

Hart County Water and Sewer Authority

Board of Directors Meeting January 11, 2024

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on January 11, 2024, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Present were Board Members Larry Haley, Bennie Harper, Marvin Justice and Patti York, Director Pat Goran, Legal Counsel Kim Higginbotham, resident Rachelene Johnson, and Hartwell Sun reporter Rachel Black.

Welcome

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Haley motioned to approve the agenda. Mr. Justice seconded the motion which passed 5 – 0.

Public Comments, remarks by invited guests

None.

Approval of December 18, 2023 regular meeting minutes

Mrs. York motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Harper seconded the motion which passed 5 – 0.

Financial report

Mr. Goran presented the financial report.

Old Business

Will Bailey Road – Mount Olivet Road connector project

Mr. Goran reminded the Board that they had voted in the December meeting to rebid this project with a reduced scope of work. He said that EMI had revised the bid package and that it would be publicized within the next few days, with an anticipated mid-February bid due date.

Request for water service – Beacon Light Road

Previously discussed under prior agenda item.

Request for water service – Bowman Highway poultry operations

Mr. Goran said that he had received the signed, witnessed and notarized commitment letters that Mrs. Higginbotham had prepared prior to the Authority's last meeting on Monday. There was some discussion about the projected project payback.

Mr. Harper made a motion to proceed with the project. After further discussion Mrs. York seconded. Motion passed 4-1 with Mr. Justice opposed. There was discussion about tracking actual usage versus commitments better in the future. Mr. Goran signed the commitment letters on behalf of the Authority, Mr. Carlton witnessed, and Mrs. Higginbotham will have the documents recorded.

Consideration of Georgia Environmental Finance Authority loan with principal forgiveness

Mr. Goran said EMI is in the process of preparing the environmental review package. He also stated that the Authority has posted a Request For Qualifications for engineering firms at the Georgia Procurement Registry website as this is a requirement for major federally-funded projects.

New Business - none

Director's Comments

Mr. Goran said that he had extended an offer to Tina Headen to be the full-time Office Manager and that she is expected to start early next week. He explained that Holly Mathis was continuing to assist the Authority remotely and that he was hopeful she would assist in training Mrs. Headen going forward. There was some discussion about training and support available through Edmunds.

Mr. Goran explained that the Authority's IT consultant had recently installed a firewall and an upgraded server and was in the process of setting up a VPN for remote access to the Edmunds software on the server.

Mr. Goran indicated that he reached out to the Lavonia City Manager and that Lavonia and the Authority had agreed to extend our water purchase agreement that expires 12/31/23 for one year with the same terms and conditions via an exchange of emails. He advised the Board that all three supplier agreements will now expire at the same time.

Mr. Goran asked the Board if they were open to minor changes in office hours. It was agreed that Authority staff would attempt to track when customers come in the office to pay their bills.

Members' Comments

Mr. Haley asked if we have limits on how much water we can purchase from our suppliers. Mr. Goran replied that we can buy up to 750,000 gallons per day each from Hartwell and Lavonia and 375,000 gallons per day from Royston but commented that Royston doesn't currently have the ability to provide that much.

Mr. Justice suggested that the Authority consider asking for contributions toward construction costs from people or companies on non-residential projects. Mrs. Johnson said she knew several residents that were willing to pay their tap fee right now on potential residential projects. It was clarified that what Mr. Justice was discussing was paying part of the cost of putting the pipe in the ground in addition to tap fees.

Upcoming Meetings – February 19th, March 18th

Adjournment

Mr. Haley motioned to adjourn, and Mr. Harper seconded. The motion passed 5 - 0.

Wade Carlton, Chairman