

CITY OF HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

The Regular Board Meeting of the Utility Board of Trustees was conducted on the 24th day of February 2021 at 3:00 P.M. by videoconference.

City Commissioners Present: Victor Leal, District 5

Board Members Present: Kevin Campbell, Chairman
Chris Bartnesky, Trustee
Enrique Del Angel, Trustee
Curtis Bonner, Trustee

Staff Present: Tim Skoglund, General Manager
Robert Canterbury, System Engineer
Gene McCullough, System Attorney
Darrell Gunn, System Contractor
Joyce Lamon, Customer Services Director
David Sanchez, Water Services Director
Jon Hedegard, Wastewater Services Director
John McKenna, IT Director
Elizabeth Soto, Human Resources Director

City of Staff: Carlos A. Sanchez, Assistant City Manger

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: OPEN MEETING AND WELCOME

Kevin Campbell, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:02 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

Cesar De Dios of 201 N. Tamm Lane voiced his concern regarding flushing of the water tower on Tamm Lane. He stated his property became a retention pond because of lack of proper drainage in the area. In the past, he was able to re-direct water to surrounding empty land; however, as the area developed, he no longer had a way to divert the water, and has experienced standing water in his property when the tower is flushed. Mr. De Dios thanked the Board for the opportunity to express his concern.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Regular Board Meeting of January 27, 2021

With no corrections requested, a motion to approve the Board Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of January 27, 2021 was made.

CITY OF HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

A motion to approve the Board Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of January 27, 2021

Motion: Chris Bartnesky
Second: Curtis Bonner

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

a) Report on staffing changes

Tim Skoglund reported Robert Canterbury, System Engineer, had declared his plans to move with his family to another state but would be able to continue as a remote, part-time employee. Mr. Canterbury shared his plans with the Board and was wished success on his move.

b) Report and discussion on operations performance and lessons learned during the freeze and power outage event of February 15 through 19, 2021.

Tim Skoglund gave a presentation on the Waterworks' operations during the freeze and power outage event. All treatment plants lost power but were able to continue operation on generator power, albeit at lower capacity than normal on grid power. The Main Office lost power but was later powered by generator until the grid was restored.

Water treatment and distribution staff worked diligently to address abnormally high demand caused by leaks in customer plumbing that had become frozen and broken. Because generator capacity was insufficient to operate the MFR WTP at full capacity, system pressure dropped, and a decision was made to fire up the downtown water plant. Two wholesale customers were disconnected, but the three who depended entirely on the Waterworks for their water supply remained connected throughout the event. Though system pressure dropped below normal levels, the regulatory trigger for a boil water notice was avoided.

Wastewater operations had 21 lift stations lose power, and rotated portable generators from station to station to avoid sewer backups and overflows.

Servers, phone systems, lighting and heating at the Main Office were affected because the building had no fixed generator for backup. Portable generators were brought in to restore essential services and later, full load. Once generator power was connected, customer service staff resumed operations despite the lack of heating on the first floor until the second day of the freeze event.

Mr. Skoglund reported on several lessons learned including the need to improve public relations outreach and response, establish a HWWS Emergency Operations Center during emergencies, prepare Downtown WTP for operation in advance of an anticipated event, add permanent generation installations and upgrades, and secure adequate fuel supply for service vehicles and equipment. Discussion by the Board ensued.

CITY OF HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Kevin Campbell, Chairman, thanked staff for their efforts to keep the System's services uninterrupted.

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

Joyce Lamon, Customer Service Director gave an overview of the delinquent accounts that were still currently pending. Discussion by the Board ensued.

d) Presentation and discussion on revisions to proposed customer service policy modifications: Application for Service Instructions; Customer Security Deposits.

Tim Skoglund reported that following the previous meeting's discussion on Customer Service Policy modifications, additional revisions to the sections on Application for Service Instructions and Customer Security Deposits were developed. Additional revisions included reorganization of the text for clarity; more appropriate requirements for documentation from corporations, LLCs, LLPs, and trusts; improved definition of requirements for de facto changes in account ownership; and definition of additional deposit amounts for customers who had left an outstanding balance on a prior account. Discussion by the Board ensued.

