

WELLS COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 19, 2020

Board members present:

Mike Mossburg
Leon Berning
L.A. Brown
Bruce Stinson
Andy Stoller

Nate Rumschlag, County Engineer
Ryan Lefeld, Choice One Engineering
Davis Lamm, BCS Management

Call to Order

Mike called the meeting to order with the pledge and prayer by LA Brown.

Approval of Minutes

Nate presented the minutes to the board from the last meeting. Motion to approve the minutes as presented, by LA Brown, seconded by Bruce. Motion carried 5-0.

Honegger, Ringger & Co., Inc.

Nate introduced the proposal from Honegger, Ringger for the work as the district's CPA. Nate asked the board if they had an opportunity to review the contract and felt that this was the direction they wished to proceed.

Barnes and Thornburg

Nate also introduced the Bond Council agreement from Barnes and Thornburg for consideration.

Discussion was interrupted by the public on questions about not receiving notifications of the project from residents in the Murray area. Board responded that notices were issued. Mike discussed some of the questions with the public but stopped the discussion to allow the meeting to proceed.

Andy made the motion to proceed with bond council agreement. Motion was 2nd by Bruce. Motion carried 5-0.

Project Engineering Status Update - Choice One Engineering

Mike turned the meeting over to Ryan. Ryan presented to the group the current design status for the audience. Jack and Ryan reviewed the project areas for the group and status of the project. Choice one has submitted permit application with the railroad and INDOT for over one month. Soil borings have begun. Choice one staff have been walking the site and proposed sewer routes.

SRF is considering some of the areas of the project as "undisturbed" and will required additional environmental investigation. Choice One would like to use SJCA to prepare the required document. Ryan presented the archeological investigation and is requesting approval of the agreement totaling \$4,500. Nate commented that SJCA has purchased Green 3, LLC which was the same group to work with the county in the past.

LA Brown made the motion to approve the agreement. Motion was seconded by Bruce. Motion carried 5-0.

Andy – What information do you need tonight to help make this meeting a success?

Ryan – We are looking for information from residents to help us find local sewer, septic, utilities and wells on the properties.

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Public – Can you explain what a grinder station is?

Public -how do we know if we need a pump?

Public -How does a grinder station versus gravity affect property owners?

Public -Why was this done?

Public -what is the monthly cost?

Public – Will storm water enter the system?

Public – How deep is the grinder station? Will it make noise?

Public – Why do we have to pump and crush our septic tanks?

Public – Are you going to empty the tanks for us? We just emptied it and it should not be at our cost.

Public – So what are you paying for? We have no costs for the systems?

LA Brown – the individual pump stations will be on the residential electric system. The power costs for the pumps are estimated at around \$4/month.

Public – What will the City of Bluffton charge us?

Public – How did you determine septic violations?

Public – You are asking for a partnership, but we need to know the monthly costs.

LA Brown – when will we know the number?

Nate/Ryan – we won't be able to determine the final number until we have the construction bids in and complete the final rate analysis.

Public – What does the current out of City residents pay to Bluffton?

Public -These projects are state driven?

Public – are there soil testing compliance?

Public - What are the qualifications of testing personnel? Who prepared the testing results and their qualifications?

Public – Where the samples contaminated?

Public – I have a friend in Liberty Center with 2 restrooms and 2 laterals leaving the house.

Public – The city can't keep their plant working? What makes you think this will work?

Public – Will you be cleaning up our property? I expect you to make our yards look like they did before this.

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Public – you should know the residents of the neighborhood.

Public – What would a contractor charge for this work on our property?

Public – What can we do for ourselves?

LA Brown – about 25% of those that did their own taps on the Paxson-McKinney project with Bluffton had problems with their laterals after the fact.

Public – So if our system is under 20-years old we can get out of this?

Nate – if your system is under that age it may qualify. A notice will be sent to you outlining the procedure for applying.

Public – will this increase my property taxes?

Nate – not directly, but as properties sell around you for more money the comparable may change over time. This is a net benefit as your property appreciates but will not simply raise your taxes.

Public – Do you have a method to compact the collapsed septic tanks?

Public – What are the setback requirements?

At this point questions started to wind down and Ryan and Jack decided to break the group up into the two project areas and allowed the property owners to review their properties and make notes with the engineers so laterals could be identified with wells and septic tank locations.

Attorney Comments

Nate commented that Mark was not available, but that he had sent two items for approval by the board.

BCS Management Davis Lamm

Board discussed with Davis services and recent proposals. Board discussed that the County paid less for their entire website than the existing BCS agreement.

Mike commented that when he talked to Lana about a proposal for billing services, she said she refused to bid the work. Mike commented that the board wants low bid system done to control costs.

Andy commented that he wants to consider an agreement on the website in the November meeting.

Davis – the value is to have this consolidating into the overall PR of the district.

Mike – Approving pieces individually, (SOPs) seem confusing.

Davis – recommended proceeding with the two SOPs now since other SOPs will be dependent on other board decisions.

Nate – the SOPs provide the board with general guidelines and help the board train new members on policy and procedure to avoid retreading old decisions and the logic for them.

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Mike commented that we are not ready to go live with the website at present.

Mike opened the floor for a motion on the SOP adoption.

Bruce made a motion to approve the two SOPs as presented. Motion was 2nd by Leon. Motion carried 5-0.

Board then tabled the discussion on the website until the November meeting when a proposal would be delivered by ITI. Andy was directed to get the proposal.

Board Comments

Mike commented that having Nate answer questions for BCS is not right during these meetings.

Leon - Why wasn't the health department here?

Nate – that is my fault. I met Allison this morning and, in our discussion, it came up and I said I didn't think it would be required. If I should not have told her that it is my fault. I didn't realize you had asked them to attend.

LA Brown – this meeting there were 5 questions that need answered and a FAQ sheet would be helpful.

Bruce – it is true that many of those complaining don't have a system.

Nate – many who ran the counts found that the district is larger than they thought, but that very few in attendance will qualify for an exemption due to age or condition.

Mike – it is still the right thing to do

Nate returned the discussion to the email from Mark Burry.

One was a request that the board pass the following motion for the project. "The Board hereby takes notice of the plans, specifications and project areas to be served by the District as proposed by the Engineer for the project. The Board hereby directs that a notice shall be sent to the residents to be served within the projects areas that will be required to connect to the District sewer facilities upon completion of the project. The Board further directs that a notice of extension of service to the project areas shall be published as required by law." The board reviewed the language and agreed. Andy made the Motion to proceed as listed above. Leon seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Payment of Claims / Reconciliation of Claims

Nate discussed that he had copies of the invoices for payment but that the ledger cut off the balance when printed. The total of invoices was reviewed but Mike asked that with the meeting running long if it was necessary to proceed with payments on the invoices until the November meeting? Board generally agreed and no action was taken on the invoices presented and Nate was instructed to bring the bills for BCS Management and Choice One to the November meeting.

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Public Comments

Dave Schultz asked the board what the target rate was discussed during the earlier public comments? Mike responded that \$90/month was the goal.

No further public comments were received as groups were split with the engineers to review the individual property owners over the plans

Motion to adjourn – Bruce, motion 2nd by LA Brown. Meeting adjourned. 5-0

Next meeting is scheduled for November 9th at the regular time.

NR

Mike Mossburg

Leon Berning

Andy Stoller

Lewis A. Brown

Bruce Stinson