

WELLS COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 14, 2021

Board members present:

Mike Mossburg
Leon Berning
Jon Oman
Bruce Stinson
Andy Stoller

L.A. Brown, RSD Superintendent
Nate Rumschlag, County Engineer
Ryan Lefeld, Choice One Engineering
Mark Burry, Attorney Miller, Burry & Brown

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes from May 10th meeting. Motion by Bruce, 2nd by Leon. Motion carried 4-0 with one abstention.

Review of Claims and Account Reconciliation

Review of claims prepared by Trent and reviewed by Mike. Trent's report totals balance of district's claims for \$13,433.78. Motion to approve the claims by Andy and 2nd by Bruce. Motion carried 5-0.

Superintendent Report

LA thanked the board & Nate & Mark for keeping the board on task. LA thanked the News Banner as well for the coverage of the district in local media.

LA commented that the biggest issue of the rollout was that the informational letter was not prepared and sent out prior to the interim bills.

Carla has been awesome to review billing as comments come in and has made updates quickly for me.

Phone calls have already slowed down. District phone line is working, and the number is 260-353-1616.

LA recommended that we stay on the same page with the public. The board laughed at the comment and said they would defer calls to LA at the new number.

LA said that pipe is arriving in Murray and Liberty Center for construction to start.

Carla said the board could write messages to the public using the back of the bill where there is open space to type up messages to the public. LA planned to have draft language in time for the monthly board approval during meetings before bills are issued on the 18th of each month. LA commented that he would avoid putting policy statements or board position in those messages.

LA commented that he made an executive decision about waiving the first late fees on the month of May since the notices were not sent out in advance, but he has since communicated with the vast majority of residents.

LA then commented about the Southard's request. Nate introduced the request from the Southards and their request from Commissioner Vanover if the district board would approve a 2-year deferment so they could delay their connection.

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Board members asked Mark Burry what the precedent was?

Mark responded that making an exception can be a trap for the board. You don't want to open a policy that does not exist in the law.

After some discussion Leon motioned to deny the request for the connection deferment. Motion was seconded by Bruce. Motion carried 5-0.

Murray sewer was corrected with the help of the county highway department.

Board did not vote but encouraged LA to prepare and issue notices using the back of the district bills monthly with the help of Carla.

Engineering Reports

VTF is planning to break ground on July 5th and Wessler inspections will start mid-July. They plan on having 2 boring crews and 2 open dig crews. The site superintendent and LA are both contacts that can be used for the public to call. LA has already started the process of coordinating with the owners on the connection points.

Mark asked Ryan for a copy of the grinder easement form they are offering the public.

Ryan presented to the board proposals to start design for Phase 2 (Craigville, Tocsin & Kingsland), Phase 3a (Keystone) and Phase 3b(Petroleum and Reiffsburg).

Ryan commented about past project meetings with SRF & their feedback to the board.

Nate and Ryan spoke with Jim McGoff again in June and pushed the district to apply for SWIF grant funds.

The rate in the study is blended for Phases 1 & 2 and is only a current request of SRF.

Mike mentioned that \$1 million of county ARP funds was earmarked by the commissioners. Mike then asked how prepared is Bluffton and Choice-One to proceed with Reiffsburg & Petroleum design?

Jon responded that Bluffton is ready.

Ryan returned to the 3 proposals for board consideration. The total project areas in the phases serves nearly 1,000 residents.

Leon asked if Craigville is premature.

Nate responded that no, we have worked with Bluffton and they are working on the connection needs.

Ryan responded that no, he is working on teaming projects with the City and their funding needs have been presented to SRF and so long as they link our projects we should be able to fund both of these needs.

Jon responded that the City is looking for responses on the Dustman Road sewer by mid-July.

Motion to move forward on all 3- project phases by Bruce, motion was 2nd by Leon. Motion carried 5-0.

The town of Ossian is asking for a release of PER data related to the North Ossian sewer project.

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When asked Nate recommended that either way, if Ossian pursues the project on their own or if they wish to team to connect the service area the RSD board wins by completing their purpose in eliminating septic violations.

Leon commented that the mood may be changing.

Nate recommended that the board require an indemnification statement be put in the data release to protect the board and Choice One for any decisions or use of the data provided to Ossian.

Andy made the motion to release the data to Ossian pending signature on an indemnification statement. Motion was 2nd by Bruce. Motion carried 5-0.

Ryan recommended that the board consider possible PER public hearing dates. Ryan asked that the board look at the next 2 months and let him know when they should pursue this.

Ryan offered to get future phase customer lists to LA for his record and research.

Attorney Comments

Issued a draft sewer use ordinance to the board. The ordinance covers discussion of the SOP's and how connections and charges fall within the RSD's sewer use ordinance. Mark commented that you need your ordinance to have the force of law and SOP's have to be in the ordinance to be enforceable if they pertain to how you deal with the public or your customers.

Nate commented that the sewer use ordinance needs to be consistent with the City of Bluffton's and be at or greater than in many cases to protect the district from potential fines or penalties.

LA commented to please have people call him first and keep his new RSD # handy to nip public issues in the bud.

Board Comments

Board asked Mark to address BCS's current consulting agreement.

Mark asked if all of the work done to date has been paid for.

Mark noted that the contract with BCS was signed on June 8, 2020 and the terms of the agreement have it lasting 6 months or until SRF closing. The closing was in March of 2021. Both of those termination conditions have passed and the board can take whatever action it sees fit.

The board wanted to keep the website maintenance with BCS at this time.

After board discussion Bruce made the motion to request final invoicing and all website authorization information. Motion was 2nd by Leon. Motion carried 5-0

Leon nominated Bruce as Vice-president. Motion was 2nd by Jon Oman. Motion carried 5-0

Public Comments

Question came up as to why the website did not include the board agenda for today's meeting.

Nate commented he would see what happened to Sarah who was uploading the agendas.

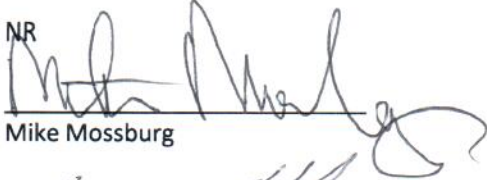
Seeing no other comments Mike opened the floor for a motion to adjourn.

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Motion to adjourn – Andy, motion 2nd by Jon. Meeting adjourned. 5-0

Next meeting is a regularly scheduled meeting for July 12th at the regular time.

NR



Mike Mossburg



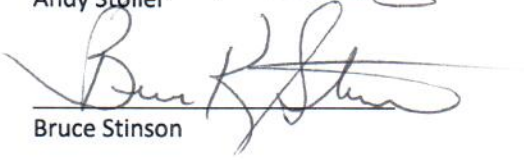
Leon Berning



Andy Stoller



Jon Oman



Bruce Stinson

WCRSD Board Meeting Attendance Sheet

July 12, 2021

NAME	Address
1. Ron & Patricia Holley	1141 E MARKET ST MURRAY
2. Bruce & Sheila Blem	1054 N. Washington (Murray) Bluffton, IN. 46714
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many attendees did not sign in. N.R.