

MINUTES

Regular Meeting
Cleveland County Water Board Room

March 14, 2023
Tuesday, 7:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Donald Melton; presiding, Vice Chairman Dewey Cook, Secretary Bill Cameron, Commissioners Tony Brooks, Bruce Martin, Pete Pedersen, and General Manager Brad Cornwell. Attorney Tim Moore attended via video conference. Commissioner Amy Bridges was absent.

Chairman Donald Melton called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, welcomed all who were in attendance and recognized Commissioner Dewey Cook who gave the invocation and Commissioner Bruce Martin led the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

A. Approval of agenda:

Chairman Melton asked Commissioners if anyone had any questions related to the adoption of the agenda. Chairman Melton requested a motion to adopt the agenda as proposed or amended.

ACTION TAKEN: Upon a motion by Mr. Pedersen and second by Mr. Cook, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the agenda as proposed or amended.

B. Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

C. Special Presentation: Michelle Alexander, Customer Services Director

Review and Recommendation of Tyler Technologies as Billing/Financial Software Package for Cleveland County Water

Mr. Cornwell introduced Michelle Alexander, Customer Services Director, to present the new software recommendation to the members. Mrs. Alexander shared that several software companies were invited to offer demonstrations for their utility billing software. A spreadsheet slide was shared to show the pros and cons of the different software companies. The District searched for new utility billing software in 2016. During that search in 2016 Tyler Technologies was the software of choice. Qs/1 was awarded the utility billing software in 2016 because of cost savings over Tyler Technologies. During the time that the District has been conducting business with Qs/1, the company has been bought out several times and continues to have problems and issues

with the software. Tyler Technologies software design is the easiest to navigate and retrieve customer data. Tyler Technologies is the software recommendation of choice by the staff for the future needs for utility billing. Mr. Cornwell noted that Edmunds was very nice but couldn't assist with all the technological needs that are required. Southern Software would not do a data conversion for the current data in the Qs/1 software. Southern Software had suggestions on how to convert the data, but the software company does not provide these services. Mr. Cornwell noted that Southern Software charges a conversion fee in their fee schedule. Mrs. Alexander reported that Southern Software was the utility billing software in place when she started her employment almost thirty years ago and that the fee schedule provided was discounted because of the prior relationship in doing business with their company. The Springbrook company bought out Qs/1, and currently maintains the software that the District uses. The quotes provided are to convert to their latest utility billing software. Tyler Technologies will be able to provide the future KIOSK machines and mobile work orders. Mr. Cornwell noted that the biggest customer complaint regarding the current software is the inability to set up automatic monthly payments on a credit card. Qs/1 doesn't support this payment option and won't support this payment option in their Qs/1 software, nor in the latest Springbrook software offered. Mr. Cornwell shared that Tyler Technologies can assist with the customer IVR telephone calls for information sharing, this feature would be used to share information with customers affected in certain outage or low pressure areas and would also inform customers if disconnections would be upcoming. Mrs. Alexander will be switching software companies for the fifth time during her career with the District. Mr. Cornwell opened the floor for questions from the members. Mr. Brooks asked about the location of Tyler Technologies. Mrs. Alexander replied that Tyler Technologies is based in Plano, Texas, but has several locations throughout the United States. The closest location is Durham, North Carolina. The staff training will be provided via the internet. Mr. Pedersen asked about the fees charged by Tyler Technologies. Mrs. Alexander responded that the conversion fee would be \$103,160. Mr. Earl noted that Tyler Technologies has other big established customers. The prior utility billing software companies struggled with providing services because the District was the largest customer. The software companies were not familiar with the size of the customer base and struggled to make accommodation for our large customer base. Tyler Technologies already has experience with large customers and the District's size will actually be in the middle of the customer base. Mr. Pedersen asked about providing customer

service and handling technical difficulties should problems arise. Mrs. Alexander responded that the District would be in good hands with the promised response as soon as possible. The current response time from Springbrook may be two to three days. Mr. Cornwell noted that the Qs/1 headquarters was Spartanburg, S.C. The training for the Qs/1 software during the 2016 conversion process was provided in Spartanburg. The travel time was forty-five minutes to reach their location. Mr. Cornwell informed the members that the location under the current Springbrook ownership has been nearly vacated. The original sales/customer service team that were the contacts for Qs/1 have left Springbrook and are employed for the competitors. Mrs. Alexander noted that the technical team for Springbrook is working from home and are no longer in an office environment.

D. Consent Agenda:

Action Taken: Chairman Melton presented the Consent Agenda Items. Upon a motion by Mr. Pedersen, second by Mr. Cameron, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda. The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

- 1) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 14, 2023
- 2) Consideration of Resolution Number 9-2023 A Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Contract with Tyler Technologies for the Utility Billing and Financial/Accounting Software Needs of Cleveland County Water
- 3) Consideration of Resolution Number 10-2023 A Resolution by Cleveland County Water for the East Marion Street Booster Pump Station Project Number SRP-D-ARP-0037
- 4) Consideration of Resolution Number 11-2023 A Resolution by Cleveland County Water for the Casar Lawndale, Sand Hills, and Will Dixon Waterlines Project SRP-D-ARP-0036
- 5) Consideration of Resolution Number 12-2023 A Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Contract to Audit Accounts with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPA's PA for the Cleveland County Water FY 2022-2023 Annual Audit
- 6) Consideration of Resolution Number 13-2023 A Resolution Authorizing the Consideration of Tenure Based on the Time Served in the North Carolina Local Government Employees Retirement System

E. Unfinished Business:

No unfinished business was presented.

F. New Business:

No new business was presented.

