

SECOND TAXING DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting Minutes

July 17, 2018

Present: David Westmoreland Chairperson
Maria Borges-Lopez Vice Chairperson
Harold Bonnet
Mary Geake
Mary Mann
Sandra Stokes
Martha Wooten-Dumas

Absent: None

Also Present: Paul Yatcko General Manager
Lisa Roland District Clerk
Eric Strom Director of Customer Care
Kara Murphy, Esq. Tierney, Zullo, Flaherty & Murphy
Darlene Young Treasurer

Public Present: None

The meeting was recorded up to Executive Session.

Call To Order:

Commissioner Westmoreland called the Regular Meeting of The Second Taxing District to order at 7:16 p.m. on Tuesday, July 17, 2018. The meeting was held at South Norwalk Electric and Water, One State Street, Norwalk, Connecticut.

1. Acceptance of the Minutes:

1.1 Regular Meeting Minutes of June 19, 2018

Commissioner Borges-Lopez moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Stokes seconded.

Minutes were approved unanimously.

(2018-07-17-1.1)

Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Strategy & Negotiations involving Collective Bargaining

Commissioner Stokes moved to enter executive session. Commissioner Borges-Lopez seconded.

Executive session was entered at 7:17 p.m. with all Commissioners, Paul Yatcko, Lisa Roland and attorney Kara Murphy present.

Commissioner Geake moved to exit executive session at 7:36 p.m. Commissioner Borges-Lopez seconded.

No action was taken as a result of discussions held in executive session regarding collective bargaining.

Discuss an Employment & Personnel Matter and Pending Claim Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Sections 1-200 (6)(a) and 1-200 (6)(b)

Commissioner Borges-Lopez moved to enter executive session. Commissioner Mann seconded.

Executive session was entered at 7:37 p.m. with all Commissioners, Paul Yatcko, Lisa Roland and attorney Kara Murphy present.

Commissioner Borges-Lopez moved to exit executive session at 7:59 p.m. Commissioner Mann seconded.

Commissioner Stokes motioned to approve the financial terms of an employee's separation from SNEW subject to negotiation and execution of a satisfactory settlement agreement, general release, confidentiality agreement and non-disparagement clause by Paul Yatcko and legal counsel.

Commissioner Wooten-Dumas seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

[Attorney Kara Murphy left the meeting at 8:01 p.m.]

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Adjust Water Rates

The public hearing regarding the proposed budgeted increase (approved by the electors in March) in water rates continued from the previous meeting. No members of the public were present to comment.

Commissioner Geake moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Wooten-Dumas seconded.

The motion carried unanimously and the public hearing portion of the discussion

was closed.

Paul Yatcko discussed the actions taken to advise the public about the hearings. These included print media ads, mass emails, and notifications posted on the company website.

The initial public hearing took place on June 19th with only one individual making a statement, and that individual spoke in favor of the increase.

The Commission's approval to implement the increase is required and if given, notice to the public will begin the next business day, with implementation of the new rate targeted for approximately September 1, 2018, pending reprogramming of the billing software.

Commissioner Borges-Lopez moved to approve the rate increase. Commissioner Geake seconded.

Before voting took place, Commissioner Geake asked whether there was a way to determine how many people had viewed the website notices. Paul Yatcko replied that website statistics are not tracked, but notice had been given to the community in many different forms.

The motion carried unanimously.

(2018-07-17-2)

3. Reappoint OPEB Advisory Committee

The OPEB Trust was established in 2014 and an advisory committee was formed. Currently the advisory committee consists of Commissioners Westmoreland, Borges-Lopez and Geake. The Commission must either reappoint these individuals, or choose new individuals, to the committee for a two year term to expire March 2020.

Both Commissioners Westmoreland and Geake offered to step down should any of the other Commissioners desire to participate. Paul Yatcko added that the committee meets twice a year just before a regularly scheduled monthly District Commission meeting, amounting to approximately an hour total commitment per year.

Commissioners Wooten-Dumas and Stokes volunteered.

Commissioner Geake moved to appoint Commissioners Borges-Lopez, Wooten-Dumas and Stokes to the OPEB Advisory Committee. Commissioner Borges-Lopez seconded.

Commissioner Westmoreland added that any and all of the Commissioners were welcomed to attend the advisory committee meetings. No one is excluded from attending.

The motion carried unanimously.

(2018-07-17-3)

4. Management Update

Paul Yatcko presented updates on the following.

Mall Construction

SNEW is waiting for GGP to complete certain work packages before commencing SNEW work in order to preclude interference issues.

GGP has not made a decision regarding electric supply pricing. Currently GGP is buying power from SNEW at the large commercial rate and this will continue until a pricing structure is negotiated.

