

**MINUTES  
TAYLORS FIRE & SEWER DISTRICT  
REGULAR BI-MONTHLY MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2019**

The regular bi-monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at the District Office in the Board Room, 3335 Wade Hampton Blvd., Taylors, South Carolina at 4:30 pm.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Paul Bowen, Commission Chairman

Mark A. J. Rea Jr., Commission Vice Chairman/Secretary

Jeff Hannah, Commission Treasurer

**STAFF PRESENT**

Robert Van Pelt, Deputy Chief

Samantha Babb, Director of Sewer Services

Alicia Jenkins, Administrative Data Coordinator

Stephanie Hackler, Senior Accounting & HR Specialist

Michael Jones, TV Crew Leader

Paul George, Sewer Technician

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

David Babb, Jason Bagwell (MetroConnects), Mike Barnes (Greenville County Council), Rita Bolt Barker (Wyche Attorneys at Law), David Brown, Kaelyn Cashman (Greer Citizen), Jaime Daniel, Joe Dill (Greenville County Council), Tom Guzik, Paul Kingsman, Kathy Norville, Willis Meadows (Greenville County Council), Frank Rogers, Linda Rogers, Martha Rogers, Cheryl Wright

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bowen at 4:30 pm. Chairman Bowen stated that the media outlets who requested notification of this bi-monthly meeting were notified via door posting, email, website, Facebook, and Twitter.

Chairman Bowen presented the minutes from the regularly scheduled bi-monthly meeting held on July 16, 2019 at 4:30 pm. Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea made a motion to accept the July 16, 2019 minutes as presented. Treasurer Hannah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Bowen opened the floor to County Councilman Mike Barnes for discussion from concerned citizens about sewer service:

Councilman Barnes: While I am here, I would like to find and resolve some problems with the charges that are being charged for people with no sewer and is not accessible. What route can we take and what do y'all feel that would be fair and we can work with legally and every other aspect. There is a good many people in here from the Meadow Creek subdivision and they have no sewer. They have septic tanks and are being charged for sewer and sewer is not within a three quarters of a mile from that property.

Chairman Bowen: What do you think the cure could be?

Councilman Barnes: Talking to the attorney today and all, you can take the sewer fee off and they say you can't do that right there. It is a state law that we can't do that. Clean out the septic tanks if

needed once every three years and fix the drain lines, but these people are paying more taxes for sewer than they are accomplishing if they would have done it every three years. When you are paying \$285 for a sewer hookup fee and you can pump a septic tank for \$350 to \$400 and these houses set for a new septic tank, they should be good for fifteen to twenty years and you figure the price of that times what you are paying for taxes on that with no sewer. We could go to a consumption. If we go to composition, charge the ones that have sewer and a consumption fee, everybody would pay and the people that do not have sewer would not be paying for the ones that they are paying for now.

Chairman Bowen: That's something we will look into, whatever is legal.

Councilman Barnes: And something else that came up, maybe Taylors Sewer District could refund at the end of the tax year, could refund the taxes that they charged on that, but the attorney said that you can't do that. So, if you could refund it but says they can't do that. So, I do not have an answer to it, but that is the reason we are here to y'all to try to resolve all this.

Chairman Bowen: We appreciate that, and we would like to resolve it too, but we can't do it right now because it's already on the taxes for next year. That is something we will have to look at and work at.

Councilman Barnes: I would like for some people in the community to up there that ask to speak if they would.

Chairman Bowen: That would be fine.

Mrs. Cheryl Wright: Hi I am Cheryl Wright, my husband would be here with me tonight, but he is out of town. He sent me some information about our taxes. Just two of us we built about a year and half ago in Meadow Creek for our vehicles and our house our taxes are about \$240 talking about property tax for sewage about \$240. Over three years, that is over \$700 that we would pay in taxes. Assuming that would need our septic tank pumped out after three years which we don't think we will for just the two of us. We would still be paying over \$500 for something that we do not benefit from at all. We don't have access to sewage, we can't hook up to it. So, it seems like an exorbitant fee for us to be charged for something that we have no benefit from.

Mr. David Brown: How are you doing I am David Brown her numbers are about the same as mine there are two people in my family. I have a newer car I pay sewer fee on car as well as well and also my house. It's not available for hook up its already been brought up by the gentleman. If it's not accessible it's not available. My position to the matter is that it is taxation without representation. So, you are charging me for something I have no ability to get ahold of I can't consume any at all. I would be interested in hearing from you gentleman its been on tax bill for long time. Its probably been out there you have been collecting this money for a period of time even those that don't have sewer be interested in hearing how have you considered options for other communities. Have you ever considered the option of not charging people who don't have these services for sewer that's a question?

