

# **Hart County Water and Sewer Authority**

## **Board of Directors Meeting September 16, 2024**

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on September 16, 2024, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm. Present were Board Members Bennie Harper, Marvin Justice and Patti York as well as Legal Counsel Kim Higginbotham, Director Pat Goran, Office Manager Karen Neal and many community residents. Board Member Larry Haley was not in attendance.

### **Welcome**

### **Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Carlton stated the agenda should be amended to include an Executive Session to discuss personnel. Ms. York motioned to approve the amended agenda. Mr. Harper seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Carlton invited the citizens to speak. Scott Franklin from the Friendship Drive/Lamb Road/Cliff Road area thanked the Board for approving expansion into his neighborhood. Mr. Franklin also showed the Board pictures and video of the challenges he and other residents have faced including very muddy water and silt filled water filters. Nancy Ferenchak, on behalf of the residents of the Raindrop/Dewdrop Circle area, thanked the Board for the approval to extend Reed Creek Highway up to their neighborhood. Residents from both groups understand the approval is just the beginning and multiple steps are required before they have HCWSA water. Residents from the Harbor Point area spoke about their desire for HCWSA water. The thirteen homes in this area share a community well. New homes are planned for additional open land, but each of those homes will have their own well. Ms. Rachelene Johnson and a couple of her neighbors again asked for Cleveland Mill Road to be included in the Mt. Olivet project currently underway.

### **Approval of August 19, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Ms. York made a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Financial Report**

Mr. Goran stated that at the next Board meeting we should have a more complete financial statement for the Board's review. Mr. Goran briefly reviewed the Authority's financial position, and the number of gallons flushed for water quality purposes in August.

### **Old Business**

### **Georgia Environmental Finance Authority Loan for Expansion into Reed Creek Area**

Mr. Goran stated EMI would be visiting soon to ride the route of the proposed extensions to the Raindrop/Dewdrop Circle and the Friendship Drive/Lamb Road/Cliff Road areas.

## **Will Bailey Road – Morris Road – Beacon Light Road – Mount Olivet Road Project**

Mr. Goran shared the construction crew is now giving this project their full attention after completing their project in Westminster, SC. Construction is currently underway on Will Bailey Road and is working toward Highland Ridge Drive. Next, construction will move to Mary's Lane then across Morris Road to Beacon Light Road. Mr. Goran recommended going south on Beacon Light Road to tie back into the recent line extension to Eric Sanders' poultry operation next. Subsequent construction will go back up Beacon Light Road to Mount Olivet Road then down Mount Olivet Road to connect to the end of our current system at Fred King Road. Mr. Goran reminded the Board this work will take several months to complete.

## **Damaged Fire Hydrants Repair Discussion**

Mr. Goran stated he has reached out to interested parties about creating a spreadsheet of the damaged hydrants and what needs to be done. Mr. Goran also reached out to a repair company but without a list to discuss they cannot provide an estimate. Mr. Goran stated that HCWSA does not have the staff or expertise to make most of the repairs. Mr. Carlton inquired if there is any benefit to installing isolation valves at the older hydrants that don't have them. Ms. York mentioned that Chris Whitfield contacted her again about the broken hydrant near his home. Mr. Goran stated that we have the parts to repair, but we will have to follow up with the contractor to have the repair made. Discussion then moved on how best to collect damages from car accidents that damaged hydrants. Ms. Higginbotham stated that she would be the one lodging a claim with the responsible insurance companies.

## **New Business**

### **Request for Water Service – Walnut Drive**

Several residents from Walnut Drive spoke about their struggles with a community well including lack of water, poor water pressure, restrictions on how they are allowed to use their water and failure of the water provider to provide a water quality report. The residents stated that HCWSA lines run by their street. They expressed their desire for HCWSA water and asked the Board to act on their behalf. They noted there are approximately twenty-three (23) homes in the Walnut Drive subdivision. The Board made it clear that the decision to use a private water company instead of HCWSA was the decision of the developer. It was stated there is nothing HCWSA can do. It was suggested that the residents contact the developer about paying to extend HCWSA's system to serve them.

### **Fiscal Year 2025 Audit Engagement Letter**

Mr. Goran stated that Burch Crooms has provided a letter detailing the proposed work for the upcoming audit. The cost is \$34,300.00. Ms. York made a motion to have Mr. Carlton accept for governance and Mr. Goran to accept for management. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Authority Staff Compensation**

Mr. Goran recommended raising the hourly rate for Office Manager Karen Neal and Field Technician Cory Bouquet by two dollars per hour at the beginning of the fiscal year. Mr. Goran shared that he does not want to lose either employee. Mr. Justice made a motion to increase the wages of hourly employees as recommended by Mr. Goran. Ms. York seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion moved to Mr. Goran's salary. Mr. Goran stated he believed his annual salary is approximately \$89,046.00. Mr. Goran also stated that he was fine with his current salary. Following discussion by the Board,

Mr. Justice made a motion to raise Mr. Goran's salary by two and a half percent for the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finally, the Board discussed potential raises for Board Members. Mr. Goran stated that Board Members could earn up to \$1,200.00 per year payable in increments of \$100.00 per month. Mr. Justice suggested paying Board Chairman Wade Carlton \$100.00 per month and the other Board members \$75.00 per month. Further discussion yielded no motions, but Mr. Goran and Ms. Higginbotham will discuss before the meeting in October.

### **Director's Comments**

The Board inquired as to training for Ms. Neal. Mr. Goran stated Ms. Neal requested formal training on the finance portion of HCWSA's software. Training is held in New Jersey. The Board also inquired as to the status of remote contractor Holly Mathis who is currently managing the finance portion of HCWSA's software. Mr. Goran stated that Ms. Mathis' services would be needed through the end of year audit. Following extended discussion, Mr. Carlton made a motion that Ms. Neal attend training in New Jersey and Ms. Mathis' services be terminated no more than one month following the completion of the year end audit. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-1 with Mr. Justice voting against.

### **Members' Comments – None**

Mr. Harper made a motion to move into Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Ms. York. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Executive Session**

Discussion was held on a personnel matter. A motion to exit the Executive Session and resume the original meeting was made by Ms. York and seconded by Mr. Harper. The motion passed unanimously.

After resuming the original meeting, a motion was made by Ms. York to have Counsel Higginbotham draft a letter of employee reprimand for Board Chairman Carlton's approval. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

### **Upcoming Meetings – October 24<sup>th</sup>, November 18<sup>th</sup>**

### **Adjournment**

  
Wade Carlton, Chairman