A Memorandum of Understanding will be sent to GGP by the end of the week. The memorandum will specify the construction costs GGP will be funding. An invoice will accompany the memorandum.

Commissioner Westmoreland asked whether the delay on GGP's part regarding the electric rate structure is due to anticipated opening day occupancy. Paul Yatcko responded that he suspected as such.

Electric outages:

Eleven significant outages have occurred since the last meeting.

June 20th:

Bird contact took out 30 customers on Baxter Drive for approximately ½ hour.

Squirrel contact took out 150 customers near Hamilton Avenue for about 20 minutes.

June 25th:

Bird contact took out 39 customers in the Monterey area for about 49 minutes.

June 30th:

A tree limb took out 59 customers out on Olean St for 2.5 hours.

Biological contact took out 11 customers in the area of Putnam Avenue for 1.5 hours.

A blown fuse took out 23 West Avenue for 20 minutes.

A transformer failure took out 12 customers on Cliff Street for 6 hours.

Another transformer on Taylor Avenue started to leak and 16 customers had to be taken out of service in order to replace the transformer. They were out for 2 hours.

July 1st:

A transformer failure took out 13 customers on Woodward Avenue for 4 hours.

July 5th:

A blown cutout took out 136 customers on Couch Street for 1 hour and 20 minutes.

July 7th:

Cable failure took out 320 customers on North Water Street. The majority were back in service within 2 hours and 15 minutes. A couple customers were out for 6 hours and 38 minutes.

Commissioner Westmoreland asked if the cable was underground. Paul Yatcko explained that the cable is wrapped in an uninsulated exterior mesh that acts as the neutral. The expected product life is 25 years while the cable is now 35 years old. The part-time consultant will be tasked with looking into the economics of replacing all such cable to be included in next year's capital budget.

Commissioner Westmoreland asked if the cable gets covered by seawater. The answer given was the cable is submerged in all sorts of water.

Commissioner Westmoreland wondered why so many outages have occurred lately after a quiet spell. Paul Yatcko replied that the heat is partially to blame – the heat adds stress to already worn equipment. The animal contacts are more difficult to explain and control. Various guards are used and yet the animals are causing havoc.

Commissioner Westmoreland thanked the staff for their timely response and repair efforts. Paul Yatcko thanked the Commissioner, and also acknowledged the staff's efforts - often under extended hours and difficult weather conditions.

Commissioner Stokes commended customer service as well for keeping the community informed via Twitter.

Commissioner Mann agreed that updates had been posted online, but questioned the new phone system. She called and no one answered. Eric Strom responded that during an outage when there are an influx of calls, it can take up to 12 rings or so for the call to be answered. Additionally, there was one incident where a momentary outage occurred at State Street and the phone system reset. While the phone system reset, the auto attendant did not pick up calls. A backup system to handle such situations is being considered.

Darlene Young asked if a phone system could be set up to notify customers of an outage. Eric Strom responded that that sort of a system would be tied into an outage management system and SNEW's gear in the field isn't sophisticated enough to perform this function. An outage management system (OMS) is something SNEW

can strive for. Darlene Young added that it would be particularly helpful for the commercial accounts to be informed on a timely basis.

Paul Yatcko commented that the phone system would need to be replaced and a compatible OMS purchased. The OMS collects meter data and ties that information with the geographical system, which in turn feeds the robo-calling system. It is sophisticated and expensive equipment more typically used by larger electric utilities such as Eversource.

Commissioner Westmoreland would like to see the cost prepared for the next budget cycle. He would also like a phone system utilizing direct phone numbers rather than extensions. Commissioner Westmoreland added that the City (Norwalk) notifies residents regarding emergencies and can isolate the calls down to a particular street(s).

River Main Replacement

As previously described, slip lining was used to repair the leaking main located under the Norwalk River and feeding East Norwalk. The main was put back in service on June 27th. All equipment has been cleared away from Liberty Square.

Additional Miscellaneous Topics

Commissioner Mann asked about the budget considering all the outage repair work that has been conducted. Paul Yatcko replied that most of the work was charged to last fiscal year's budget.

Commissioner Westmoreland asked about the ETA on the replacement of the temporary transformer on Washington Street. The response was that there is a long lead time on that type of transformer. It is still months from arriving.

Reservoir Levels

Levels were at 87% capacity last week.

First Annual SNEW Employee BBQ

The first SNEW BBQ is planned for Saturday, July 21, and the Commissioners and their families are invited to attend.

Filtration Plant tours will be available.

Commissioner Borges-Lopez moved to adjourn. Commissioner Geake seconded.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Attest:

Lisa G. Roland
District Clerk