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Reading Area Water Authority
Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, August 9, 2016

The Stated Workshop Meeting of the Reading Area Water Authority was held on Tuesday, August 9, 2016 at Reading Area Water Authority 1801 Kutztown Road, Reading PA at 4:30 PM. Present were: Board Members: Chairman Ralph Johnson, Vice Chairman Steve Symons, Mr. William Murray, Ms. Julissa Espinal, Mr. Thomas Weld, Engineer, BCM Engineers, and Mr. Dean Miller, Contracted Executive Director. Absent was Ms. Maria Rodriguez.

Public Comment:

Mr. Ernest Schlegel expressed his concern over the comments at the previous board meeting. Mr. Schlegel discussed his personal accounts and requests he made for adjustments. Mr. Schlegel expressed his displeasure over the accusations he directed the changes versus requested them.

Mr. Schlegel expressed concern for the way information was leaked and suggested the CSR be disciplined.

Mr. Schlegel said he appreciates all the Board Members he worked with, but he believes this is not the proper way to do business; he said he did nothing wrong, he tried to do his best job on running this organization. Mr. Schlegel expects the Board Members to conduct themselves in a good way, try to do the right thing for people like he's done himself. He said that sooner or later people need to leave "little Ernie" alone and move on because he will come back and use the law to do it.

Mr. William Murray addressed Mr. Schlegel accusations as being totally ridiculous.

Mr. Murray re-states what he said in the last meeting that the forensic audit will determine whose is lying. Mr. Murray asked Ms. Suzanne Ruotolo if Mr. Schlegel told them to remove the fees, and Ms. Ruotolo said it was requested to have them removed by Mr. Schlegel. Mr. Murray asked Mr. Schlegel to stop attacking him on things he hasn't done.

Chairman Ralph Johnson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from July 28, 2016. A motion was made by Mr. Steve Symons and seconded by Mr. Bill Murray. Ms. Espinal requested 2 spellings in the minutes be corrected. Ms. Ruotolo asked that they be corrected right then, and Mr. Symons motioned that they could be fixed.

- All in favor. Motion passed unanimously

Chairman's Report

Chairman Johnson told the RAWA Board of Directors about the resignation of Ms. Maria Rodriguez. He said he has reported the resignation to the Mayor.

Board Report

Mr. Bill Murray reviewed the Off/On program, the key points of the programs are.

1. Pushing back the late fee that RAWA charges after 30 days.
2. During that period there will be courtesy phone call, and a courtesy notice in the customer's bill indicating that their bill is due.
3. The 20% collection fee will be pushed back 30 additional days.
4. In addition there will be color coding invoices. Regular invoice white envelope. Past due second notice green, which will include an attached page to notify them about the 10% late fee that can be avoided if pay within the time frame. If no response after the first 2 notices they will receive an aggressive notice a red letter.

Mr. Murray said we are giving people chances as much as we possibly can to be able to send payments, before moving on to further steps.

Mr. Murray re-stated turn-offs will only occur if we do not successfully negotiate payment arrangements terms to only owner occupied customers. Businesses and others will go through the process of notifications without the owner occupied terms. This program will be coordinated with the Human Relations Commission, similar to the hardship program. The only difference is that when the account goes to ARB they will hold the account on soft collections and the 10% and try to negotiate the deal with the customers.

Customers will have to show commitment on working with us. Future turn-offs will be avoided at all cost unless we have people that say they just can't pay and will not pay their water bill. We still reserve the right to turn people off.

Mr. Symons suggested notifying the City when shutting someone's water off; he believes that will benefit us by pushing the issue to possibly getting the money owed.

Mr. Murray said we are 99% ready to roll out this new program. Next Board Meeting he will have the written rules.

Mr. Murray made a motion that as of August 9, 2016 Reading Area Water Authority will stop turning off water to owner occupied residences, seconded by Mr. Symons.

- All in favor. Motion passed unanimously

Chairman Johnson requested that 2 Board Members review the meter reading invoices and Miller Environmental invoices that Mr. Setley used to review. He volunteered Mr. Murray, Mr. Symons and Mrs. Espinal to review them on a monthly basis.

Chairman Johnson recommends that City Clerk and Mayor's office should receive a copy of the RAWA board agenda and any attachments that would be discussed during the meetings.

Chairman Johnson said there is a upcoming meeting with City Administration to find out where the Council stands and discuss any concerns, or different ways they would like to work with us. He will have a report of that meeting for the next Board Meeting.

Executive Director:

Mr. Miller asked for a motion to approve the Capital Fund invoices for August 9, 2016, totaling **\$117,445.86**. Ms. Espinal made the motion and Mr. Murray seconded to authorize the payment of the Capital Expense invoices as presented.

- All in favor. Motion passed unanimously

Mr. Miller asked for a motion to approve the General Funds invoices for August 9, 2016, totaling **\$191,803.74**. Mr. Murray made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Symons to authorize the payment of the General Expense invoices as presented.

There was a discussion had concerning the transition of Attorney Setley, and also questioned was the final RKL payment made. The payment was made as an installment for the 2015 financial audit. Mr. Murray asked that we make the RAWA accounting firm be present at RAWA board meeting for any questions that may arise.

- All in favor. Motion passed unanimously

Mr. Miller gave an update to Board Members about the Authority and department activities and mentions the several water main breaks that occurred last week.

Mr. Miller said RKL will be available for the September Workshop Meeting on September 13, 2016 to go over the 2015 Financial Audit.

Mr. Miller said the Solicitor RFP it has been completed and now posted on the website, it will also be advertise on the newspaper for the next 2 weeks, and he will send a list to local firms in the area.

Mr. Miller said the list for forensic auditors has been put together by administration and presented to the Board Members for review.

Mr. Miller gave an update on the Lead and Copper project. He has provided minutes from the Lead and Copper team meetings; they have concluded the materials analysis out in the system and are now in the process of developing the site sampling plan that needs to be submitted to the DEP.

Mr. Miller said we have received an updated draft agreement for Birdsboro Power for our consideration. Mr. Miller asked Mr. Thomas Weld to review and submit comments. Mr. Weld will have an answer from Ember Clear regarding the plan cost and how much water is needed for this project.

The RFQ's for Engineering Services were opened. 3 proposals were received; Gannett Fleming, BCM Engineers, Spotts Stevens and McCoy. Mr. Symons, Mr. Ralph Johnson and Mr. Miller will review the proposals and have a meeting and discuss it for next Board Meeting.

Engineers Report:

Mr. Weld said he will have an update on Ember Clear for the next meeting on which direction we will go based on Ember Clear's input. Mr. Weld said we are moving very rapidly on the water plant PLC upgrades and starting to gear up for the September work where we take the second of the 3 segmentation basins out of service to do the concrete work and the clarifiers.

Mr. Weld said he submitted the action plan on the filters and is waiting for their comments. He will then get the permit application together to submit the bid in September.

Executive Session called at 5:40 PM

Resumed public meeting 6:00 PM

A motion was made to appoint an interim solicitor. Roland Stock was mentioned to use until we have found a permanent Solicitor at a hourly rate with no retainer. Chairman Johnson asked for a motion to approve Roland Stock as Interim Solicitor. Mr. Murray moved and Ms. Espinal Seconded.

- All in favor. Motion passed unanimously

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Bill Murray and seconded by Mr. Julissa Espinal.

- All in favor. Motion passed unanimously

Meeting Adjourned.

The next Reading Area Water Authority Board Meeting will be held on Thursday August 25, 2016 at 4:30PM in the Penn Room, City Hall, 815 Washington Street, Reading, PA 19601.