Board members. K. T. was reminded that the niece will need to fill out a water user's agreement for this property.

740 Harris Road. Suzuki Hucks supposedly moved out and left owing us \$1,200.00. Then a lady named Harmony Riley moved in and the water was cut off when she would not pay the bill, which was about \$1,300.00. It turns out that Harmony Riley is Suzuki Hucks' daughter and she never moved out of the house. K. T. stated that he doesn't know how they are still living in the house without water.

The Board had approved about 100 curb stops for the SRF project. So far there has been 60 ordered and that may be all that we need.

Mrs. Richardson at 115 Norris St. called Henry a handy man to work on her plumbing. Henry went out and disconnected the service at 117 and 119 Norris as they are all tied in together. WMUD will have to put this back together. Henry is not a licensed plumber and he is not going to repair the pipe. Therefore it is on WMUD to repair it.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

Commissioner Bennett stated that if there was no other business a motion should be made to adjourn. Commissioner Colson motioned and Commissioner Reeves second for meeting to be adjourn. All Board members voted "aye" and the meeting was adjourned.