

PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY APRIL 14, 2021
8:30 AM

Present: Wade R. Fowler, Jr., Chairman
Darsweil L. Rogers, Secretary
Evelyn Shaw, Treasurer

Others Present: Elaina L. Ball, CEO/General Manager
Telly Whitfield, Assistant City Manager
Michael Boose, Cumberland County Commissioner, Liaison

Absent: Chris Davis, City Council Liaison
Bill Zell, Interim Hope Mills Town Manager/Liaison
Media

REGULAR BUSINESS

Chairman Wade Fowler called the meeting of Wednesday, April 14, 2021, to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Rogers, the agenda was unanimously approved.

AWARD PRESENTATION

- A. American Public Power Association (APPA) Exceptional Electric Reliability Award in 2020
Presented by: Elaina Ball, CEO/General Manager
Jon Rynne, Electric Chief Operating Officer
- B. Adopt PWC Resolution # PWC2021.13 - Resolution Honoring Public Power Lineworkers During Lineworker Appreciation Days April 12 and April 18, 2021

Jon Rynne stated PWC received the APPA Award of Excellence for Exceptional Electric Reliability. He stated APPA compared our 2020 reliability statistics with energy information agencies' collection of reliability statistics for all the utilities within the U.S. They also compared them with 2015-2019 submissions for the EIA for reliability statistics and placed PWC's reliability statistics in the top quartile based on those criteria. This demonstrates we are doing the right things in system improvements, how we operate the system and keeping up with the highest level of reliability, particularly for the SAIDI index.

Mr. Rynne stated the second is a resolution recognizing Lineworkers Appreciation Days. This is a formalization for recognizing Lineworkers for all their efforts in doing their jobs safely on a daily basis. Also, for the things they do in responses to outages, and natural disasters (hurricanes, ice storms, tornadoes) and all the issues that affect the power system. This is a resolution that recognizes our Lineworkers in response to an action at the state level.

Commissioner Fowler asked if we adopt resolutions for honoring our water workers as well. Mr. Noland stated we give recognition for response, but he is not aware if AWWA does anything like this.

CONSENT ITEMS

Upon motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Rogers, Consent Items were unanimously approved.

- A. Approve Minutes of meeting of March 24, 2021
- B. Approve bid recommendation to award contract for the Rockfish Creek Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) Screening Improvements to J. Cumby Construction Company, Cookeville, TN, the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder in the total amount of \$2,430,000.00 and forward to City Council for approval.

Funding for the Rockfish Creek WRF Screening Improvements is from WS-85 (CPR1000329). Funding in the amount of \$250,000.00 is available in FY2021, funding in the amount of \$1,485,000.00 is budgeted in FY2022 and \$695,000.00 is budgeted in FY2023

Bids were received on March 15, 2021, as follows:

<u>Bidders</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
<u>Award Recommendation: Alternate Bid</u>	
J. Cumby Construction, Inc., Cookeville, TN	\$2,430,000.00
Laughlin-Sutton Construction Co., Browns Summit, NC	\$2,483,600.00
Haren Construction Company, Inc., Etowah, TN	\$2,647,000.00
State Utility Contractors, Monroe, NC	\$2,919,000.00
T.A. Loving Company, Goldsboro, NC	\$3,095,900.00
Water & Waste Systems Construction, Garner, NC	\$3,160,000.00
<u>Other Evaluated Bids: Base Bid Only</u>	
J. Cumby Construction, Cookeville, TN 38501	\$2,810,000.00
Laughlin-Sutton Construction Co., Browns Summit, NC	\$2,815,000.00
Haren Construction Company, Etowah, TN	\$2,972,000.00
State Utility Contractors, Monroe, NC	\$3,244,000.00
Water & Waste Systems Construction, Garner, NC	\$3,460,000.00
T.A. Loving Company, Goldsboro, NC	\$3,470,000.00

COMMENTS: Notice of bid was advertised on February 16, 2021 with an original bid opening date of March 11, 2021. Addendum No. 1 was issued on February 22, 2021 to provide bidders the ability to attend the mandatory pre-bid virtually. Addendum No. 2 was issued on March 3, 2021, to provide minutes to the Pre-Bid Meeting and provide additional Contract document Revisions. Addendum No. 3 was issued on March 10, 2021, to provide additional Contract Document Revisions and extend the bid opening date to March 16, 2021. The bids for this project were evaluated by Water Resource Engineering. By accepting the alternate bid there was a reduction of \$380,000.00 from their base bid price, for a total recommended bid price of \$2,430,000.00. The project Base Bid was for equipment manufactured by Huber who provided the screens installed as part of the Cross Creek WRF Screening Improvements project completed in February 2020. The Alternate Bid form allowed bidders to write in equipment manufactured by either JWC or Headworks. The research and evaluation work performed by Hazen and PWC prior to the Cross Creek project resulted in a specification that considered Huber, JWC, and Headworks all as equal equipment. **SDBE/Local Participation:** J. Cumby Construction is not a local firm. They do not anticipate utilizing DBE or local firms. They do anticipate \$50,000 of expenses for local hotel and/or apartment rental and tool purchases.

