

**SECOND TAXING DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS**

Regular Meeting Minutes  
August 21, 2018

Present: David Westmoreland Chairperson  
Harold Bonnet  
Mary Geake  
Mary Mann  
Martha Wooten-Dumas

Absent: Maria Borges-Lopez  
Sandra Stokes

Also Present: Paul Yatchko General Manager  
Lisa Roland District Clerk

Public Present: None

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*The meeting was recorded in its entirety.*

**Call To Order:**

Commissioner Westmoreland called the Regular Meeting of The Second Taxing District to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 21, 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 July 17, 2018.

Commissioner Geake moved to accept the minutes. Commissioner Mann seconded.

**Minutes were approved unanimously (2018-08-21-1.1)**

*Public Participation*

*No members of the public were present.*

**CONSENT AGENDA**

2. Electric Write-Off – April 1, 2018 through June 30, 2018

Commissioner Geake moved to accept the consent agenda. Commissioner Mann seconded. Commissioner Wooten-Dumas abstained.

The consent agenda was approved with one abstention.

**(2018-08-21-2)**

**REGULAR AGENDA**

3. Legal Counsel Annual Retainer Agreement – FY 2018 - 2019

Paul Yatcko recommended the District continue with Tierney, Zullo, Flaherty and Murphy as it has for over 20 years. The annual retainer fee will remain at \$10,000, with a proposed increase of \$25 in the hourly rate to \$275 per hour. The firm has extensive knowledge of the District's history, and their rates are comparatively low.

Commissioner Wooten-Dumas stated that she appreciated the firm's work.

Commissioner Bonnet asked if other firms had been considered. Both Commissioner Westmoreland and Paul Yatcko responded that it would take considerable time and effort to bring another firm on board to the level of understanding and knowledge Tierney, Zullo, Flaherty and Murphy have attained representing the District. No other firms have been considered.

Commissioner Wooten-Dumas moved to approve the agreement. Commissioner Geake seconded.

The firm of Tierney, Zullo, Flaherty and Murphy was retained for the 2018 – 2019 fiscal year.

**(2018-08-21-3)**

4. Management Update

*Reservoir Status*

The current status is at 91% capacity. The unusual amount of plentiful rain fall, combined with the repair of two significant leaks (from piping running across the river, and from piping running under the intersection at Dr. Martin Luther King and West) in the system, have attributed to a high level of supply and a decrease in unbilled demand. Billed demand has dropped from previous summers to 4.3 million gallons per day as opposed to over 5-6 (and even as high as 8) million gallons per day.

*Electric Outages*

*July 21:* Squirrel contact on a gas operated disconnect switch took out 15 customers on Hamilton Avenue for 1 hour and 20 minutes.

*July 21 through July 23:* The Mall was intentionally disconnected, at their request, to preclude damage to their equipment from the collection and accumulation of the anticipated heavy rainfall. The planned outage lasted 47 hours.

*August 2:* Repair of a burned secondary in manhole # 59 on South Main took out 20 customers for 3 hours and 45 minutes.

*August 2:* An underground transformer went bad in manhole # 91. Fourteen customers had to be taken out for an hour in order to complete the repair.

*August 3:* A service wire needed to be relocated at 209/211 Flax Hill Street, taking out 5 customers for 10 minutes.

*August 9:* A bad transformer on South Main Street was replaced with 2 transformers to lighten the load. Twenty six customers were out for 3 hours and 10 minutes.

*August 13:* A burned service wire at 40 Byrd Street took out one customer for 2 hours and 40 minutes.

*August 15:* A burned service wire at 155 Ely Avenue took out 15 customers for about an hour.

*August 16:* Several customers at Shorefront Park complained of low voltage. An overloaded transformer was replaced, taking out 8 customers for 4 hours.

#### *Mall*

SNEW work is on hold until GGP gives the go-ahead. Construction may be a little delayed, but opening is still anticipated for October 2019.

SNEW has recently provided GGP with a Letter of Agreement, along with an invoice for material and labor. Materials are invoiced upfront, whereas labor for both SNEW personnel and contractors are invoiced as expended. Going forward, labor will be billed on a monthly basis.

#### *Customer email regarding Water Bill*

Commissioner Westmoreland brought up a customer complaint, received via email, regarding the untimely receipt of water bills. It appears that water bills are being received later and later after the statement date. The Chairman himself receives his water bill between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, while payment is due by the end of the month. He believes this is too short a payment window. Other bills he receives give him at least 3 weeks to pay.

Paul Yatchko commented that utilizing autopay is a solution to having the bill paid on time, but also acknowledged that the billing process is not what it should be. Currently the electric bills are sent out first to allow the customer as much time as possible to pay within the discount period. However, he doesn't understand why both electric and water cannot be billed simultaneously.

One issue is that the available manpower is not sufficient to support simultaneous billing. There is too much manual intervention in the billing process and part of that is the review of the exception report. The exception report is too long and time consuming to review. Additionally, billing is only performed by one individual – the Customer Service Supervisor.

Commissioner Westmoreland asked if the payment window could be extended to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

Commissioner Mann commented that billing needs to be more consistent from period to period and asked whether all bills, other than the exceptions, could be sent at the same time.

Paul Yatcko stated that many in-house processes need to be updated and streamlined including billing, requisitioning and purchasing, payroll and accounts payable. Many processes need to be fixed in order for the organization to run well. The organization runs, but not efficiently due to poor process design and the lack of the integration of systems – systems do not talk to each other.

Commissioner Westmoreland asked Paul Yatcko to investigate the water billing process and the cause for the lag. Additionally, he mentioned that electric billing has been late on occasion as well.

Paul Yatcko commented that financial functions need to be fixed, there has been a lot of turnover in accounting since the beginning of the year, and the accounting department could have been doing a better job.

A plan for the accounting/financial department is being considered, whether re-staffing or relying on contract personnel for a while longer has not been decided upon.

Commissioner Geake moved to adjourn. Commissioner Mann seconded.

**Adjournment**

*The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.*

Attest:

Lisa G. Roland  
District Clerk