

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD JOINT WATER SEWER SYSTEM
APRIL 25, 2023**

Present: John McMeekin, Chairman; Jason Taylor, Treasurer; Laura Johnson, Kyle Crager, Robert Arndt, Don Prioleau, Commissioners.

Absent: Doug Pauley, Vice Chairman; C.D. Rhodes, Attorney.

Others Present: Patti L. Davis, Scott Elliott, Sara Weathers.

The Fairfield Joint Water Sewer Service met in regular session on April 25, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Midlands Technical College Fairfield Campus. In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date and location of this meeting: The Independent Voice of Blythewood and Fairfield, The Country Chronicle and other individuals associated with distribution lists for the Town of Winnsboro, Fairfield County and the Town of Ridgeway.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McMeekin called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and reported that Mr. Rhodes is ill and will not be attending the meeting. Sara Weathers is here tonight sitting in for Mr. Rhodes.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Crager, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 5-0.***

Commissioner Arndt arrived at 6:02 p.m.

Chairman McMeekin took a point of privilege to discuss the recent announcement of the RIA grants. The Fairfield Joint Water Sewer System and the Town of Winnsboro were awarded two \$10M grants. These are complicated with the Joint System, the Town of Winnsboro, the Town of Ridgeway and Fairfield County with the multiple entities and three pools of money, including the Dominion settlement and now the SCIIP Grant. The Town and the County also have a joint obligation for operational costs for the Commission. The lines must be delineated as to where they are and where they cross. The grants were introduced in the middle of the year last year, and this area is fortunate to receive two. Chairman McMeekin stated receiving these grants represents the State of South Carolina showing its faith in the cooperative spirit of these groups, including the County, the Town of Winnsboro, the Town of Ridgeway and the Joint System. It is based on regionalization and cooperation. As a representative on the Midlands Council of Government, Chairman McMeekin

knows we are being looked upon favorably, and this is the indication of that. This is a step in the right direction. Mr. Taylor then gave further information on the grants, stating he is very glad that a total of \$20M has been received, \$10M for the Town and \$10M for the Joint System. The Town applied for and received the grant to upgrade its drinking water facility. A lot of information has been given on wastewater but not much has been given concerning drinking water. This is also a need in the community and throughout the County. Most of the treated drinking water throughout the County is provided by the Town of Winnsboro. Ridgeway is a customer along with Mid-County. The Town has invested a lot of money to get access to water, but while around 10M gallons of water can be accessed out of the Broad River, only about 4M gallons can be treated. About \$16M was put forth to gain access in putting a line to the Broad River, and only 4M gallons of the 10M available gallons can be treated. The treatment facility is being upgraded in order to get more of a return on the investment. The Town's \$10M grant will take the existing water treatment facility, which is antiquated in a lot of ways, and upgrade the treatment process, hopefully to produce even better water and also to produce a larger volume (2M gallons of treatment capacity) of water. The Town has been limited in the amount of treated water but never limited in the amount of water that could be accessed as has been the problem with the sewer capacity. If more than 4M gallons was needed, it could be pulled from the Columbia line; however, this is not the most efficient way to do this. The \$10M grant received for the Joint System is called the Winnsboro Wastewater Interconnection Line. It will immediately help to open up the area along Peach Road for industrial development. There is a lot of land that is suitable for industrial development, including one that the County has worked to acquire a portion of. This interconnection line will hook from the existing Winnsboro Wastewater Plant down 321 to the Peach Road site to start opening up some of that territory for industrial development. However, it does not create additional capacity. The line being installed will simply open up the industrial territory. In the future when the new plant is built, that line can be used to interconnect with the new wastewater facility to create more of a regional approach. Chairman McMeekin stated this is a game changer if it is acted on correctly. Mr. Crager also serves on the Midlands Council of Government along with Councilman Gilbert. Beyond what happens at County Council or the Town Councils, it takes the Council of Government. The NPDES permits, the 208 Plan and many other aspects are overseen by the Midlands Council of Government. This is fairly complex, but these grants are game changers and pushing in the right direction. The grants will also change a lot of what is being done with the budget. The budget workshop for these grants will be held on May 31, so this will push some of the action items back to the planning stage. Some thought will need to be put into how to handle the grant money properly along with oversight. This is good news, and we are moving in the right direction.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Commissioner Crager, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of March 23, 2023. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

4. DISCUSSION OF TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Chairman McMeekin stated this item pertains to the grants and moving forward. He was present in the room in the fall of 2017 when this Commission was being discussed and organized, and it has been a long time. In the organization of the Commission, there is a Technical Committee which needs to be able to take in technical information, process it, analyze it and then report back to the Commission. If it is five members, a Commission of the Whole is okay with three members constituting a quorum. With seven members, it is a little unwieldy and slows down the process. We cannot afford to be slow right now. The Technical Committee had been moved from a Committee of three to a Committee of the Whole. Chairman McMeekin would like to go back to a smaller Committee. Mr. Crager will continue to serve as Chairman. If the Committee of the Whole is continued, four would constitute a quorum, but Chairman McMeekin would be required to come to the meetings as Chairman and then turn the meeting over to Mr. Crager. In going back to a Technical Committee, Mr. Crager will be Chairman and will handle the entire meeting. We need to be able to move quickly and have those capable of analyzing things. Mr. Crager would remain as Chairman and Mr. Taylor, Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Arndt would also be on the Technical Committee. These are the ones who deal with most of this, Mr. Crager is the engineer and representatives from both Towns and the County. The motion needed would be to return the Technical Committee back down to four members to be comprised of Kyle Crager, Jason Taylor, Laura Johnson and Robert Arndt. In looking at the minutes from September 29, 2021, the Committee will be charged with studying matters concerning the planning, designing and construction of capital projects. Previously this entailed the construction of the plant, but there is more now because of the interconnector line. The Committee will only be empowered to study those matters referred to it by the Commission and to make recommendations to the Commission. Under no circumstances will the Committee act on behalf of the Commission. Chairman McMeekin also asked that the Committee allow the entire Commission to be allowed into any executive sessions in order to keep the entire Commission informed. Motion made by Commissioner Taylor, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, to return the Technical Committee to a smaller number of four charged with studying matters concerning the planning, designing and construction of capital projects, only being empowered to study those matters that are referred to it by the Commission to make recommendations to the Commission and under no circumstances to act on behalf of the Commission. For the benefit of