- C. Adopt PWC Resolution # PWC2021.10 – Resolution to Authorize the Condemnation of Easements and the Delegation of Real Estate Acquisition Authority to the General Manager

Staff recommends condemnation of three (3) Easement Parcels in Project Area 23, Section 02; eight (8) Easement Parcels in Project Area 25; and six (6) Easement Parcels in Project Area 32 East - Section 01. The Easement Parcels listed are in addition to the ones previously approved in PWC Resolution Nos. PWC2021.01, PWC2021.06, & PWC2021.09 where negotiations to date have either proven unsuccessful and or the signatures of rightful owners unobtainable.

- D. Adopt PWC Resolution # PWC2021.11 – Resolution to declare personal property described as one (1) 2010 Caterpillar 430E Backhoe, VIN #CAT0430ECSWC00201 as surplus and sell by public auction.

COMMENTS: North Carolina General Statute 160A-270 permits the sale of personal property with an estimated value of \$30,000 or more by public auction upon authorization by the governing board.

- E. Adopt PWC Resolution # PWC2021.12 – Resolution Rescinding Policies

Staff recommends that the Commissioners adopt a resolution rescinding policies from the PWC Policy and Procedure Manual. PWC is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the entire Policy and Procedure Manual, engaging many employees from across all divisions. Additional resolutions and information will be shared as the effort progresses.

END OF CONSENT

POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL UPDATE

Presented by: Paula Shambach, Corporate Development Manager

Ms. Ball stated Paula Shambach will share an update on policies and procedures that are being updated as an organization.

Ms. Ball stated as she joined the organization, a couple of items came her way, and she began to look into how things were coming to her office. She stated we have a very detailed Policy and Procedures Manual. But policies should be an extension of the Board. A lot of items that are in our Policy and Procedures Manual are not board level documents. So, we stood up a team, and Paula Shambach is doing a terrific job wading it. She is wrangling all the Officers, which is a full time job. She is also managing several sub-teams and doing a great job with them as well. The objective of this team is to review this 616 page document, streamline it, simplify it, reduce waste in our internal processes and empower our employees. Push some of this decision making closer to the work

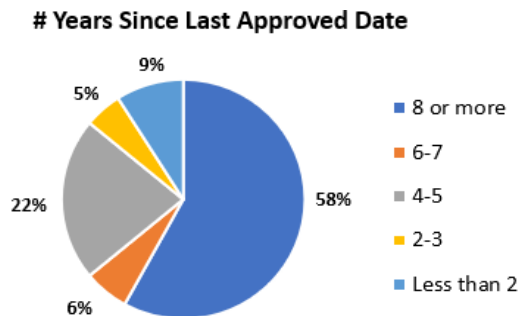
Ms. Ball stated the Commissioners will over the next several commission meetings, as they see today in Consent, requests to dispose of policies, remove policies, stand up new policies and modify policies and procedures. The intent today is to highlight the good work the team is doing and give the Commission the overall look at what we are up to, the work plan and why you will see these items over the next commission meetings.

Ms. Shambach thanked Ms. Ball for providing a great summary on the background for this presentation. She stated Ms. Ball spoke to Corporate Development to see what they could do to modify the Policy and Procedures Manual so that it better meets our employees' needs.

Ms. Shambach stated the following.

The current Policy and Procedures Manual has:

- 131 policies/procedures
- 58 policy statements
- 616 pages
- 58% of Policies Procedures have not been updated in the past eight (8) years. As a best practice we should look at these every 1 to 3 years.
- 14% of Policies and Procedures have been updated within the past three (3) years



She stated we requested feedback from our employees, and they had a lot to say. We received over 200 surveys back.

Below are the top five recommendations from our employees:

- Remove unnecessary content
- Provide better search function
- Fewer more meaningful Policies and Procedures
- Less paragraphs, more bullets
- Provide easier, digital access

Staff responded to questions from the Commission. Ms. Shambach stated based on the analysis and the data compiled from our employees we established the following goal.

