

CITY OF HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 24, 2020

The Regular Board Meeting of the Utility Board of Trustees was conducted on the 24th day of June, 2020 at 3:00 P.M. by videoconference.

City Commissioners Present: Richard Uribe, District 1

Board Members Present: Michael Garza, Chairman
Michael Murphy, Trustee
Curtis Bonner, Trustee
Chris Bartnesky, Trustee
Dan Serna, Ex-Officio

Staff Present: Tim Skoglund, General Manager
Robert Canterbury, System Engineer
Gene McCullough, System Attorney
Darrell Gunn, System Consultant
Ron De La Garza, Finance & Revenue Director
Joyce Lamon, Customer Services Director
Sanjuana Garcia, Purchasing Manager
David Sanchez, Water Services Director
Jon Hedegard, Wastewater Services Director
John McKenna, IT Director
Elizabeth Soto, Human Resources Director

City Staff Present: Carlos Sanchez, Assistant City Manager

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: OPEN MEETING AND WELCOME

Michael Garza, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:03 P.M. and asked if the agenda had been posted in accordance with the law; Nilda Sanchez responded affirmatively.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: COMMUNICATION / INPUT FROM CUSTOMERS AND RESIDENTS OF HARLINGEN

None

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Regular Board Meeting of May 27, 2020

With no corrections requested, a motion to approve the Board Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of May 27, 2020 was made.

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A motion to approve the Board Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of May 27, 2020, was made.

Motion: Chris Bartnesky
Second: Michael Murphy

Motion to approve was carried by a vote of the Board (4-0).

b) Special Board Meeting of June 9, 2020

With no corrections requested, a motion to approve the Board Minutes for the Special Board Meeting of June 9, 2020 was made.

Motion: Chris Bartnesky
Second: Michael Murphy

Motion to approve was carried by a vote of the Board (4-0).

*** Out of sequence

Mr. Skoglund asked to consider R1920-43 out of sequence as a courtesy to the presenting attendee from Electronic Image Designers, Inc. Chairman Garza agreed.

a) R1920-43: Awarding a contract for resilient records management assessment

Tim Skoglund reported the organization was in great need of improvements to its document and records management practices, noting the various types of documents and repositories in use. Though staff might implement simple directory organization and file naming changes, it did not possess knowledge of best practices and available tools to comprehensively tackle such a large, evolving challenge.

Mr. Skoglund explained that staff had reached out to three firms who were vendor-neutral and interviewed two of the firms. Electronic Image Designers (EID), led by Robert Blatt, had been determined to be the most qualified firm.

Robert Blatt gave a lengthy presentation explaining the importance of document and records management, regulatory requirements for records retention, and cybersecurity needs for documents.

Mr. Blatt discussed the problems that an unorganized, unsecured approach to management of documents and records can cause, and he explained the assessment being proposed to help the Waterworks to understand and begin tackling its current challenges.

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Curtis Bonner, Trustee, asked who else had been interviewed to provide this consultant support. Mr. Skoglund explained that two other firms had been considered in an apparently small field of vendor-neutral consultants specializing in document management. Discussion by the Board ensued.

Mr. Skoglund further noted that the State of Texas required all municipalities to designate a records manager. The Waterworks' records management responsibilities fell under the City Secretary, but natural coordination challenges made the performance of this responsibility impractical. Mr. Skoglund informed the Board the Waterworks would need to designate its own records manager to ensure compliance with state mandates on records retention.

A motion was made to approve Resolution No. R1920-43 – Awarding a contract for records management assessment

Motion: Michael Murphy
Second: Chris Bartnesky

Motion to approve was carried by a vote of the Board (4-0).

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

a) Report on Delinquent accounts in excess of \$500 per account

Joyce Lamon, Customer Service Director, reported there was a new list for active delinquent accounts and that some payments had already been posted since the report was submitted.

Ms. Lamon stated she had made contact with several account holders to discuss their current situation and payment status. Several customers, residential and commercial, who had not been contacted would be continually pursued for payments.

