

**Clear Lake/Clearwater Sewer Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Zoom Web Conference
February 18, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Goenner called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. via Zoom Web Conference.

ROLL CALL

- Present: Chair Goenner, Vice-Chair Lawrence, Members White and Ranum. Member Petty arrived at 5:36 p.m. during the roll call.
- Absent: None.
- Staff Present: Director Smythe, Chief Operator Strande, Operator Forsell.
- A quorum was declared present.
- Guests Kevin Kieke and Paul Meschke were present.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Lawrence to approve agenda as presented, seconded by White, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

2. PUBLIC FORUM

No one was present for Public Forum.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Approval of Claims/Accounts Payable for November 2020**
- b. **Approval of Claims/Accounts Payable for December 2020**
- c. **Approval of Minutes from December 17, 2020 Regular Meeting**
- d. **Approve Pay Equity Report**
- e. **Res 2021-01 – Approving Annual Appointments**
- f. **Res 2021-02 – Pre-Authorization of Claims Payments**

MOTION to approve the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Lawrence, seconded by White, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Res 2021-03 – Ratifying T.O. Plastics Discharge Agreement

Director Smythe outlined the few minor changes since the agreement was last discussed.

MOTION by Lawrence to approve Res 2021-03, seconded by Ranum, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

b. Annual Renewal of Director Contract

Members debated the costs for Director services provided by the City of Clearwater. Members from Clear Lake believe the costs are too high and that less hours are needed than provided for in the contract. A suggestion was made to consider going to an outside consultant, but some expressed concern that past consultants had not worked out well, citing fraud and MPCA penalties. Member Ranum stated he thinks the current service is good and suggested scaling back the hours to 180 hours. Members Petty and Lawrence expressed concern about what happens if the actual hours exceed that amount. There was also concern about how to determine a fair cost. After further discussion, there was a suggestion to drop the hours and move to a flat-fee contract.

MOTION by White to offer flat fee arrangement of \$15,000 per year, payable \$1,250/month, seconded by Petty. Voting aye – Goenner, White, Petty, and Ranum. Voting nay – Lawrence.

MOTION CARRIED 4-1.

c. Revisit/Discuss Posting Operator Position

- Director Smythe asked if the position posting was to be at the same pay scale as the last posting and if we would seek a class D operator. Members affirmed.
- Member Lawrence stated she would like to revisit the position and asked about the hiring timeline. Chief Operator Strande responded that he would know more in May, but that he plans to retire before year-end. He would like at least 6 months of overlap so Operator Forsell is not left hanging, that he would be too busy to train someone new.
- Member Ranum asked if the position was in the budget. Smythe responded that it is not, as she did not anticipate an overlap of this length. Strande had stated at budget time that he intended to retire in August, not year-end. Lawrence noted that we have to answer to the two cities on budget.
- Strande stated that there are not a lot of operators out there and it could take several months to find a qualified candidate. Ranum noted that Strande was short last year for several months and that he was okay having some overlap now to get caught up.
- Lawrence expressed concern that the Board has been debating over \$4,000 for the Director position, which is in the budget, but now are willing to add a position not in the budget for several thousand dollars. Strande reiterated that it could take 2-3 months to find a candidate.
- White suggested posting the position March 1 for 60 days. Strande stated he would like to fill it May 1. There was additional discussion about the wage range, which starts at \$22.44/hour.
- Members agreed to post position and extend the posting if we don't receive sufficient applicants.

MOTION by Petty to post position for 30 days, seconded by Ranum, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Sewer Authority Mail Issue

Smythe stated this issue should be addressed after the Director contract is resolved.

MOTION TO TABLE by Lawrence, seconded by Ranum, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

b. Other Business

- Chair Goenner raised a concern about the amount of new construction and capacity of the plant. He stated the Board should get notified of new permit requests. There was discussion about capacity and how this could be addressed. Strande noted the plant is currently at less than 50% capacity, but it should be monitored. Smythe stated the Clearwater City Council gets a summary report of permits each month, could copy Board. Members agreed that a permit report should be provided by both cities. Member Petty suggested we should also develop a method for valuing the capacity in the future.
- Chair Goenner also raised the issue of Board pay. Clear Lake recently raised pay for the City Council to \$100 per meeting. Smythe noted that LMC was not aware of any restrictions on when Board members could raise their pay.

MOTION by White to raise the Chair's pay to \$125 per meeting and Members pay to \$100 per meeting, effective January 1, 2021, seconded by Ranum, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOTION by Lawrence to amend the budget for these new amounts, seconded by Ranum, all voted aye. **MOTION CARRIED.**

6. REPORTS

- Strande reported that all 4 tanks have now been installed. There were repairs to one set of membranes. Overall, the plant looks nice and Jon is doing a great job.
- Petty asked if the RIBs were offline. Strande reported that they were and noted it was difficult to get the nitrate numbers down sufficiently in current configuration without causing increases to phosphorus.
- Smythe reported that our audit was nearly complete and that the auditors would be at the next meeting to give their report.
- Smythe also reported that there was a final meeting on the RIBs project. Strande had a few tweaks to the final record drawings, but they should be completed within a week or two.
- Goenner asked about sales tax paid by mistake a few years ago on the first invoice for the tanks project. He noted we may need to pay that to make the contractor whole. Smythe will follow-up.

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

Next meeting will be on April 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Location TBD by Chair closer to date.

8. ADJOURN

MOTION to adjourn by Lawrence, seconded by Ranum, all voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

ATTEST:



Annita M. Smythe, Director

APPROVED:



Tim Goenner, Chair