Goal

The goal of this effort is to:

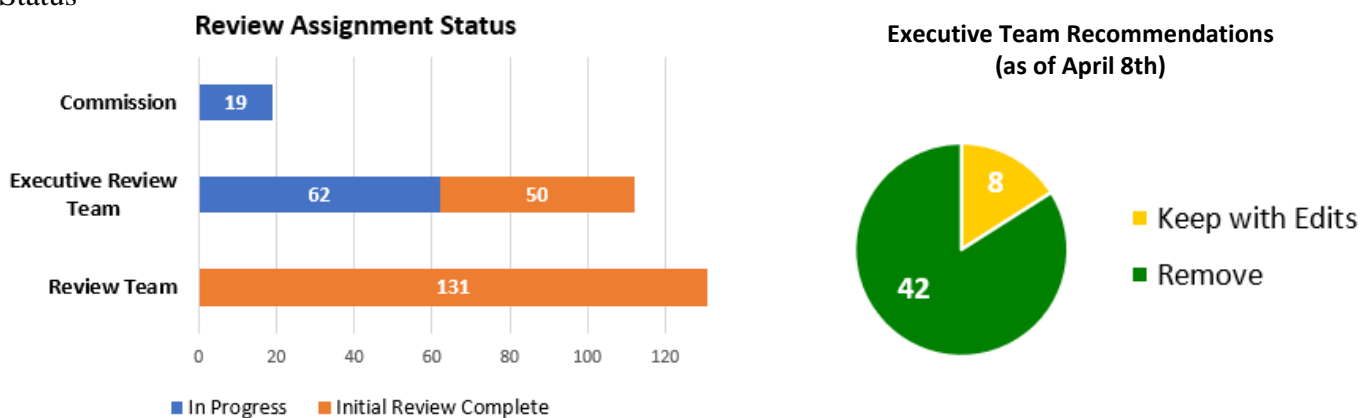
- gather feedback from across organization
- modify procedures so that decision-making occurs at the lowest level of authority possible
- ensure compliance is easy to understand and enforce
- streamline procedures to maximize efficiencies; and
- remove all unnecessary content to increase readability.

Ms. Shambach stated based on this goal which was approved by Elaina Ball and our Officers they moved to develop our action plan, which consists of the following:

- Meet with Officers to share scope/plan
- Establish teams and review process
- Survey all employees to get input/ideas
 - Employees had the opportunity to give their comments, and those comments were placed in the policy
- Hold staff review team meetings
 - Ms. Shambach stated the manual was divided into three groups. The review teams consisted of employees across all divisions. She stated all the employees were engaged and very active in this process, which is now complete.
- Executive review team meetings

- The executive review team looked at all the feedback; held a lot of discussion on the documents.
- Recommendations shared with Commission
 - We have prepared a resolution that includes rescinding several policy statements, as well as a list of those policies with major content changes.
- Develop new documents/resources
 - We will move some of the content from the rescinded policies and procedures to other locations that are easily accessible to employees
- Communicate updates to all staff on a regular basis
- Establish/rollout new SharePoint Site, through MS Office 365
 - We are asking for an effective date of July 1st as part of the resolution.
 - We will post to the SharePoint site as we go along
- Final edits/posting of updated/new documents
- Implement new review process

Status



Follow-up

- New documents will be moved to SharePoint
 - Communication and training will be required across the organization
- New process for regular review will be developed and implemented to keep PPM and other key documents up to date.

Staff responded to additional questions and comments from Commission.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY RANKING DISCUSSION

Presented by: Elaina L. Ball, CEO/General Manager

Ms. Ball presented Mr. David Pistrui and Mr. Darrell Kleinke of Acumen Dynamics to the Commission. Mr. Pistrui and Mr. Kleinke provided a brief background of their experience.

The Commissioners, Mr. Pistrui and Mr. Kleinke discussed the Strategic Priorities. The Commission ranked them based on their importance compared to each other.

The Strategic Priorities are:

Community Engagement	Conservation
Economic Development	Financial Health
Customer Satisfaction	Engaged Employees
Operational Excellence	

GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Ms. Elaina Ball provided the following updates to the Commission.

Greensboro SOC

Ms. Ball stated there was a Special Order by Consent (SOC) issued to Greensboro related to the reduction of 1,4 Dioxane in the Cape Fear River. She stated, we think that is good and necessary, but we also believe that the SOC does not go far enough. As a result, we have filed a petition to contest the SOC primarily on the basis that it does not include a basin wide approach.

Ms. Ball stated there are other entities that discharge 1,4 Dioxane into the Cape Fear River, so what we want is a basin wide approach. We have established a joint action understanding with the Southern Environmental Law Center in hopes of combining resources and advocating to get a basin wide approach to 1,4 Dioxane. This is not unique to that species. Ms. Ball went on to state we hope through advocacy like this we will be able to influence decision makers who have regulatory authority over the Cape Fear River. There is a lot of benefit in addressing sources of discharge into the river. Discussion ensued.