City Commissioner, Richard Uribe, asked if the Waterworks was informing customers about any organizations and local or state programs offering financial support to help them during the pandemic crisis. Ms. Lamon explained that customer service representatives were offering information on other agencies offering assistance including CDBG, St. Anthony's Church, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and others. An in-house list had been developed to provide information on available options for assistance so that customers could contact them and apply. The list was pending the inclusion of additional assistance options to be made available through the City.

Ms. Lamon reported on Board-directed plans to resume late fees and delinquent disconnections the first week of July. Discussion by the Board ensued.

b) Discussion of COVID-19 response and effects on operations

Tim Skoglund discussed the Waterworks' continued actions to address COVID-19 threats and impacts. He presented charts of current cases noting that COVID-19 positive cases

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seemed to be accelerating, and he shared data on the operational impacts of the temporary policy suspending delinquent disconnects and late payment fees.

Tim Skoglund stated that measures previously implemented in response to the pandemic were continuing, but he noted that the recent installation of hand sanitizer dispensers at the drive through stations had relieved meter technician staff of the responsibility for cleaning drive through equipment.

Dan Serna, City Manager, formally requested that the Board continue the suspension of delinquent disconnections and late payment fees until August. He explained the unemployment rate in Harlingen was at 16 percent, and many citizens were still experiencing financial hardship. Chairman Garza stated his agreement with the request. Discussion by the Board ensued and a consensus expressed that the suspension continue until August.

c) Presentation on the status and forecast for capital improvement projects for FY 2020 and FY 2021

Robert Canterbury, System Engineer, gave a detailed presentation on the status of current year CIP projects and the proposed CIP projects for FY 2021. Cost estimates were discussed for each project. Mr. Canterbury noted that the proposed projects would be supplemented for future years with additional projects that the master plan currently in progress would identify later in the year. Discussion by the Board ensued.

*** Michael Murphy, Trustee, left the meeting.

d) Report on credit card payment processing services

Tim Skoglund reported a resolution was approved last month at the June 9th, 2020 Special Board Meeting, approving an agreement with InvoiceCloud as the new credit card payment services provider. InvoiceCloud's fee had been approved at \$2.45 per transaction. One of the other candidate service providers subsequently contacted Staff to offer a lower fee. After further discussion, InvoiceCloud had agreed to reduce the transaction fee to \$1.99. Mr. Skoglund explained this reduction would yield significant savings for Waterworks customers.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: FINANCIALS

a) Monthly Financial report for month ending April 30, 2020

Ronald De La Garza, Director of Finance, gave an overview of the financial reports for May 2020. Discussion by the Board ensued.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: RESOLUTIONS

b) R1920-40: Approving a contract extension for supply of bagged cement

Tim Skoglund explained the proposed extension was the second option year for the contract.

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A motion was made to approve Resolution No. R1920-40 – approving a contract extension for supply of bagged cement.

Motion: Curtis Bonner
Second: Chris Bartnesky

Motion to approve was carried by a vote of the Board (3-0).

c) R1920-41: Approving a contract extension for supply of fire hydrants and parts

Tim Skoglund explained the proposed extension was the first option year for the contract.

A motion was made to approve Resolution No. R1920-41 – approving a contract extension for supply of fire hydrants and parts.

Motion: Chris Bartnesky
Second: Curtis Bonner

Motion to approve was carried by a vote of the Board (3-0).

d) R1920-42: Approving a contract extension for repair of compressors and blowers, electric motors, gear boxes and mixer drives and vertical turbine pumps

Tim Skoglund explained the proposed extension was the first option year for the contract. He recommended a language correction/deletion on the third paragraph, deleting the words “as summarized in the table below.”

A motion was made to approve Resolution No. R1920-42 – approving a contract extension for repair of compressors and blowers, electric motors, gear boxes and mixer drives, and vertical turbine pumps

Motion: Curtis Bonner
Second: Chris Bartnesky

Motion to approve was carried by a vote of the Board (3-0).

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: MANAGER’S REPORTS

Tim Skoglund stated the meeting had run long and offered to skip presentation of the manager’s reports. No discussion ensued.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Garza, called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 P.M.

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Motion: Curtis Bonner
Second: Chris Bartnesky

Motion to approve was carried by a vote of the Board (3-0).

Attest:



Nilda Sanchez, Board Secretary