Chairman Bowen: It was put on the tax bills years ago, and it's never been a problem nobody has ever said anything about it until now, it is something we will look into, we will do whatever is legal.

Mr. Brown: Absolutely I hope you wouldn't do anything that is illegal that makes perfect sense to me. So ok thank you for taking the issue into consideration.

Senior Accounting and HR Specialist Hackler: I was just going to mention that when you levy a tax it has to be levied against everyone in your District. We couldn't pick and choose, we did ask can we remove the septic tanks from the tax, we did ask if we could do that as a solution. We were told no once you levy you levy against the entire District. We also called all the other local special purpose districts (SPD's) in our area to check on what they are doing. Most of them are not only doing the ad valorem tax which would tax everyone, septic tank or sewer attached but also doing a consumption for those who are on sewer. Several of the districts are doing both a tax and consumption, some did just consumption and some just did tax. So, we definitely have been checking into what other districts that are our size and what we do have done in the past. We did ask an attorney if we could remove a select few from that and at this time we were told we could not its definitely going to be a large project to look into to come up with a solution to satisfy everyone.

Director Babb: I have one comment, I don't know if y'all are eligible for it you do know that there is a homestead exemption, I think you have to apply for that at the County which it is, I am not positive 65 or older, you get actually an extra discount on your taxes so if you haven't applied and you are eligible I would suggest to apply for that.

Mr. Brown: Completely understood on the homestead exemption, legally blind, 100% disabled or over 65 years of age that the law but I guess my question would be interested to know when you performed that research when you did your analysis I would love to see your paperwork on it – its public knowledge I assume it probably is.

Senior Accounting and HR Specialist Hackler: We actually called today to get updated information and most of them have it on their websites. One district provided their policy, we can certainly get that information to anyone else who needed it. We wanted to get up to date information, so we called around this morning to make sure prior to meeting, again the ones in our area doing the same.

Mr. Brown: I appreciate that there were other communities that recently went through this transition to where there was concern or complaint and that Commission decided to charge for consumption and not charge a tax. Are you familiar with that situation?

Senior Accounting and HR Specialist Hackler: We are aware that was something in the news in July concerning MetroConnects. I think someone from Metro is here who could probably speak to that better than I could, but from what we understand it was a budgetary issue with them. I am not 100% sure for what they were able to get from County Council as far as millage I understand MetroConnects did not have a rate increase for ten years, definitely constraining their budget, and they saw that consumption was an alternative for them for the ones that were attached to sewer. So we have not done that rate analysis and have not been as constrained as far as millage. We have been able to meet budgetary needs within how we are.

Mr. Brown: I'm sure you are your charging tax for people not using your system.

County Councilman Willis Meadows: Asked if it would be possible to get a copy of the Enabling Act.

Director Babb: Yes

Treasurer Hannah: Asked Councilman Dill for the name of the individual who gave him different information than what Taylors had received. They may know something we don't know.

Councilman Dill: Stated that he would have his source call Taylors.

Chairman Bowen: Asked if there were any more comments. There were none.

Councilman Barnes: Thanked the Board for their time.

Chairman Bowen: Thanked Councilman Barnes for bringing the issue to the Board's attention and stated that the Board would look into the matter to see what it could do.

Constituent: A follow up will be posted to your social media?

Chairman Bowen: Yes ma'am.

A fifteen-minute recess was held from 4:50 pm until 5:05 pm.

Chairman Bowen recognized Director Babb for the Sewer Department Report. Director Babb reviewed the written and attached Sewer Report. She reviewed the Permit Fees for the months of July and August 2019. Director Babb reviewed the Work Order and Service Request summaries from July 1, 2019 to the present date. Director Babb introduced Paul George to the Board as the new Sewer Technician for the Right-of-Way Crew who was hired August 26, 2019. She then reviewed the meetings and training attended during the previous months as well as all upcoming meetings/training. Lastly, Director Babb asked if there were any questions. There were no questions. Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea made a motion to accept the Sewer Department Report as written. Treasurer Hannah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Bowen recognized Deputy Chief Van Pelt for the Fire Department Report in Fire Chief Baker's absence. Deputy Chief Van Pelt presented the report as written and attached. He reviewed the meetings attended during the previous months, as well as upcoming meetings/training. He recognized the years of service, resignations, and deployment for various personnel. Deputy Chief Van Pelt then announced Clayton Wells was hired as a firefighter on July 30, 2019 assigned to B-Shift and Wilson Stone was hired as a firefighter on August 1, 2019 assigned to A-Shift. Deputy Chief Van Pelt also announced that the Department was helping with personnel deployment in response to Hurricane Dorian. He also informed the Board that the Department made a memorial donation to Fairview Presbyterian Church in memory of former firefighter Blake Watson. Deputy Chief Van Pelt announced that Greenville County began covering the cost for the Department's new 800 radios under the Greenville County Palmetto 800 Partnership Agreement, as of August 1, 2019. Deputy Chief Van Pelt introduced the Board to a dispatch service agreement that the Department received from the City of Greer governing the continuous provision of fire dispatch service, which is currently being

