

July 18 minutes (3)  
WEST MADISON UTILITY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
July 18, 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 July 18, 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:

Attendees:

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

K. T. Newman  
David Bishop  
Jim Herring  
Alan Crosswhite  
Randy Tarnish

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 July 18, 2017 Agenda:

Commissioner Brown motioned and Commissioner Colson second, to approve the Agenda for the July 18, 2017 meeting for the Board of Commissioners of the West Madison Utility District. The vote on the matter being as follows:

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

The matter carried unanimously and the Agenda for the July 18, 2017 meeting is hereby approved.

Re: Approval of June 15, 2017 Minutes

Commissioner Brown motioned and Commissioner Colson second to approve the Minutes for June 15, 2017 meeting. The vote on the matter being as follows:

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

The matter carried unanimously and the Minutes for June 15, 2017 is hereby approved.

Re: David Bishop

David Bishop the 4th District Board of Supervisor's representative was an invited guest by the customers of WMUD. Mr. Bishop gave a summary of his commitment to the community, i.e., clean water, repairing of sewer system and better service to the WMUD area. Mr. Bishop reiterated that he supported the 5 Board of Commissioners members to provide a first rate water and sewer system. He reminded the costumers that "growing pains" and "hard decisions" must be made sometimes to achieve progress. Mr. Bishop reaffirmed that he wanted to make sure everyones voice is being heard and that his promise

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didn't stop now that the campaign was over.

The following question and answers were asked during Mr. Bishop speaking session:

Q: A customer, Carolyn Singleton asked why the Board of Commissioners did not reflect a true representation of the African-American majority that lived in the area?

A: Mr. Bishop said he supported the diverse make-up of the strong representatives for the Board of Commissioners.

Q: Who appointed these (3) new Board commissioners?

A: David Bishop said he appointed them. They were recommended by others.

Q: After Rachel Brown was laid off why are there \$100 and \$200 water bills?

A: KT Newman will be looking into that.

Q: Why is it that everyone on the board does not pay water and sewer?

A: Because of growth in the area he wanted to get representation from the different areas in the community. Not all WMUD customers have a sewer system.

Re: Consent Items Approval

Item #5 Acceptance of EOM RVS Reports for June, 2017

Item #6 Acceptance of EOM Financials for June 2017

Commissioner Brown motioned and Commissioner Reeves second that the two items be approved and accepted. The vote on the matter carried unanimously.

Re: Presentation by Commissioner Larry Bennett

President Bennett gave a synopsis of the 2016/2017 business and work activities that have occurred at WMUD.

- WMUD has maintained financial footing to prevent well from breaking down
- Contracted KT Newman who maintains the well, lagoon, water and sewer systems are functioning correctly. Mr. Newman was named one of the top 3 Utility Maintenance Operators in the state.
- WMUD has retained the services of Breazeale, Saunders & O'Neil CPA Firm
- Engineering Services
  - provided maps of the sewer layout system
  - provided resolution to overflow of rain water
  - provided input for diesel by-pass pump and aerator for Lagoon which are now installed and working very efficiently at the Lagoon.
- Retained Jim Herring Attorney at Law
  - well connected and established with water utilities in MS
- Replace manhole covers at a cost of \$400. each (note that the steel manhole covers usually cost \$1,200 each but Utility Contractors were able to replace the steel covers with concrete covers.

Some cost cutting measures WMUD have taken over the past one and a half year:

- Eliminate garbage dumpster cost
- Utility Contractor rates was lowered by \$2,500.00 per month
- Eliminate Office Manager position
- Changed postage to bulk rates
- These changes produce a \$50,000.00 in savings to WMUD

Reasons why we made the decision to increase the rates are:

- In 1940 when the area was developed galvanized pipes were used we are committed to replacing these pipes at a cost of \$390,000.00
- Update the 2 pipes that goes into the Lagoon by installing a new bigger and more efficient "one" pipe
- The last inspection on the Water Tower failed, therefore a cost of \$189,000. is needed to bring the Water Tower up to required

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- standards
- Doors to the Community Center won't lock properly. The doors will need to be changed because they can not be repaired. Door replacement will cost \$4,000.00.
- When heavy rains occur water is entering in at the bottom of foundation of the Community Center and West Madison Office
- The Big Black River is eroding which is causing it to become wider. The the Lagoon over the next 5 to 10 years will be spilling into the Big Black. EPA has said the Lagoon cannot dump sewer waste into the river.
- The seriousness of this has prompted Engineering Services to contact the Core of Engineers to see if they can assist in this issue.
- When ever the electric power goes out in the area WMUD must borrow a generator from Madison County to keep the well running properly. WMUD will be looking to purchase a back-up generator which will cost \$56,000.00. It is costly to have an electrician come out each time to hook-up the borrowed generator to the well.

