

## UTILITIES SERVICE BOARD MEETING

06/08/2020

***Utilities Service Board meetings are recorded and are available during regular business hours in the office of the Director of Utilities.***

Board Vice President Capler called the regular meeting of the Utilities Service Board to order at 5:00p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom and Facebook Live.

Board members present: Jim Sherman, Jason Banach, Amanda Burnham, Jean Capler, Megan Parmenter, and Julie Roberts. Three board members were absent, Jeff Ehman and ex-officios Terri Porter and Jim Sims.

Staff present: Vic Kelson, Laura Pettit, Holly McLauchlin, LaTrea Harrington, Chris Wheeler, James Hall, Brad Schroeder, Brandon Prince, and Jane Fleig.

### MINUTES

***Board member Sherman moved and Board member Burnham seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the May 26 meeting. Motion carried, 5 ayes.***

### CLAIMS

***Sherman moved and Burnham seconded the motion to approve the standard claims as follows:*** Vendor invoices submitted included \$181,071.76 from the Water Utility, \$750.00 from the Water Sinking Fund, \$32,695.00 from the Water Construction Fund, \$711,331.68 from the Wastewater Utility, \$1,100.00 from the Wastewater Sinking Fund, and \$1,328.02 from the Stormwater Utility, and \$78,500.00 from the Water Construction Fund

***Total Claims approved: \$928,276.46. Motion carried, 5 ayes.***

***Sherman moved and Burnham seconded the motion to approve the utility claims as follows:*** Utility invoices submitted included \$49,194.25 from the Water Utility, and \$16,582.44 from the Wastewater Utility.

***Total Claims approved: \$65,776.69. Motion carried, 5 ayes.***

***Sherman moved and Burnham seconded the motion to approve the wire transfers, fees, and payroll in the amount of \$471,342.30. Motion carried, 5 ayes.***

***Sherman moved and Burnham seconded the motion to approve the customer refunds as follows:*** Refunds submitted included \$83.57 from the Water Utility, and \$157.42 from the Wastewater Utility.

***Total Claims approved: \$240.99 Motion carried, 5 ayes.***

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

CBU Director Kelson presented the following items recommended by staff for approval:

- Control Freaks, LLC., \$3,500.00, Disinfection systems improvement on SCADA system at Dillman WWTP
- Alpha-Liberty Company, Inc., \$429.00, Annual calibration of balance and scale at Dillman WWTP

***As no items were removed from the Consent Agenda by the Board, agreements approved. Total contracts approved: \$3,929.00.***

## **REQUEST APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT MODIFICATION WITH GROOMER CONSTRUCTION FOR THE SARE RD. HMA REPAIR PROJECT**

CBU Engineer Jane Fleig requested approval for the first amendment to an agreement with Groomer Construction. The original contract was approved for \$4515.62 at the April 27 USB meeting. There is a section of the Sare Rd. path that sank over a 24in water main. Once construction started, our crews removed the existing path and placed the stone. Groomer placed the asphalt. The stone was not level, so in leveling with the paving machine, more asphalt was used than planned. This is a contract modification to add \$618.03 to cover the additional material and trucking costs. The agreement is not to exceed \$5,133.65. The work is complete.

***Sherman moved, Burnham seconded the motion to approve the Agreement Modification with Groomer Construction. Motion carried, 5 ayes.***

## **REQUEST APPROVAL OF FIRST AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT WITH ELECTRIC PLUS, INC. FOR THE DILLMAN WWTP CHLORINE FEED SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

CBU Assistant Director of Engineering Schroeder requested approval for an amendment to the agreement with Electric Plus for work on the chlorine system enhancement at Dillman for the electrical work the department required. Electric Plus provided quotes for multiple tasks. Most of the parts did not come in at the same time so work was done as parts came in. This increased the contract by \$1,315.00 from the original contract of \$4,900.00. The new amount is \$6,215.00.

***Sherman moved, Burnham seconded the motion to approve the First Amendment to the Agreement with Electric Plus. Motion carried, 5 ayes.***

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

## **STAFF REPORTS:**

Kelson reported CBU is in the process of preparing the boardroom for the likelihood that in-person meetings will resume. CBU is working to ensure social distancing in the boardroom while accommodating board members, staff, and the public. Sherman asked if it is possible to have a mixed format meeting such as having participants join via Zoom and others join in the boardroom at CBU. Kelson said there may be a modification for future USB meetings that involve Zoom or Facebook Live that respects room capacity limits. We are currently awaiting an answer from the Office of the Mayor about the requirement to have all voting USB members attend in person. City Attorney Wheeler replied that the Electronic Meeting allowance has been extended to July 4, 2020.

Kelson noted he had received questions on the moratorium on late fees and disconnections of service for nonpayment. The Governor's Executive Order on this expires at the end of June, so CBU is proposing to reinstate late fees on July 1. With August being a busy month with students moving in, disconnections will not be reinstated until September 1. The objective is to get everyone who is in arrears to work with CBU on either getting on a payment plan or working with the Customer Assistance Program (CAP).

Assistant Director of Finance Pettit introduced staff member Edie Henderson who manages the CAP and spoke of revenues and accounts receivable to date. Pettit reported revenue has been steady through COVID. The customer service team has been working with those who need assistance by setting them up with a payment plan to avoid future placement on the disconnections list.

Burnham asked how many customers have been put on a payment plan due to COVID. Pettit answered only 25% of CAP funds have been utilized for the year, and no request has been turned down.

CBU staff later provided information regarding the number of customers on payment plans due to COVID. There are currently 23 customers on payment plans from a reporting period of March 1 through June 17 compared to 12 during the same period in 2019. The Collection Specialist indicates 5 to 8 of the 23 may be COVID related, however customers are not required to disclose why a payment agreement is needed.

Burnham also asked how late fees are calculated and when they will be assessed. Pettit replied that late fees on the current balance are calculated as follows: 3% on water, 3% on sanitation, and 10% on wastewater. Penalties will not be applied to arrearages. Late fees will be assessed July 1.

Sherman asked about water usage over the last few months. Kelson responded that while water usage is down due to there being no students, bills have not gone down as much as anticipated. This may be due to new meter installation.

Kelson also reported receiving questions regarding an indefinite extension of the moratorium for service disconnections due to nonpayment. Our Customer Assistance Program allows customers to utilize the service four months out of the year. We are encouraging those who can afford to pay to not let their bills go into arrears. If there is an increase in demand for the customer assistance program, the USB can review a potential extension of the service in the future.

Capler asked if there are any options of funding in relief packages from the Federal Government, or from City funding to increase the customer assistance program if needed. Kelson answered the CBU is on an accrual accounting basis instead of cash accounting like most other city departments and therefore has more flexibility. CBU can investigate any federal funding programs.

**PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

Mr. Ross Thackery spoke to the board about water bills he received for April and May for a commercial property where four units in the building were shut down for the entire month of April and part of May. There was a single leaking toilet that accrued a water bill of \$1,866.00. In speaking with the customer service team, he requested help from CBU in the form of removing the wastewater portion of the bill or any other type of assistance available. He was offered a delay in payment to which Mr. Thackery noted it will not help. He stated that he followed the county and city guidelines to stay home and stayed away from the property as did all the tenants. He is now responsible for the high water bill in addition to the cost to replace the toilet and damages from the leak. He said there is no care from CBU in this situation, that he did what the city asked, and received no condolences. He is seeking some sort of alleviation.

Capler thanked Mr. Thackery for his comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Capler moved to adjourn; the meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

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Julie Roberts, President

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DATE