

Commission of Public Works meeting, July 22, 2024
Regular monthly business.

Commissioners present: Trey Stephens, Donnie Cooper, Roy Shaw and Gerald McMurray

Employees present: Danny Lowe, Ken Phillips and Christy Lowe

Visitors present: Deborah Peek, Judy Graham-Dowd and Mike Kellems

Place: New Ellenton Commission of Public Works
100 South Main Street
New Ellenton, SC 29809

Time: 7:00 PM

Chairman Mr. Trey Stephens presiding.

Mr. Trey Stephens opens with the Pledge of Allegiance and Ken Phillips said the prayer.

Mr. Trey Stephens welcomes everyone and asks that he or she state their name for the record.

Mr. Trey Stephens opened the floor to guest comments and questions.

Aiken County Councilman Mike Kellems congratulated New Ellenton CPW on being awarded additional grants with the State Revolving Fund and RIA. Mr. Kellems stated on the county level they recently voted for items that will be on the November ballot although it does not include anything specifically for New Ellenton, it should benefit everyone in the community.

Mr. Trey Stephens states that approving the Financial Report for June 2024 is on the agenda and asks for a motion and a second. Vice Chairman Donnie Cooper made a motion to accept the Financial Report; it was seconded by Commissioner Gerald McMurray and carried.

Chairman Trey Stephens states that approving the minutes for June 24, 2024 is on the agenda and asks for a motion and a second. Commissioner Roy Shaw made a motion to accept the Minutes as written; it was seconded by Commissioner Gerald McMurray and carried.

Mr. Trey Stephens asks for any questions or comments. (none)

OLD BUSINESS

Director Danny Lowe reported there was a Pre-Construction meeting with Blair Construction for the Chime Bell Church Rd. project slated to begin in August. The SCIIP Projects at Florida Ave/Fern St and Club Dr. are waiting on permits with DHEC and should be going out for bids in the latter part of August.

Danny Lowe reported the water loss was 2% for the month of June.

Mr. Lowe reported the auditors will be coming on August 29th to gather information to complete the audit for FY 2023-24.

Ken Phillips gave an update of field activities for June including having repairs made to 8 fire hydrants.

Trey Stephens reported that we had closing on the Oak Hill Water System property today. Mr. Stephens stated that we have talked with Deborah Peek from Oak Hill and coordinated closing out Oak Hill and CPW taking over their customers beginning September 1, 2024.

Trey Stephens asked if we have had any issues with the new sewer rates on the bills. Office Manager Christy Lowe stated that there were only 2 customers that called concerning the high amount of their new sewer rate. Mrs. Lowe looked into why it was so high and found that it was due to a leak the customer had during the January – March timeframe so their water usage was higher during those billing cycles. Christy informed the customers the City of New Ellenton was over the sewer and any adjustments made to a sewer rate would need to be approved by them. The City did contact us at a later date to request us to lower the sewer rate to what their average usage of water is normally.

Mr. Trey Stephens asks is there any more old business. (none)

NEW BUSINESS

Danny Lowe stated there have been a lot of developers coming to request water service from NECPW. Mr. Lowe spoke with our engineer and has had a Water Capacity Reservation Agreement written up which states that the developer wanting a Willingness to Serve Letter will have to pay a non-refundable 10% reservation fee that will expire in 1 year. Danny will have the engineer add NECPW specs to the agreement and bring it back to the Commissioners for final approval.

Danny Lowe stated he has 2 customer issues in Cedar Creek this past month and he told the customers he would bring before the Commissioners as they are unable to attend the meeting. The first concern is about an underground dog wire that was cut in the process of CPW repairing a leak. CPW called in an 811 locate for all lines in the area to be marked. Once this was done, CPW's technicians began to dig and hit an underground dog wire that was in the utility right of way. Director Lowe explained to the customer that CPW followed proper procedures when calling in a locate before we dug in the area and we are not responsible for a dog wire that was placed in a utility right of way. All Commissioners agreed that CPW is not responsible for replacing/repairing the underground dog wire since it should not have been placed in a utility right of way.