Re: Alan Crosswhite

Mr. Crosswhite from MS Rural Water Assoc. stated that WMUD water rates had not been increased since 2009. Unfortunately, WMUD current rates were no longer able to sustain the company for growth and repairs. The new rates were implemented after a rate study was done which showed what it would take to maintain the company and provide clean water, sewer repairs and other daily operational maintainace. Under the old rates WMUD cannot qualify for the much needed Grants to help correct water tower and etc.

Re: Customer's Issues

Larry Bennett open the floor up to the customers that had notified WMUD about being on the Agenda. The following customers opted not to speak and/or were a no-show. The numbers are corresponding as shown on Agenda.

Name	Account #	Name	Account#
1. Henry Green	336	30. Charles Thompson	288
2. Carolyn Robinson	441	31. Lee Ethel Thompson	446
3. Linda Spencer	449	32. Cassandra Jones	302
4. Sharon Ross	42	34. Anita Haymer	341
5. Ethel Hudson	481	35. James Wilson	345
6. Eddie Jones	413	36. Shetavia Campbell	130
7. Liza Thompson	41	39. Ethel J Thompson	313
8. Rosie King	442	41. Elma Cable	316
9. Jessica Lewis	945	44. Margaret Hopson	218
11. Theodore/Angela ollie	695	45. Shaundell Bracey	467
13. James/Mary McField	444	46. Sonya Champion	103
14. Jeannette Morgan	548	47. Laquita Carson	915
15. Ricky /Rena Jordan	267	48. Krystal Rasnick	231
18. JW Thomas	415	49. Wesley Hollins	345
18. John Thornton	369		
19. Maranda McDaniel	245		
20. Cordelll Spires	475		
21. M. Spicer	105		
22. Jack Jefferson	325		
25. Nannie Ealey	381		
26. Jamie Hardin	248		
27. Rosie Robinson	641		

The following customers voiced their concerns. The numbers are corresponding as shown on Agenda:

Q. #10, Nola white, (Carolyn Singleton spoke on her behalf). Ms. Singleton stated

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that she had worked at Bear Creek and that the water meters are not calibrated correctly and there is no accurate way to calculate sewer usage. Also 4 years ago WMUD received Grant money to replace meters. What happened to that money?

A. WMUD is currently in the process of replacing old meters. The grant money is being used to purchase the new meters.

Q. When water bills go way up, how does WMUD handle this situation?

A. First RVS system will flag any unusually high bill for a reread. Secondly if there appears to be a problem with the meter it will be replaced and lastly, if the meter is working correctly then the customer will be notified that they may have a water leak and the customer should have a plumber check for leaks on their property.

Q. Why did some customer's water bill go up \$300 and \$400.

A. Anyone who had an excessively high bill should contact the office and Utility Contractors will look into the matter.

Q. #12, Walter McField/Kay Retha McField. Why are the rates still going up if you have just recently cut \$50K from the budget?

A. The amount of water going thru the meter and sewer is greater than the revenue that is needed to provide and maintain the water and sewer system. The Rural Water Association recommended that WMUD do a rate increase in order to stay

viable  
with the growing needs of the community.

Q. #16, Rick Jensen, The water rates are steadily increasing is there a missuse of funds? Maybe the state auditor should come in and do an audit. The state Auditors will report to the State Attorney their findings. Would the rates go down?

A. Comm. Bennett said there is no answer at this time for rate adjustments. Customers who have pools or sprinkle water systems should consider getting a second water meter.

Q. #17, Ora Ephfrom, Does WMUD have some one to read the meters if there is standing water covering the meter? How can it be read?