*** Tim Skoglund took time to introduce a newly-hired Assistant Utility Engineer, Emiliano Rosel. Emiliano was welcomed by the Board.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: FINANCIALS

a) Monthly Financial report for month ending January 31, 2021

Ron De La Garza, Finance & Revenue Director, gave an overview of the financial reports for January 2021. Discussion by the Board ensued.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: RESOLUTIONS

a) R2021-12 Approving a proposed Substantial Modification of the City of Harlingen Pretreatment Ordinance to comply with regulatory streamlining guidelines and recommending the same to the Harlingen City Commission for adoption

Tim Skoglund reported that the Waterworks had maintained a wastewater pretreatment program since 1984 for the regulation of wastewater discharges from industrial and commercial customers. A pretreatment ordinance had been adopted by the Harlingen City Commission in 2002 that had remained unaltered since that time.

Waterworks staff submitted a revised pretreatment ordinance to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in 2015, but no action to approve the revision was ever made. Waterworks contracted with Ambiotec in November 2018 to help redevelop Harlingen's pretreatment ordinance based on EPA's streamlining rule introduced in 2005. TCEQ recently directed Waterworks to proceed immediately with adoption of the redeveloped ordinance.

Ann Whitko of Ambiotec gave a presentation on the major changes contained in the new ordinance. Discussion by the Board ensued.

CITY OF HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Mr. Curtis Bonner, Trustee, pointed out the misspelling of “regulatory” in the pre-amble of the resolution and requested it be corrected.

Darrell Gunn asked whether the new ordinance would have any effect on surcharges for BOD and TSS that the Waterworks had been assessing. Ann Whitko replied that it would not.

A motion was made to approve Resolution No. R2021-12 – approving a proposed Substantial Modification of the City of Harlingen Pretreatment Ordinance to comply with regulatory streamlining guidelines and recommending the same to the Harlingen City Commission for adoption.

Motion: Curtis Bonner
Second: Chris Bartnesky

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

b) R2021-13: Approving a temporary variance to water and sewer billing policy related to the freeze and power outage event of February 15 through 19, 2021.

Tim Skoglund reported that Commissioner Ruben De La Rosa had requested a variance from normal billing policy and that would follow San Antonio Water System’s approach of offering a billing discount for customers who experienced high water consumption on account of the recent freeze. San Antonio’s approach substituted customers’ January’s water consumption for the February consumption if February’s consumption was higher.

Waterworks’ current policy offered customers a 50% discount on leakage water consumption contingent on submission of receipts substantiating a repaired leak. Leakage water was defined in the policy as the difference between the most recent month’s consumption and the average of prior months’ consumption.

Mr. Skoglund explained that the proposed resolution for a temporary variance of policy would follow the same approach with the exception that submission of receipts would be waived. The prior month’s consumption would be used the basis for the leakage water determination and, for residential customers, would also be substituted for the February consumption in the calculation of customers’ sewer winter average.

Darrell Gunn asked whether wholesale customers would also receive a discount. Joyce Lamon expressed concern that wholesale customers receiving such discount may not pass that benefit on to their own customers as the Waterworks intended. Tim Skoglund proposed a revision to the resolution for excluding wholesale customers from the discount pending further evaluation and coordination with wholesale customers. Discussion by the Board ensued.

CITY OF HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

A motion was made to approve a revised version of Resolution No. R2021-13 – approving a temporary variance to water and sewer billing policy related to the freeze and power outage event of February 15 through 19, 2021.

Motion: Chris Bartnesky
Second: Curtis Bonner

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

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: MANAGER'S REPORTS

Tim Skoglund highlighted portions of the Manager's Reports. The Board asked questions and discussed the information as it was presented.

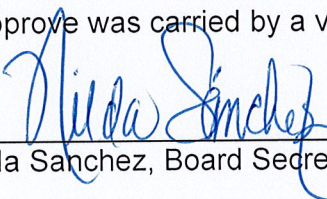
AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman, Campbell, called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:35 P.M.

Motion: Curtis Bonner
Second: Chris Bartnesky

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

Attest:



Nilda Sanchez, Board Secretary