

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
FAIRFIELD JOINT WATER SEWER SYSTEM
SEPTEMBER 27, 2023**

Present: John McMeekin, Chairman; Doug Pauley, Vice Chairman; Jason Taylor, Treasurer; Laura Johnson, Kyle Crager, Robert Arndt, Don Prioleau, Commissioners; C.D. Rhodes, Attorney; Patti Davis, Secretary.

Absent: Robert Arndt.

The Fairfield Joint Water Sewer Service met in regular session on September 27, 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 6:02 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Vice Chair Pauley, seconded by Commissioner Crager, to approve the agenda. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Vice Chair Pauley, seconded by Commissioner Crager, to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of July 25, 2023. ***The motion carried 6-0.*** Motion made by Commissioner Crager, seconded by Vice Chair Pauley, to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of August 14, 2023. ***The motion carried 6-0.***

4. DISCUSSION CONCERNING PROPERTY PURCHASE FOR WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Mr. Rhodes stated particular properties will not be discussed tonight, and Commissioner Johnson will be speaking to where the County is in this process. Mrs. Johnson stated County Council is on second reading of Ordinance 825, and with this, County Council is approving for Administration to begin searching for a suitable location for the wastewater treatment plant. This will be a joint effort with the Joint System, County Council and American Engineering. Mr. Rhodes stated the County would like to have a lot of input into the property that is chosen. He believes the order of things does not matter as much as everybody being on the same page as to a piece of property

that will ultimately be selected. The County is in the process of finding a piece of property, and Mr. Bingham has given the general criteria needed. Ultimately, County Council will vote on a piece of property and the price, and the Joint System would be asked to concur with that decision. Chairman McMeekin stated this is a good summation, and Commissioner Johnson stated she did not want County Council to solely make the decision, because it is a joint effort.

5. DISCUSSION CONCERNING REISSUANCE OF RFP FOR DESIGN OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Mr. Rhodes stated the point is coming where some of the preliminary design work and scope work that has been approved for American Engineering thus far will start to run out, and the transition will be needed into more design work for pricing, projections, etc. An engineering firm will need to be selected to do that work. Previously, an RFQ was done, and a general consensus is needed as to how the new RFQ will be pulled together and what is necessary to pull the trigger on its distribution. That process could consist of working on the RFQ and bringing it back to the Commission with the Commission then voting to approve it. This would not necessarily require Commission approval as the Treasurer has the power to do this, so a discussion is needed as to the previous RFQ and what the next one would look like. Chairman McMeekin stated he would like for the Commission at-large to have the final decision so everyone would be comfortable with it and appearances are "above-board". It is a moving picture with interest rates continuing to rise and the world changing. Some of the imports are loosening up a bit, and it is a different world than the last time. Commissioner Johnson suggested that the old RFQ could be looked at by each member of the Joint System and then come back together with recommendations. Chairman McMeekin suggested this item going to the Technical Committee. Commissioner Taylor stated his preference would be to pull the RFQ to use as a starting point and then run it through the Technical Committee. The Joint System has the benefit of having Commissioner Crager as a member with his extensive technical knowledge. Also, the last time this was put out, it only produced two bids, and he would like to have more this time. Commissioner Johnson inquired concerning the turnaround time. Commissioner Crager stated there are a tremendous amount of RFQ's on the market right now, and over the last 90 days, the market has been inundated. Mr. Rhodes inquired what is the impetus for putting this out right now and is this something that could wait. He believes it would not hurt to wait three or six months. Chairman McMeekin agreed and stated Commissioner Crager has a better feel for this set of circumstances. Chairman Crager proposed preparing revisions to the old RFQ before the next meeting and keep the agenda item for discussion only for now. Commissioner Johnson stated she thinks the quicker this gets out the better. When jobs are advertised, sometimes they are out for three or four months, but if we wait to

put the RFQ out, it may still take three or four more months to get a response. The date for submittal could be placed out further, but at least it will be out there and hopefully, some will trickle in. Commissioner Crager stated sixty (60) days would be the minimum and ninety (90) days would be a little longer than typical. The other thing that could be done would be to solicit letters of interest for a qualifications process for potential outreach. Mr. Rhodes has never done this and inquired concerning the responses. Commissioner Crager stated this would give the opportunity to see who is interested and potentially flesh out questions before the actual RFQ drops. After further discussion, Wednesday, October 4, was selected for the Technical Committee Meeting to discuss this item further. Chairman McMeekin inquired if Mr. Rhodes has heard if all the SCIIP grants are being met. Mr. Rhodes knows there are a lot of folks with question marks. He believes the Joint System is in good shape as compared to some others, due in large part because of the available bank account. He is not aware of any that are failing just yet, but there are definitely some having significant fund matching issues that they are trying to work through. Mr. Rhodes will distribute the former RFQ for the upcoming meeting on October 4.