The second customer concern was in reference to the leak we had about 2 weeks ago on Longshadow Dr. A customer that lives on a road off of Longshadow Dr. on Berwick Ct. has some sediment in his sprinkler lines, which is normal from time to time when a leak occurs. Instead of calling CPW and making us aware of the problem so we could come out and look at it or help resolve the problem, he called Cold Creek Nurseries and had them come out and replace all the valves. Mr. Lowe stated they probably just needed to be cleaned out but we don't know that now because the customer did not call us until he wanted us to be responsible for paying the \$600+ bill from Cold Creek Nurseries. Mr. Lowe told the customer that this is not something that the CPW has ever replaced for a customer in the past, but the customer still wanted it brought before the Commissioners for a decision to be made. All Commissioners agreed that this is not the responsibility of CPW to pay for him having the valves on his sprinkler lines replaced after a leak.

Danny Lowe presented a Capital Improvement Plan with a list of 13 items in the system that need to be addressed in the future. At the top of the list is Longshadow Dr. where we have had some serious problems lately and the fact that the line is dangerously deep (over 11 ft.) in some areas. Chairman Trey Stephens stated to the Commissioners that they all need to be more intentional when doing the Annual Budget going forward to include some of these projects because had we been doing this years before, we wouldn't be having some of the problems we are having now. In say that, Trey stated that after the Banks presentation at last months meeting, they came back with some other options. After discussion, Trey said that he needs the rest of the Commissioners approval to go ahead with the underwriting to start the process on the loan as well as approval for Danny to have our engineer start on a cost estimate for Longshadow Dr. Vice Chairman Donnie Cooper made a motion to start the loan process for underwriting with no commitment until everything is finalized and approved and also to start the engineering work on Longshadow Dr; it was seconded by Commissioner Roy Shaw and carried.

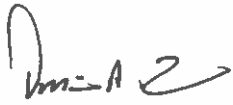
Office Manager, Christy Lowe, stated that we had an Oak Hill Water customer who came into the office to fill out an application for new service in September. The customer asked what would happen to the Security Deposit he paid at Oak Hill. Mrs. Lowe then called Deborah Peek with Oak Hill and asked her for a list of all the customers who paid a Security Deposit and let her know we would discuss how to handle it at the next Commission meeting. After discussion, CPW Commissioners decided that Oak Hill would credit customers on their final bill based on the amount each one paid as a Security Deposit.

Christy Lowe stated that in looking into the CPW Security Deposit account as well, it is a separate account from the main operating account (Gross Revenue) but it has not been the practice in the past to transfer any money over from a Security Deposit that has been used to pay off an outstanding balance owed after a customer moved out. Therefore, the Security Deposit bank account continues to increase without paying anything back into the Gross Revenue account for owed water revenue. Christy stated she went back to 2019 and figured up the amount that should have been transferred back into the Gross Revenue account. It came up to approximately \$37,000 but would be more if you went further back. Mrs. Lowe suggested to start off with a \$50,000 transfer into Gross Revenue from the Customer Security Deposit account. The Office Assistants have already started a spreadsheet to track when a customer closes their account and the amount due to CPW so it can be transferred at the end of the month. All Commissioners agreed to go ahead with the initial transfer of \$50,000 and then make a monthly transfer going forward into the Gross Revenue account.



Christy Lowe reported to the Commissioners that the new Parks & Recreation Director with the Town of New Ellenton, Jessica Weathersbee, stopped by the office with a form requesting a sponsor donation to Youth Sports. After discussion, the Commissioners agreed to donate \$500.00 to the City of New Ellenton Parks & Recreation.

Donnie Cooper made a motion to adjourn; Gerald McMurray, all vote, so moved.

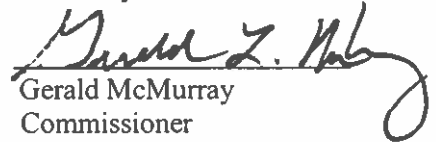

Attested by,



Director
Danny Lowe


Trey Stephens
Chairman
Donnie Cooper
Vice Chairman

Jackie Keenan
Secretary-Treasurer


Gerald McMurray
Commissioner
Roy Shaw
Commissioner