

**CITY OF HARLINGEN WATERWORKS SYSTEM**  
**Regular Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

The Regular Board Meeting of the Utility Board of Trustees was conducted on the 25th day of March, 2020 at 3:00 P.M. by videoconference, an audio recording of which was made publicly available at *www.hwws.com* on March 27, 2020.

City Commission Present:      Ruben De La Rosa, District 4  
   Victor Leal, District 5

Board Members Present:      Michael Garza, Chairman  
   Kevin Campbell, Vice Chairman  
   Michael Murphy, Trustee  
   Chris Bartnesky, Trustee

Staff Present:                      Tim Skoglund, General Manager  
   Robert Canterbury, System Engineer  
   Gene McCullough, System Attorney  
   Darrell Gunn, System Consultant  
   Gene McCullough, System Attorney  
   Ron De La Garza, Finance & Revenue Director  
   David Sanchez, Water Services Director  
   Joyce Lamon, Customer Services Director  
   Elizabeth Soto, Human Resources Director  
   San Juan Garcia, Purchasing Manager  
   John McKenna, IT 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 February 26, 2020**

Tim Skoglund, General Manager, recommended a language change to Item 3, Approval of Minutes, second page, first paragraph. He recommended revising the words "...expressing his concern of the..." to "...expressing his concern that the...". The change was duly noted.

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A motion to approve the Board Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of February 26, 2020, as amended, was made.

Motion: Chris Bartnesky  
Second: Michael Murphy

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

Vice Chairman, Kevin Campbell entered at 3:05 P.M. The minutes had already been approved.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**a) Presentation by Carr, Riggs & Ingram on FY 2019-2020 Annual Audit and Financial Report**

Quentin Anderson of Carr, Riggs & Ingram presented the results of the financial audit for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2019. Mr. Anderson advised the Board the annual financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Waterworks. He called the Board's attention to several items and sections of the Independent Auditors' Report, the Financial Statements, Notes to the Financial Statements, Management's Discussion and Analysis, and the Statement of Changes in Net Position.

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

Tim Skoglund noted there were no new additions to the list. Discussion by the Board ensued.

**c) Discussion of COVID-19 response including continuity of operations plan and potential modification of normal customer service policy**

Tim Skoglund discussed the Waterworks' responses to the emerging COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that Staff had been participating in daily videoconference meetings with the City's Emergency Operations Team and listening in on teleconferences with Cameron County and the Texas Department of Health Services for the latest updates and guidelines.

To meet social distancing guidelines, Mr. Skoglund reported that the Waterworks had closed its offices to walk-in customers starting on March 24, 2020 and that a press release advising of the closing had been issued. Poster signs had been posted on the public entrance doors of the main building redirecting customers to other payment and customer service options. Customer Service for developers, meter installations and tap orders were being handled though drive through, drop box, phone calls, and emails.

Mr. Skoglund reported that informational resources, action plans, and policies were being distributed to employees through Microsoft SharePoint, a web-based platform offering greater flexibility for providing information than traditional intranet pages that require web programming. Mr. Skoglund displayed the COVID-19 SharePoint page noting that documents and informational links could be added or updated quickly by non-

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programmers.

Mr. Skoglund summarized the Waterworks' Incident Action Plan that established three stages of COVID-19 response and the conditions under which they would be triggered. He noted that a cleaning program had been put into place to keep contact surfaces clean and limit the spread of germs. Social distancing guidelines were also being practiced in all departments. In an effort to reduce the potential for spread of COVID-19 among employees and comply with health official recommendations, plans were being developed and equipment ordered to enable telecommuting arrangements for employees whose work responsibilities could be effectively performed at home.

In light of extraordinary economic hardship that some customers would be facing because of loss of income during the crisis, the Board discussed suspension of disconnections and waiver of late fees. Mr. Skoglund informed the Board that several local valley water utilities had recently suspended disconnections noting that public health would be a concern if disconnected customers would not be able to stay at home while shelter-in-place orders were in effect. Discussion by the Board ensued considering options ranging from case-by-case suspension of disconnection to suspending disconnections for all customers. Consensus of the Board was reached to implement a 30-day suspension of disconnections for all and to waive all late payment charges until the next month's Board Meeting when the extension of such actions could be considered.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: FINANCIALS**

**a) Monthly Financial report for month ending February 29, 2020**

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

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: RESOLUTIONS**

**a) R1920-21: Awarding a contract for construction of Dixieland WTP Roadway Rehabilitation & Extension Project**

Robert Canterbury, System Engineer, informed the Board that in an effort to continue communication for engineering operations, he and the City Engineer had issued a notice informing all engineers and developers involved in development and capital projects work about the continuation of engineering operations. Exemptions for the current shelter-in-place order were identified in the notice.

Mr. Canterbury displayed images of the Dixieland Water Treatment Plant showing deterioration of the roads at the plant and areas where road extensions were needed. He noted five bids had been received for construction of a replacement and extension project and recommended award to the lowest bidder. The two references contacted had highly recommend the low-bid contractor.

A motion was made to approve Resolution No. R1920-21 – awarding a contract for construction of Dixieland WTP Roadway Rehabilitation & Extension Project

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Motion: Chris Bartnesky  
Second: Kevin Campbell

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

**b) R1920-22: Awarding a contract for purchase of a filter underdrain system, filter media and installation support services**

David Sanchez, Director of Water Services, gave a slide presentation of the filter underdrain system at the MFR Water Plant and the failure recently occurring in Filter No. 1. The existing underdrain system dated back to the 1960's and had been operating well beyond its life expectancy. Staff was unsure how long the cracks had existed, but the possibility of underdrain collapse in other filters posed a serious risk to the plant's ability to meet summertime demands. A recommendation to replace the entire system was presented for Board approval. Discussion by the Board ensued.

A motion was made to approve Resolution No. R1920-22 – awarding a contract for purchase of a filter underdrain system, filter media and installation support services

Motion: Kevin Campbell  
Second: Michael Murphy

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 Garza, called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:23 P.M.

Motion: Kevin Campbell  
Second: Michael Murphy

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

Attest:

  
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Nilda Sanchez, Board Secretary