

ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 24, 2013

The Board of Directors of the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) held a regular meeting on Thursday, January 24, 2013, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers at the Chapel Hill Town Hall.

Board Members present: Alan Rimer, P.E., Chair; John A. Young, Vice Chair; Amy Witsil, Secretary; Terri Buckner; Stephen Dear; Michael M. Hughes, P.E.; Gordon Merklein; and Will Raymond. Absent: Dana Raborn.

OWASA staff present: Ed Kerwin; Mason Crum; Greg Feller; Patrick Davis; Stephanie Glasgow; Heidi Lamay; Ed Holland; Kenneth Loflin; William "Dusty" Martin; Andrea Orbich; Kelly Satterfield; Stephen Winters; and Robert Epting, Esq., Epting and Hackney.

Others present: Meg Holton, Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Manager of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Mac Clarke, Chapel Hill resident; and Heather Payne, Chapel Hill resident.

There being a quorum present, Chair Alan Rimer called the meeting to order.

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MOTIONS ACTED UPON

1. Will Raymond made a motion to approve the December 13, 2012 Minutes of the Board of Directors; second by John Young, and unanimously approved.

2. Will Raymond made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting; second by Gordon Merklein, and unanimously approved.

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ITEM ONE: ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Alan Rimer said any Board Member who knows of a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to any item on the agenda tonight is asked to disclose the same at this time. None were disclosed.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

John Young said that the Finance Committee met prior to the Board meeting to receive and discuss a report from staff regarding options under consideration in OWASA's water and sewer rate design study. The Committee will make a proposal for the Board's consideration on February 28, 2013.

PUBLIC MEETING ON STREAM BUFFERS

Will Raymond thanked the Town of Chapel Hill for holding a public meeting on stream buffers in the watershed on January 22, 2012. Mr. Raymond also thanked Patrick Davis for attending on behalf of OWASA.

ITEM TWO: PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

Alan Rimer asked for petitions and requests from the public; there were none.

Terri Buckner petitioned that Board Committee Meeting Summaries be posted on OWASA's website.

Ms. Buckner also petitioned the Board to consider a public fund for water conservation efforts, similar to the Taste of Hope customer assistance program, to fund water efficient improvements.

The Board referred Ms. Buckner's petition to staff for discussion at a future meeting.

Mr. Rimer asked for petitions and requests from the staff; there were none.

ITEM THREE: MINUTES

Will Raymond made a motion to approve the December 13, 2012 Minutes of the Board of Directors; second by John Young, and unanimously approved. Please see Motion No. 1 above.

ITEM FOUR: DISCUSSION OF A POTENTIAL POLICY ON PUBLIC COMMENTS IN BOARD MEETINGS

Heather Payne requested that the Board not adopt the proposed policy on limiting public comments by citizens.

Alan Rimer opened discussion to the Board and began by suggesting that the Board adopt a statement that all involved in the Board meeting should behave civilly.

Terri Buckner said she supports a three-minute limit on public comments, which is applied consistently to everyone.

Michael Hughes said he supports a three-minute limit on public comments with Board discretion. He also inquired if there was a requirement to accommodate disabled speakers in accord to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Robert Epting said he was unaware of any ADA constraints but that the Board could consider accommodating those citizens.

Will Raymond said he does not support the three-minute time limit; he supports an informal approach to public comment/presentation. Mr. Raymond also does not support a civility statement.

Amy Witsil said she supports a framework for public comments with Board discretion.

John Young said he has no opinion; but that the three- to five-minute time limit gives guidance to speakers to organize their comments. The time limit also gives the Board a reasonable time to receive and process those comments.

Gordon Merklein said he supports a three- to four-minute time limit on public comments with discretion from the Board.

Mr. Rimer said that whatever the Board decides, a statement should be published that states a time limit with discretion from the Board.

Robert Epting proposed the following be added to each Board agenda: *“Public comment is invited either by petition upon topics not on the Board’s agenda, or by comments upon items appearing on the Board’s agenda. Public speakers are encouraged to organize their remarks for delivery within the three-to-five minute time frame allowed each speaker. Additional time may be allowed at the discretion of the Board of Directors.”*

Mr. Dear suggested the statement begin with, *“The Board of Directors appreciates and invites the public to attend and observe its meetings.”*

The Board concurred that this new statement will be added to each Board agenda.

ITEM FIVE: MARKETING PLAN FOR TASTE OF HOPE CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mac Clarke said that six per cent participation by donors is not a success and perhaps an “opt-out” program would be beneficial to OWASA. Mr. Clarke said that perhaps the Board should consider an annual request for support from local governments and/or making an appeal in the newspapers or customers’ bills.

Terri Buckner said that State Employees Credit Union (SECU) Foundation does a great job raising money and OWASA should inquire of the SECU Foundation on how they raise money. Ms. Buckner also said that staff can add a notice to the on-line bill to sign up for Taste of Hope and do a better job of advertising Taste of Hope and its accomplishments.

Stephen Dear said he agrees with Ms. Buckner about promoting benefits of Taste of Hope. Mr. Dear also said that local churches welcome bulletin inserts and there is an opportunity to work with the list-serve of local clergy who meet periodically.

Will Raymond feels Mr. Clarke's suggesting about an annual appeal to the community for support of the Taste of Hope program is good but does not agree with the "opt-out" program.

Alan Rimer reminded the Board of their obligation to attend an outreach event in the community to talk about OWASA as well as the Taste of Hope program.

Ms. Buckner said she feels that OWASA should get aggressive and should defer to a subcommittee.

Mr. Dear said this is a good example of the need to have an Outreach Committee.

Mr. Rimer said that he will discuss this topic at the Executive Committee meeting on January 28th meeting.

ITEM SIX: DISCUSSION OF THE RATE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After discussion, the Board agreed that progress regarding a new rate proposal has been made, however there was no consensus. The Board requested that the Finance Committee make a rate structure recommendation to the Board on February 28, 2013.

ITEM SEVEN: REVIEW OF DRAFTS OF THE BUDGET PLANNING DOCUMENTS; SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ISSUES, PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS, AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION; FISCAL YEAR 2014 BUDGET CALENDAR

Mac Clarke suggested the Board take into account comments from the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill when considering legal obligations to meet UNC's water demands.

ITEM EIGHT: FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2012

The Board received this report as an information item.

ITEM NINE: OWASA'S APPROACH TO PROJECTING WATER DEMANDS

Following Board discussion, the Board encouraged continued collaboration with the local governments and that OWASA staff work toward commonality of the data.

ITEM TEN: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILL SUMMARIZE THE KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THE BOARD MEETING AND NOTE SIGNIFICANT ITEMS FOR

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION EXPECTED AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

Ed Kerwin summarized the meeting with the following items:

- Staff will follow up on Terri Buckner's petition to post Board Committee meeting summaries to the OWASA website.
- Staff will work with Ms. Buckner regarding her petition to consider a public fund for water conservation to be discussed at a future Board meeting.
- Staff will post information on each agenda welcoming and encouraging public comments at Board of Director meetings and regarding the time limit for comments.
- Finance Committee will bring a rate structure recommendation to the Board on February 28, 2013.
- The Board's February 14, 2013 meeting will be a Work Session to discuss OWASA's strategic plan.

Will Raymond made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting; second by Gordon Merklein and unanimously approved. See Motion No. 2 above.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.