

The Lowcountry Regional Water System Commission held its regular monthly meeting at 4:00 pm on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, in the large conference room at the Hampton County Adminstrative Center in the Town of Hampton, 200 Jackson Avenue East, Hampton South Carolina. All meetings are open to the public (except for information, if any, to be discussed in Executive Sessions) and all interested parties are invited to attend.

**Commission Present:** Mayor Robert Brown, Hampton

Mayor Nat Shaffer, Varnville

Ms. Peggy O’Banner, Yemassee

Mayor Horney Mitchell, Gifford

**Officers Present:** Mr. Brian Burgess, General Manager

 Ms. Marlene Marchyshyn, Treasurer

Ms. Kari Foy, Engineer

Mr. Blake Hodge, Field Operations Manager

Mr. Alec Sterling, Treatment Operations Manager

**Visitors Present:** Ms. Marie Rivers- Yemassee

 **Quorum Met:** Yes

1. **Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Robert Brown called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

2. **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Horney Mitchell gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance - Conducted by all.

3. **FOIA Compliance Report**

As required by Code of Laws of South Carolina, notice of this LRWS Commission meeting was posted prominently in the offices of the Commission at least twenty-four hours in advance. In addition, the local news media and all persons requesting notifications of meetings of the LRWS Commission were notified of the time, date, and place of such meeting, and were provided with a copy of the agenda at least twenty-four hours prior to this meeting.

4. **Adoption of the Agenda**

Moved by Peggy O’Banner, seconded by Nat Shaffer, to adopt the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Horney Mitchell to approve the minutes for the July 26, 2023, meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

6. **Public Hearing-Development Impact Fee Policy & Schedule of Fees**

There were no members of the public in attendance at the time of the public hearing.

7. **Reports:**

**A. Financial Report**- The financial report for July was presented by Marlene. She noted that the year-to-date expenses were high and reminded the Board that as previously reported, there had been repairs and maintenance done that were not expected.

Moved by Peggy O’Banner, seconded by Horney Mitchell to accept the financial report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**B. General Managers Report**- Brian reported that the Field Operations crew had been busy repairing water leaks. We have had employees out of work due to Covid.

 **(Staff Reports)**

**1**. Deputy General Managers Report

**2**. Human Resource Managers Report

1. Marlene provided the work hours for the month of July. She noted that there were no workers comp incidents or loss time and that there were no new hires, terminations, or resignations during July.

**3**. Billing Managers Report

**4**. Engineers Report

Kari provided an update on the progress of ongoing projects.

1. The Gifford Lift Station Project is almost complete. They are working on a punch list now and have an electrical panel to change. The project should be closed out mid-September.
2. We had a preconstruction meeting on the Sewer Service Extension (Early Branch). A Notice to Proceed dated September 5, 2023, was issued.
3. The Yemassee WWTP Aeration Upgrade & Flow Splitting Project funding finalized $1.5 million in grant funds from SRF for upgrades.
4. The LRIP Lift Station Upgrade Project received bids on 8/8/23. The low bid was $815,100 and exceeds the project funding.

Other projects going on include the SCIIP Project funding plans, Mixson St. Sewer repair, Dollar General hydrant installation, Iron Line Metals in Yemassee. LRWS will also be preparing Standard Specs and Development Guidelines with the help of the MRB consultants' group.

**5**. Field Operations Managers Report

Blake provided a report of the work done since the last meeting. He reported that his crew had worked on fifteen mains and had two more to do.

**6**. Treatment Operations Managers Report

Not in attendance at the time of staff reports being presented. No report provided.

8. **System Member Commissioners Reports**

A. Town of Brunson- Not in attendance.

B. Town of Gifford- The town is currently working with two grants: one federal and one state. The two grants will be combined and used towards the playground. The town has signed the necessary paperwork with the contractor to work on the old Rosenwald school. They will be working on stabilization of the roof and installing windows.

C. Town of Hampton- The town applied for a grant for playground equipment on Nix Street. The town is also working on Halloween and Christmas.

D. Town of Varnville- The town applied for $370,000 demolition project grant funds for dilapidated homes and buildings around the town.

E. Town of Yemassee- The Shrimp Festival is fast approaching. There will be a variety of events and vendors. All slots for vendor participation are full. The town's plan for the near future is to add a water feature to their park.

F. Hampton County- Not in attendance.

9. **Old Business**

**A)** **Update On SCIIP Funding Strategy**

Brian provided the Board with a spreadsheet showing a funding breakdown for the SCIIP Project. The project will include the Industrial Area Water Improvements, Yemassee Interconnection, Hampton-Varnville Interconnection, and Hwy. 601 Sewer Extension. The estimated cost of the project is $24,885,735. Funding for this project will be as follows: SCIPP $10,000,000, RD Disaster grant $11,868,575, Hampton County $474,000, and LRWS $2,543,160. LRWS is looking at adding another section to create a loop in Yemassee on the south side from Castle Hall to River Road when applying for funding through the RD Disaster grant. The SCIIP grant requires a 15% match. Brian told the Board that the $2,543,160 included part of that match as well as providing Engineering for the entire project. LRWS is looking at borrowing the funds from the bank and then later, refinancing the loan for a longer term. The General Revenue Fund would service the loan. Nat Shaffer asked Brian if the $2,543,160 loan was allotted for in the draft budget. He said that he was trying to figure out the dollar amount that it would affect the customers. Brian told him that it would be about $6.50 per customer but that it would depend on how the Board decides to do it. It can be added as a fee, or part of the base rate, or part of a volumetric rate.

