



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS  
407 W. Broad Street, Level 2,  
Greenville, South Carolina  
April 4, 2023  
8:15 a.m.**

## **GreenvilleWater**

Commissioners of Public Works in attendance:

Chairman Phillip A. Kilgore, Vice-Chairman James W. Bannister, Debra M. Sofield, Wil Brasington (via phone), and Mayor Knox H. White. A quorum was present.

Greenville Water Senior Staff in attendance:

Interim Chief Executive Officer Jeff Boss, Chief Financial Officer Phil Robey, Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Bob Schmidt, Director of Operational Technical Services Dr. Jane Arrington, Director of Engineering Mark Hattendorf, Director of Information Technology Brad Treas, Director of Business Services Steve Miller, Director of Human Resources Lisa Bryant, Assistant Director of Water Resources Elizabeth Pierczynski, Controller Brian Bearfield, Manager of Facilities and Maintenance Allen White, Internal Auditor Jacob Polson, and attorney Adam Bach.

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The Regular Meeting of the Commissioners of Public Works was called to order at 8:15 a.m. by Chairman Kilgore.

### **1. WELCOME**

Chairman Kilgore congratulated Jeff Boss on taking the role of Interim Chief Executive Officer for Greenville Water and thanked Mr. Boss for accepting the responsibility. Mr. Boss expressed appreciation for the opportunity.

### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comments were presented.

### **3. CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Kilgore asked for questions pertaining to the consent agenda items. There being none, he called for approval of the items of the Consent Agenda which were the meeting minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting March 7, 2023, the Water Resources Report, the Finance Update, New Development, and New Annexations. Commissioner Brasington moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to approve the items of the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

### **4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Chairman Kilgore invited Legislative Liaison Bob Knight to provide a legislative update. Mr. Knight announced South Carolina's Comptroller General resigned. Richard Eckstrom held the position for 20 years up until his resignation.

Mr. Knight shared there is hope the additional ARPA funds allocated to water and sewer given to the Rural Infrastructure Authority should be distributed soon. South Carolina is last in the nation to distribute these funds.

A trespass bill was created for public water utility lands, which is to be introduced to the Legislators on 4/4/2023. Mr. Knight left a copy with Greenville Water Attorney Adam Bach to review. The bill proposes to raise the fines for trespassing on public utility land. The hope is to get the bill before the Judiciary Committee for discussion before the legislative session ends in May. The increase in fines is to discourage persistent trespassers.

## **5. PROPOSED WATER BILL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Chairman Kilgore called on Director of Business Services Steve Miller to talk about a proposed water bill assistance program. Commissioner Sofield thanked Mr. Miller for the work put into development of the program.

The formation of the program arises from the 2023 Strategic Plan goals. The purpose of the program is to assist customers who are experiencing financial hardship. A couple of the benefits will be reduced delinquency and reduced disconnections for non-payment. Funds collected will be applied to water and sewer charges only and will support existing community assistance resources.

The proposed funding sources will simply be round-up and donation. Donations may be one-time or recurring from customers, businesses, and employees with options to give through Greenville Water's website, paper form, by phone, and in-person. Mr. Miller reviewed the options for the high-level program structure and the administration of funds, explaining any participants would need to complete an application and the funds would be applied directly to the customer account.

In summary, the program is in the early stages of design, but it will be modeled after existing programs in South Carolina. Funding will be by round-up and donations, utilizing an existing partner agency with funds being applied directly to customer accounts. The program development next steps include response to Commission feedback, development of process documentation, agency agreements, legal review and advice, program branding and an update to the Commission for approval. The goal is to go-live in the Fall/Winter of 2023.

Chairman Kilgore asked Mr. Miller to keep him updated on the progress of the program development as he was extremely interested in the proposal.

## **6. CURRENT AND FUTURE GRANTS**

Chairman Kilgore invited Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Bob Schmidt to present information on current and future grants. Dr. Schmidt reviewed awards for the Federal fiscal year of 2023, including pending projects. The Fiscal Year 2024 community project funding requests include the 60-inch Transmission Main Phase 2 and a Joint Fire Management Program where Greenville Water has teamed with the South Carolina Forestry Commission, the North Carolina Forestry Commission, The Nature Conservancy, and the Southern Blue Ridge Fire Learning Network. Other proposed grant applications in process include:

- Black Bear Study
- Fish Passage



- Brook Trout Translocation
- Multiple Forestry Collaborative projects
- Cybersecurity Projects

An important set of potential projects under consideration with the SC-DHEC (EPA) Lead Service Line Replacements (LSLR) program includes Disadvantaged Communities. Dr. Schmidt identified four potential communities in the service area. Only the questionnaire portion of the application has been submitted and the overall finances for the project still need to be looked at. The projects in these communities will include service line replacement, both the inlet and outlet service lines. Commissioner Brasington told Dr. Schmidt he would have someone from the City of Greenville reach out to Greenville Water to learn more.

Greenville Water Staff has worked with the State up to a year to get the program language changed to add galvanized pipe and to change the definition of “disadvantaged community” to mean disadvantaged communities rather than the whole utility system. The State is now no longer looking at the overall system, they are looking at communities within the systems.

## **7. I.T. UPDATE BRIEF**

Chairman Kilgore welcomed Director of Information Technology Brad Treas to provide an update for 2022-2023. Mr. Treas presented the 2022 delivery highlights, the 2023 planned deliveries and strategy shifts for 2023-2024.

Water 2050 is a new initiative within the American Water Works Association. Mr. Treas highlighted recommended actions of this initiative that Greenville Water is focused on and thanked the Commission for the investment in incentivizing innovation and experimentation. The investment allows Staff to deliver on the kinds of things presented in the update and future deliverables. Chairman Kilgore added the position of the Commission is to be industry leaders in technology. Commissioner Sofield thanked Mr. Treas for the update and accomplishments.

## **8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Mr. Boss introduced Greenville Water’s new Director of Human Resources Lisa Bryant. Ms. Bryant shared a little about herself and thanked the Commission for the opportunity to join the Greenville Water team.

A review of Greenville Water’s benefits was initiated in October 2022, and the report has been delivered. Recommendations in the report will be reviewed and presented to the Commission in May.

A draft copy of Greenville Water’s Master Plan has been received. Management and Engineering Staff are reviewing the document.

A regulatory Wildfire Response Plan was provided to the Commission for review. Dr. Schmidt thanked Commissioner Sofield for recommending the previous plan be updated. Mr. Boss shared North Saluda had a successful prescribed burn of 128 acres. A small bear den with

two small cubs was discovered. The mother bear left when the fire approached, but she did return afterwards. Mom and cubs are doing well.

**9.COMMISSION COMMENTS**

No comments were presented.

**10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Vice-Chairman Bannister moved, seconded by Commissioner Sofield, to enter executive session to discuss legal and personnel issues.

The motion passed unanimously.


(Executive Session)

Commissioner Sofield moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Bannister, to go out of Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 9:37 a.m.

  
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Phillip A. Kilgore, Chairman

  
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Kimberly Haulter, Executive Assistant