reviewed and revised at the District's attorney office. Deputy Chief Van Pelt thanked the Board on behalf of Fire Chief Baker for allowing the Department to replace the old Battalion Chief's vehicle with a 2020 Chevrolet Tahoe. The Department will also be transferring ownership of its 2005 Ford Expedition to the Sewer Department, instead of listing the vehicle as surplus on the Gov-Deals website as discussed in the July 16, 2019 regularly scheduled bi-monthly meeting. Deputy Chief Van Pelt then summarized the Incident Response Reports for the months of July and August 2019, and the 2019 SC Fire Fatalities Report as of August 27, 2019. Lastly, Deputy Chief Van Pelt announced that Fire Chief Baker and himself will be attending the SC State Fire Chief's Conference in Myrtle Beach from September 26, 2019 through September 29, 2019. With there being no questions, Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea made a motion to accept the Fire Department Report as written. Treasurer Hannah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Bowen recognized Mrs. Jaime Daniel for the Financial Reports. Mrs. Daniel reviewed the Financial Reports as written and attached. She detailed the statement of net position, the statement of activities, general funds, and the cash flow statement. Mrs. Daniel asked if there were any questions. There were none. Treasurer Hannah made a motion to accept the Financial Reports as presented. Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Under old business, the Board revisited the dispatch service contract that the Department received from the City of Greer governing the continuous provision of fire dispatch service and the payment of fees for such services, which has been redlined by the District's attorney. The Board decided to take the contract under advisement until the next scheduled special called meeting.

There was no new business to report.

Chairman Bowen opened the floor for public comment that was not on the agenda. Mr. Tom Guzik asked the Board if Taylors staff was going to be at the next County Council meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2019. Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea stated that District has been attending such meetings and that the District will have some representation at the County Council meeting he was referring to. Mr. Guzik then asked where the discussion of interest would be on the agenda for that meeting. Director Babb stated that the County Council agenda was not out yet. Director Babb then invited Mr. Guzik to the District's next meeting on Monday, September 16, 2019 at 10:00 am.

Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea requested to revisit new business. He held a brief discussion on bringing in some form of the most helpful, economical human resources help for the District. Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea then honored two friends he lost in the Twin Towers on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea made a motion to go into executive session to receive legal advice where the legal advice relates to matters covered by the attorney-client privilege. Treasurer Hannah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The Board entered executive session at 5:39 pm.

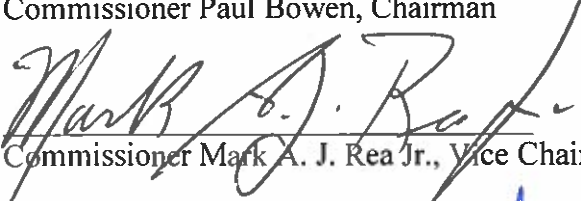
Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea made a motion to exit executive session. Treasurer Hannah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The Board exited executive session at 7:12 pm. No action was taken during executive session.

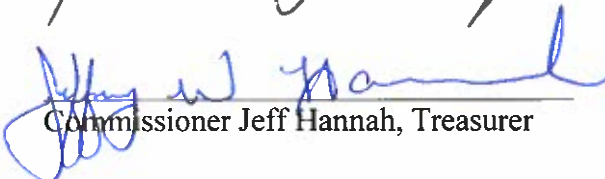
Vice Chairman/Secretary Rea made a motion to allow the Director of Sewer Services and associated staff to move forward with the CDM Project. Treasurer Hannah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, Treasurer Hannah made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Bowen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:14 pm.

  
Commissioner Paul Bowen, Chairman

11-12-19  
Date Minutes Approved

  
Commissioner Mark A. J. Rea Jr., Vice Chairman/Secretary

  
Commissioner Jeff Hannah, Treasurer