everyone, Mrs. Weathers pointed out that these meetings will be public meetings, will be subject to the laws of FOIA and will be properly noticed. The public is welcome to come to the meetings, and this will allow the Commission to be able to function a little bit more agile. Chairman McMeekin thanked Mrs. Weathers and stated this is the way it has been done in the past, always open to the public and subject to FOIA, and the public is always welcome at the meetings. Also, when the grants were proposed last year, more goods and services could be bought than now. Inflation is out there and running costs up. The Commission needs to be able to move expeditiously and wisely and carefully. Time is not necessarily our friend, although we do plan to think through everything very carefully. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

5. FIRST PRESENTATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 BUDGET

Chairman McMeekin stated Commissions Johnson and Taylor have worked on this jointly. Commissioner Taylor stated a budget was previously presented, but it was a much more detailed budget and not one to be passed with the current situation. In the current situation, there is really a small budget to cover a few items being proposed in the amount of \$98,800. This consists of many blank line items because we are not fully operational yet, but the following are the few line items listed:

- Printing, Binding and Advertising: There will be occasions when advertising will be needed for meetings, public hearings, etc. and \$500 is listed for this line item.
- Legal Services: This is the largest line where money has been spent, and \$44,000 is in this line item. Mr. Rhodes provided this information.
- Engineering Services: This is a touch high at \$50,000. This does not represent engineering associated with the capital project itself because that will all come out of the Dominion settlement funds. This represents any other engineering services that are needed. The hope is to be able to get additional grant money and occasionally an engineer or professional services type person to assist in preparing the grant package. This is not to cover the cost of the PER or any of the engineering associated with the capital project, because this is not a capital budget and instead is an operating budget. Chairman McMeekin stated the PER is the Preliminary Engineering Report. Mr. Taylor agreed and stated this is the critical thing the Commission is working toward. This is needed in order to kick off the bidding of the actual construction of the plant. DHEC must first have the PER.
- Insurance: This is something that was recently acquired as a necessity just in case a decision is made that may have repercussions. The cost for this is \$3,600.
- Miscellaneous Expenses: This is a line item of \$700. The By-Laws state a post office must be set up, so this will cover things of this nature.

This budget will be funded from member contributions, a transfer payment from the Town and the County. This budget will be taken back to the respective Councils for approval as part of the current budget process. It is set up for a 75%-25% split. Commissioner Johnson stated there is a line for budget amendments for any category that is incorrect. Chairman McMeekin stated the Commission will count on Commissioner Johnson's accounting skills to keep everything in line. Chairman McMeekin further stated this is a preliminary presentation and is another step being taken to move forward.

6. UPDATE ON WASTEWATER PLANT ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Chairman McMeekin stated the Scope of Work and Description of Engineering Services was included in the Agenda Packet by Mr. Bill Bingham. This is a listing of what has been asked of him to do and present in draft form on May 9. The County and the Town of Winnsboro have both signed off on this. It was expected today, but Mr. Bingham had jury duty.

7. RESOLUTION NO. 2023-01: A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING CERTAIN FINANCIAL POLICIES OF THE FAIRFIELD JOINT WATER SEWER SYSTEM AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AND BANKING RELATIONSHIPS, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Chairman McMeekin stated the Commission will need to set up a banking relationship to handle the money the Commission will have and establish procedures of how to handle the money. An employer identification number must also be applied for. Mrs. Weathers stated the financial policies 1.0 and 1.02 are referred to and made a part of the Resolution. Chairman McMeekin stated those need to be handled separately; however, Mrs. Weathers stated it is set out as one Resolution. Chairman McMeekin stated he and Mr. Rhodes spoke this afternoon as well as the Town Attorney. Because of the SCIIP Grant and the workshop pushed off until May 31, these policies may need to be refined a little more. Mrs. Weathers stated since the banking matters can wait, the recommendation is to table this item for now. A Resolution can be brought forth on May 9 for the stand-alone banking relationship.

8. ADOPTION OF CORPORATE RESOLUTION


Mrs. Weathers stated this item should be tabled also because section 3 gives the authorization to execute the banking documents. Chairman McMeekin stated it is wise to table this also. Mrs. Weathers also noted that on May 9 the By-Laws will be amended to conform with traditional FOIA regulations of 24-hour notice rather than 48 which will make the Commission a little more agile. Chairman McMeekin stated in the beginning it was set up for five days then shortened to 48 hours, but 24 hours would keep us in line with every other governmental entity.

- 9. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (The following statement is provided in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act: Subsequent to Executive Session, the Commission may take action on matters discussed in Executive Session.)**

No executive session needed.

10. ADJOURN

At 6:28 p.m., it was moved by Commissioner Crager, seconded by Commissioner Taylor, to adjourn. ***The motion carried unanimously 6-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
SECRETARY



JOHN MCMEEKIN
CHAIRMAN