Community Solar

Our Community Solar is fully subscribed. We are planning Solar Sunday on April 25th.

COVID

We have had a rise in COVID cases. We are encouraging our employees to stay vigilant. We will send an email to our employees today. Commissioner Rogers asked if we have made it clear that our employees must wear masks while riding together in trucks. Ms. Ball replied we have, but we have seen lapses. He also asked what we do when employees do not comply. Ms. Ball replied we send them home. Additional discussion ensued.

Water and Waste Water Cost of Service

We continue to work on the water and wastewater cost of service. We have one on one meetings with the Commissioners to review the cost of service classes as well as some fee matters.

Budget preparations are underway. We will present our upcoming budget on May 12. Our costs are outpacing our revenues on the water side. We have some work to do. A significant portion of our capital expense is in support of annexation. We intend to begin our bond issuance process very soon with a goal of going to market on the water/wastewater side in October.

Article in News and Observer

We became aware of an article in the News & Observer that has reported a matter involving a number of municipalities in North Carolina, it also includes PWC and has generated some public discussion. We met as a leadership team to discuss this article and to help facilitate our leaders' answers to questions from employees. We have received a lot of questions from employees and the main thing they are concerned about is their jobs. We have posted on the internet a list of frequently asked questions. Ms. Ball stated the key message she wants to convey to our employees is their jobs are safe. We are going to continue to monitor the media that has generated on this matter. We want our employees to know what a terrific job they do.

New Commissioner

We are excited! Council has appointed a new commissioner, Mrs. Ronna Garrett. We will facilitate when she will take her oath of office as well as her first commission meeting date.

Legislative Issues

- Monitoring legislative issues, in addition to the water quality issues.
- Monitoring a bill for a pilot project around TEXFI and remediation of the trichloroethylene
- Monitoring local and small spending bill
- Monitoring telecommunications bill that impacts rural communities

Recognitions

Special thanks to Mark Brown. He has been terrific in helping with the strategic metrics. He has taken on himself to assist some of the other Officers as they build out their own strategic metrics.

Special thanks to Sheila Mitchell. We are going live in July with an upgrade to the Customer Care and Billing System. It is a project called C2M. She and Michael Lopez have done a terrific job in helping the organization get ready for this big product.

Special thanks to Lucille Phillips. She is leading a taskforce to discover what new functionality we can use with this new system.

Open Commission Requests

Ms. Ball queried the Commissioners on this report to determine the disposition of items on the report.

COMMISSIONER/LIAISON COMMENTS

County Commissioner Michael Boose

Commissioner Boose stated at the annual legislative breakfast, the County brought up the question why PWC has to clean up from the upstream. He stated there was no answer received.

Commissioner Boose also stated Carolyn Justice-Hinson does a great job in informing everyone of PWC Day.

Commissioner Darsweil Rogers

Mr. Rogers stated he is appreciative of the conversation surrounding ‘change’. It is the nature of being in a vibrant organization. Employees embrace the opportunity to do things differently if it makes sense. He also commented on the role leaders have in the workplace and community.

Commissioner Wade Fowler

Commissioner Fowler commented on ‘Community Engagement’. He stated we are a hometown utility. Part of our value is determined on how people see us in the community. Which is why we believe community engagement is an important thing to focus on now. Though it is not our primary objective, it is one we have let drop to non-existence that we have to bring back up, which is why there is more focus on it now. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Fowler introduced **Commissioner Ronna Garrett**, who is attending the meeting virtually. Commissioner Garrett stated she is honored and privileged to serve with the Commissioners. She stated she is chomping at the bit and can’t wait to get with her esteemed colleagues and work through all the challenges in the future. She is looking forward to joining the team.

REPORTS AND INFORMATION

The Commission acknowledges receipt of the following reports and information.

- A. Personnel Report – March 2021
- B. Position Vacancies
- C. Approved N.C. Department of Transportation Encroachment Agreement(s):
 - Encr. # 18781 - installation of water main, sanitary sewer main and doghouse manhole on SR1408 (Bonanza Drive).
 - Encr. # 19171 – install of water lateral with split tap on US401 N (Ramsey St) for Take 5 Automotive
- D. Actions by City Council during the meeting of March 22, 2021, related to PWC:
 - Approved Bid Recommendation – Three (3) Substation Concrete Based Cable Trench Systems

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, upon motion by Commissioner Rogers, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 10:02 a.m.