A. The maintainance personnel have hand pumps that remove the water out of the hole.

Q. #22, Jack Jefferson, When are the water rates going to go down? Why don't customers

get notices when there is work being done on the lagoon?

A. Currently there is no discussion for reducing the rates. Notices are given out to customers if there is a planned interruption work schedule for the Lagoon. However, when there is emergency work being done the customers may not be notified

immediately if the work will only be for a few hours.

Q. #23, Cynthia Cage, Will I have to pay my bill if the charges have double?

A. If there is no error on the billing then you will be expected to pay your bill.

Q. #24, Melissa Ealey, In July I have less water usage in June but my bill is a lot higher. Why is there a rate increase and how was it decided?

A. The rates were done by MS Rural Water Association. Rates will assist WMUD in providing good quality drinking water and help with the cost of replacing galvanized pipe and other repairs in the community.

Q. #28, Danielle Robinson, what is WMUD doing to stop rain from causing sewer back-ups?

A. Rain water should go down the drain not the sewer line. There may be an issue with the how the developer did the sewer and drain system.

Q. #29, Ellen Armstrong, why can't there be 7 instead of 5 Board of Commissioners?

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A. Mr. Bishop said that it is a statutory law, MS Code 1972, that dictates the number.

Q. #32 Cassandra Jones, what is the general percentage of water usage for a single person? There are a lot of elderly people on fixed income in the area what can be done to change their bills?

A. Randy Tarnish said generally a single person would use about 65 gallons of water per day however, it could be more or less. Comm. Bennett explained that WMUD does not have a customer assistant program and he could not recommend any program or agency that was available in the Jackson area.

Q. So older people cannot pay their bills? Comm. Bennett explained how the rates were set to help maintain the best quality of service for the community. So WMUD does not care just as long as the water board is taken care of. Upon making this statement the meeting became loud and unruly. Therefore, Comm. Bennett said he would have to close the meeting to maintain order.

Q. #33, Crystal Fuqua, Who can say what is the results of reread meters?

A. Utility Contractor would be able to answer questions about reread meters.

Q. #37, Roosevelt Brown, We are dissatisfied and not happy. The Board and the community should be able to come up with a solution to resolve the high rates that have been placed on the area.

Q. #38 Sadie Heard, stated to cut cost you closed the office. Now the customers cannot get any answers other than to leave a phone message. We are demanding that the office be reopened.

A. KT has placed an employee in the office from 8 to 5 each day. Ms. Heard went on to say that the Board has not heard the last of this!

Q. #40 Brenda Cole, stated that her water bill was \$121.90 and it was just her and her two small sons. Why was her bill so high. She asked Mr. Bishop to please get a president on the Board that can work with the community. Also, the rates had been raised too much \$20 plus \$5.00 why couldn't the rates been raised a little at a time?

A. Mr. Bishop stated the Board is not trying to hurt the community. He said to please give the Board an opportunity to try and serve the community. Rural Rura Water set the rates.

Q. #42, Roderick Spencer, commented that a lot of people voted for a change but you don't have to have all of the changes at one time.

Q. #43, Tony T. Jones, commented that his June and July bill was less than his previous bills but they were higher.

A. Please contact KT and he will follow up with you.

President Bennett apologized to the customers for getting flustered with the many out burst that the community was venting about.

Re: Executive Session

Re: Operator Report

Comm. Reeves motioned the Operators Report be accepted as read and Comm. Brown second.

The matter carried unanimously.

Re: Community Center Doors

Comm Bennett asked for a motion to have the community center doors replace now that there was funds from the community center bookings. Comm. Brown motioned and Comm. Reeves second to have the doors replaced at a cost of no more than \$4,500.

The matter carried unanimously.

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Re: Community Center Booking

It was discussed and decided that the booking for the Community Center will be handled by Louvella Lawson instead of Dorothy Bennett. Comm. Colson motioned and Comm. Brown second. The vote on the matter was,  
Scott Colson Aye  
Louvella Lawson Aye  
Evelyn Brown Aye  
Commissioners Bennett and Reeves did not place a vote

OLD BUSINESS: None to discuss

NEW BUSINESS: None to discuss

Comm. Reeves motioned and Comm. Brown second that meeting be adjourned

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Larry Bennett, President

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Evelyn Brown, Secretary