6. REVIEW OF PROJECT MANAGER JOB DESCRIPTION

Mr. Rhodes has reviewed this and will defer to Commissioner Taylor and Commissioner Johnson who, along with their staff, worked through this. Commissioner Johnson stated Mr. Clauson and Mrs. Williams worked on the actual job description. Chairman McMeekin suggested adding "should have" concerning the minimum training and experience, and Commissioner Crager agreed. Commissioner Taylor inquired as to the appropriate place to advertise the position and suggested the trade organizations, Municipal Association, County Association, ICMA, Rural Water, etc. Mr. Rhodes stated there will be a budget attached to this position, and he does not feel a salary should be advertised; however, he believes the parties responsible should have an idea of what they are willing to do. Commissioner Johnson stated those conversations can begin next week, and in terms of advertising, normally a salary range is included. Commissioner Crager suggested it be posted "commensurate with experience." Commissioner Taylor stated this can be done, but calls will probably still come in inquiring about the salary range. After further discussion, Chairman McMeekin appointed the following to the Finance Committee: Chairman McMeekin, Commissioner Taylor, Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Crager. The Finance Committee will also meet on October 4 immediately after the Technical Committee.

7. DISCUSSION CONCERNING SCIIP GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Rhodes stated there were preliminary discussions about asking the Midlands COG for grant administration support. This is something they are willing to do, and they have reached back out to see if this is something that

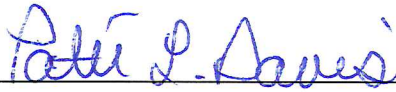
is wanted. The grant administration agreement between the Joint System and the County has built into it the ability to contract to provide some of these services. This discussion item is based on where things are right now and is this additional support needed at this time. Chairman McMeekin stated he and Commissioner Taylor met with the COG, and Commissioner Johnson was not able to make this meeting. Representative McDaniel called this meeting in an attempt to bring all parties together with the COG. The offer was again made by the COG at this meeting. Commissioner Taylor stated there is great value in strengthening the relationship with the COG. Being partnered with them and working with them demonstrates our ability to do some of these projects, and this is a great benefit with the delegation and the COG. The COG has changed leadership recently, and it would be good to develop a good relationship with them going forward. Chairman McMeekin has worked closely with Mr. Sprouse, and items will go from the EPAC Committee back to the COG. Chairman McMeekin will be Vice Chairman of the EPAC Committee, and Mrs. Williams will also be on EPAC. All of this ties in together. Mr. Britt Poole is the new Executive Administrator of the COG, and Mr. Sprouse would be a big help to this project and others. There is also the possibility of financial help, which the Town and the County would appreciate. He believes this should be pursued. Mr. Rhodes stated RIA was adamant about all agreements very clearly defining roles and responsibilities. They want to know who to look to for pay applications being processed appropriately and that reports are done in a timely manner. Carrying this forward, the support that is needed from the COG would need to be clearly defined with exact responsibilities. Chairman McMeekin stated this can be pinned down, and Mr. Sprouse could get in touch with Mr. Rhodes to discuss further. Commissioner Johnson stated American Engineering offered to do the quarterly reports. Commissioner Crager feels there is time for this because there will not be a lot of burden until construction gets closer, and the quarterly reports currently only require one or two page efforts. Commissioner Johnson agrees that this could be postponed, and when it comes to the draw-downs, the County may be able to do the draw-downs. Chairman McMeekin stated we must be extremely careful going forward, and Commissioner Johnson stated files are being kept on everything with documentation. Mr. Rhodes stated it sounds like this item will be deferred until the process is a little further down the line with a little better idea of what those tasks would actually look like. Chairman McMeekin stated in the meantime, he will pursue what he can with the COG.

8. 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.

9. ADJOURN

At 6:38 p.m., it was moved by Commissioner Crager, seconded by Vice Chair Pauley, to adjourn. ***The motion carried 6-0.***



PATTI L. DAVIS
SECRETARY



JOHN MCMEEKIN
CHAIRMAN