**B) Update on LRIP Sewer Pump Station Rehab Project**

Kari gave an update on the LRIP Sewer Pump Station Rehab Project. The project was estimated at $616,000 going into bid opening. LRWS received $470,000 in grant funds and committed to the difference of $146,000. On bid day, the low bid was $815,100. We had three contractors that requested plans to bid on the project, but we only received one bid. SRF is acceptable with this if LRWS is in a position to proceed. RIA is continuing with their regular programs where every March and September, they have a deadline to apply for grant funds. LRWS will be submitting this project to request their assistance in making up the difference.

10. **New Business**

A) Presentation of the 2022 Annual Report

Marlene provided the Commissioners with the Annual report for the year ending September 30, 2022. The report provides information on last year’s water and sewer production and consumption totals, amounts billed and collected per town, annual revenues, annual expenditures, and projects. The report has been posted and is available on LRWS’ website.

**B) Resolution 2023-09 Adoption of the Updated Capital Improvement Plan**

LRWS previously adopted a Capital Improvement Plan for its water and wastewater system. LRWS is considering amending its water and wastewater capacity impact fees and is required to have a Capital Improvement Plan as part of the requirements to adopt impact fees. LRWS has updated the existing Capital Improvement Plan and is in the process of developing a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan with a consultant which will be completed at a later date.

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Horney Mitchell to approve and adopt the Updated Capital Improvement Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

**C) Resolution 2023-08 Adoption of Water and Wastewater Capacity Impact Fee Policy and Fee Schedule**

Brian discussed the Water and Wastewater Capacity Impact Fee Policy and Fee Schedule. He noted that on page 2, Section 2 of the water capacity fee per meter equivalent, it shows the meter equivalent is equal to a 150 gallon per day residential meter but that it should be a 250 gallon per day residential meter instead. This capacity fee shall be assessed on all new developments and redevelopment for which water and/or sewer service is requested. Capacity fees should be calculated based upon the daily water and sewer demands of new development or redevelopment provided by the owner, developer, or design engineer. The capacity fees set forth in the Resolution would be $2,700 per meter equivalent for water and $2,688 per residential equivalent unit for sewer. After further discussion, the Board agreed that the fee should be reduced for now and revisited later.

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Horney Mitchell to adopt Resolution 2023-08 Adoption of Water and Wastewater Capacity Impact Fee Policy and Fee Schedule with the charge for both water and sewer being reduced to $1,200 each. Motion carried unanimously.

**D) First Reading of Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget, Capital Improvement Renewal &** **Replacement Budget and Extension and Expansion Budget**

Brian presented the draft budget for 2023-2024. The draft Operating Budget is $3,780,029. Brian noted that he still had a lot to do with the budget and that there were some numbers that still needed to be updated and/or finalized. He noted in previous discussions of the SCIPP funding strategy that the $2,543,160 was not included in the draft budget. If the bank loan is added to the budget, LRWS will need to increase its revenues by $210,000 to $220,000. As mentioned during the SCIIP funding strategy, this would mean a rate increase of about $6.50 per customer.

Moved by Nat Shaffer, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to approve the first reading of the 2023-2024 Operating Budget, Capital Improvement Renewal & Replacement Budget and Extension and Expansion Budget. Motion carried unanimously.

**E) Consideration of Proposals for the Town of Yemassee Mixon Street Sewer Main Repair and Replacement**

Kari and Brian discussed the ongoing sewer issues that LRWS has had on Mixon Street in Yemassee. LRWS has had David Rowell with Little Dipper pumping the line every day until a contractor can come in and make the necessary repairs that are needed. Kari reported that the line has collapsed and needs to be replaced. A bid was submitted by TCO Construction for the replacement and repairs. The total bid amount is $65,560. The job would include a new manhole, eight-inch sewer main, tying into existing manholes, reconnect existing services, traffic control, mobilization, and demobilization.

Kari told the Board that someone had purchased the property between Josselson and Bing Street and that he wanted to subdivide the parcel and build five homes. There are two sewer lines that cross the parcel that would need to be relocated. One of the lines crossing the parcel is failing and would need to be replaced. LRWS is working with the developer to address the issue.

Moved by Peggy O’Banner, seconded by Nat Shaffer to approve the proposal for the Mixon Street Sewer Main Repair and Replacement. Brian will talk with the developer concerning the sewer line issue between Josselson and Bing Street.

**F) Resolution 2023-10 Engineering Task Order #23167 From Keck & Wood for Yemassee WWTP Upgrade**

The Yemassee WWTP is currently under a consent order from SCDHEC for violations of its discharge permit. LRWS is in the process of developing an industrial pretreatment program for its wastewater facilities as part of a plan to meet the order. We will need to produce a preliminary engineering report to determine the actions that need to be taken to return the plant to compliance. LRWS has a Master Service Agreement with Keck & Wood and received a proposal to produce the PER. The proposal is in the amount of $50,400. LRWS will pay Keck & Wood from the Contingency Fund account. If funds are not available in the Contingency Funds account, the Depreciated Assets (Short Term Assets) account will be used.

Moved by Peggy OBanner, seconded by Nat Shaffer to accept and approve Resolution 2023-10 Engineering Task Order #23167 from Keck & Wood

**G) Public Comments**

Ms. Marie Rivers of Yemassee spoke to the Commissioners about the possibility of running sewer services to her residence on Bing Street. She said that she was told by the town of Yemassee that it would be made available if her address was annexed into the town limits but after being annexed, she was told by the town that they had no more funds available. She said that it seemed to her that her home had been overlooked as other homes in or around her area were provided with the service. Kari explained to Ms. Rivers the process and requirements involved in receiving grant funds. She said that this issue would be something to look at with future grant funding.

11. **Adjournment**

Moved by Horney Mithcell, seconded by Peggy O’Banner to adjourn. The meeting was then adjourned at 5:35pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Marlene Marchyshyn.*