G. General Manager's Report:

Mr. Cornwell continued with Ginger Fern, Finance Director. Mrs. Fern noted that one of the consent agenda items was the new financial audit contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPA's. The audit contract with the prior auditor would not have been available until April or May. The interactions with the new auditor have been very good. Mrs. Fern is very pleased and very impressed so far. The local options sales tax continues to be above budget by 36.5%, this is approximately \$96,000.00. The budgeted amount for local option sales tax has already been met for the year. The materials for the maintenance department remain over budget. There are still some remaining capital projects that have not been converted to capital yet. There were no debt service payments to report, and payroll was a normal four-week month. Mr. Cornwell introduced Jeff Earl, Operations Director, to give his report. Jeff Earl will be retiring at the end of March and Mr. Cornwell noted that this will be Mr. Earl's final operations report. There were twelve leaks in February, four were main line breaks and eight were service line breaks. A total of 483 work orders were completed. The meter change outs consisted of 310 radio read meters, this concluded route 19. The District has installed between 24,000 to 25,000 radio read meters with the staff providing the labor in lieu of an outside contractor. The backflow tests for February were 60 tests. There were forty-one-yard repairs completed. The line extension for Saint Peters Church Road has been completed. The crew has relocated to Shuford Road for a line extension installation. After the Shuford Road extension is completed, the crew will relocate to Delight Road to install water lines on the Oak Grove Cloverhill side of the bridge. Mr. Cornwell noted that the Saint Peters Church Road line extension was the last installation for the Town of Belwood for the ARP funding. The water plant daily average was 4.03 MGD. The peak day was January 3, 2023, for 4.77 MGD. The Marion Street Booster Pump Station contractor has ordered the materials and the equipment. This construction should begin in April. The Clearwell building construction continues with the roof and the insides. The final tie-ins to the water plant will include the effluent, backflow, and high service lines. The flocculation and sedimentation improvements project at the water plant will be advertised on February 20, 2023. The pre-bid meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2023. The Weir project documents to close the loan have been submitted to the USDA for final approval. The bid

should be in the spring of 2023. The AIA (Asset Inventory Assessment) projects have been completed for the Towns of Fallston, Lawndale, and Polkville. The projects have been submitted to the state for approval. The NCDWI will be reviewing the project for the Town of Fallston for possible funding for camera recording of the sewer lines. The Casar Lawndale, Sand Hill and Will Dixon design phase is 80% complete. Some cost-effective changes were made to the design and Willis Engineers will update the design to include these changes. Mr. Cornwell brought back Michelle Alexander, Customer Service Director, to continue the Customer Service, Disconnection and Billing Update. The billing numbers were shared. The customers in cycle 2 were disconnected on February 27 and 28th. A total of 129 accounts were locked for non-payment. The account balances totaled \$36,751.16 and \$11,140.47 remains to be paid, approximately 22 customers. The billing department called twenty-two customers about possible water leaks. The billing department had 57 completed leak adjustments, totaling \$12,598.21. Mr. Cornwell noted that the customer leak adjustments processed were pertaining to the freeze in January. The numbers for leak adjustments will be monitored to determine if changes and adjustments need to be made to the leak adjustment policy currently in place. Mrs. Alexander noted that an attempt was made to contact all customers in cycle 2 before the disconnections took place, almost one hundred customers paid their account balances to avoid disconnection. Mr. Cornwell continued the General Manager's report with an update on the Centrally Located Operations Center. Mr. Cornwell noted that visitors to the construction site were not permitted and if members would like to accompany him for a visit to the new operations center that arrangements can be made. The Lawndale Park for the Stagecoach Greenway has all permits completed except for the sedimentation and erosion control permit. Mr. Cornwell is working to get the situation resolved and get the permit in place. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Application has sent several questions concerning the Stagecoach Greenway. Mr. Cornwell has addressed these questions. The agreements for the Delight Road and NC 10 Access Points still have not been received and are still being reviewed by NC Wildlife Resources. The Paved Trails & Sidewalks Feasibility Study Grant Program has begun the selection process for the contractor. The NCDOT is handling the selection process and the entity that was chosen was also the entity that Mr. Cornwell would have chosen. The design of the Stagecoach Greenway along the Casar Lawndale Road is still being designed. Mr. Cornwell referred the members to a page in their agenda packet for the letter mailed to Asphalt Paving of Shelby. The

land lease for the sand dipping has expired so a letter of notification was mailed to them for reference. Mr. Cornwell referred the members to a letter at their seats addressed to the legislative delegation for project funding.

H. Board Members Announcement and Remarks

Mr. Cameron asked for updates concerning the utility pole at the centrally located operations center. Mr. Cornwell noted that this would be discussed during the closed session. Mr. Melton noted his appreciation for the staff and employees. The members noted appreciation to Jeff Earl for his years of service upon his retirement.

I. Closed Session

1) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price or other material terms of a contract or other proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (5) and to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(3) in the matter of NCDOT v. Broad River Holdings, LLC, ET AL Cleveland County File No. 22-CVS-0265.

Action Taken: Upon a motion by Mr. Brooks, second by Mr. Martin, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to go into Closed Session at 7:25 PM.

Action Taken: Upon a motion by Mr. Pedersen, second by Mr. Brooks, the Board of Commissioners returned to Open Session at 7:47 PM.

Open Session:

Action Taken: Upon a motion by Mr. Martin, second by Mr. Cameron, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to ratify the discussion held in Closed Session and to authorize the General Manager to proceed as directed in Closed Session with the items discussed.

J. Adjournment

Action Taken: Chairman Melton called for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion by Mr. Brooks, second by Mr. Pedersen, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Cameron

Bill Cameron, Secretary

