

WELLS COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2023

Board members present:

Bruce Stinson
Leon Berning
Jon Oman
Andy Stoller
Dr Richard Jackson

Lewis Brown, RSD Superintendent
Nate Rumschlag, County Engineer
Ryan Lefeld, Choice One Engineering
Clayton Lengerich, Attorney

Call to Order

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

Public Questions

Brandon Wright: told the board to inform the attorney that a formal complaint had been filed with the IURC, 21 Alive investigates and FW Newspapers have also been contacted. Brandon asked for a refund check.

The board discussed that a credit for a portion of his bill is being processed because, as new construction, he should not have been charged all of the fees to date and this was not addressed by the billing company.

Andy commented that this should be a credit on your account.

Brandon – I have no other choice but to open my valve to the system so I can use the sewer. I have purchased a valve key and if the system is not open, I will open the valve and use the sewer.

The board discouraged this action as it may open him up for liability.

No further public comments or questions

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from August 15, 2023 by Leon and 2nd by Dr. Jackson. Motion carried 5-0.

Review of Claims and Account Reconciliation

Review of claims prepared by Trent and reviewed by Leon for the board. Leon brought in 17 claims totaling \$21,912.68.

Account balance was \$144,022.80 on Aug 15, 2023
Account balance is \$160,479.98 on September 11, 2023

Lewis asked which of the two electric bills was the highest. Leon responded that it was Heartland REMC.

Motion to approve the claims by Jon Oman and 2nd by Andy. Motion carried 5-0.

WELLS COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2023

Superintendent Report

Lewis reviewed his notes for the board.

- Craigville gravity has passed pressure testing.
- Low Pressure lines are being tested now. And tracer wire splices are necessary in some locations.
- One wire is being corrected for a service to a home.
- Testing is going slowly with Craigville because multiple repairs are required. The couplers appear to be a problem causing VTF to repair many of the connections.
- VTF is often taking a day to run up the pressure, find a leak and repair the joint.
- Few grinders are missing their external shutoffs.
- Electric is at the main lift station.
- 36 connections are left of the 80 total grinders.

Andy how much is left to test?

- There are 2 miles of 5 miles left to test.

Bruce commented that according to Aaron they need 2 more weeks, and I say we hold him to that. I don't want to be unreasonable, but we have to hold them to this.

- Restoration crews were in Craigville and will start doing areas further out.

Andy – Why are they only testing one area at a time?

Ryan – I believe it is an equipment issue.

Lewis – We are working on the forcemain.

Bruce – I want to meet Aaron again.

- They are making ground on the Kingsland project.
- I have had to meet with each homeowner for the grinder locations. If Levi or Ryan have a problem, I need to know but my stakes and notes are what is agreed to by the owner.
- Working on electrical specs and diagram for Kingsland. I still have some homeowners making up their minds on the grinder location.
- Rail Pros are the delay for the 6" main crossing.
- Murray church was helpful. Liberty Center still has 7 connections to do. A contractor was at fault for promising to do the work and the residents are all looking for a new contractor.
- VTF did pay for remedial electrical work to satisfy an issue on a property per my request.
- I have a new customer concern/comment form that I am handing out to collect and respond to issues.
- I am meeting with Mark and Brooke for Kingsland customers that are refusing to participate.
- I have a few people refusing to sign easements.
- 811 contract is in preparation and is very cost effective.
- Siphoning is still an issue on about 6 locations.
- Grinder easements are being documented incorrectly by some notaries. We are having trouble recording documents that notaries are completing incorrectly, and we have to go back and redo certain documents.
- We are working on options for a vehicle and building in the future.
- Discussed the Meyer building expansion project and impacts of the concrete rinse and operations. Ryan stated that this was in the ordinance to pass through expenses. Jon commented that Bluffton needed more time to look at the type of flow and any rate of bill impacts.

WELLS COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2023

Leon – will the lady who can't pay qualify for help?

Lewis – No, but there is some assistance coming along the way.

Bruce – Any chance we can meet this week with Aaron? I think 2 weeks is our max or we will need to do something.

Andy – Can we have MBB review the contract and what our options are for enforcement? Also, Andy requested that Lewis develop a budget for the used Hwy vehicle and north cold storage building costs.

Nate discussed both the costs and potential for the liquidation of a county vehicle or properties and options done by Adams County.

Engineering Reports

- P1
 - Closeout paperwork has been submitted to SRF.
- P2
 - Aaron is telling me the couplings are causing trouble with testing compliance.
 - We want VTF to accelerate the testing process.
 - Andy asked if there were any issues beyond the testing. Ryan responded that the main lift station startup is now a critical path item.
 - Lewis commented that the individual grinders could be tested and startup done.

Brandon – I don't want VTF on my property testing my line.

Lewis – Brandon's grinder is new construction and would not be something VTF needs to test anyway.

Andy - What are the list of items for us to turn this on?

- Forcemain testing, main lift station start up, and grinder pump start up.
- Lewis is holding the letter to connect notice until Ferguson testing is underway.
- We are finding some grinders are missing the external shutoff valves.
- P3
 - Construction underway.
 - Forcemain is currently going on and gravity is next.

● Other

Andy – What are the locations of missing valves and how many are we talking about?

Ryan – We can work around this and get the valves needed.

Andy – Ryan do you recommend we proceed with liquidated damages?

Ryan – We don't recommend that because it can lead to arbitration or litigation.

WELLS COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 11, 2023

Jon – Bluffton has looked at liquidated damages on projects as well, but ultimately it was better for the City to wait and negotiate solutions. The option always remains available.

Nate commented that if the board does want to pursue liquidated damages to let him know so a special meeting could be held to vote at that time.

Attorney Comments

- P1 Disbursement Requests:
 - DR #87 \$75 for Choice One Engineering
 - DR #89 \$60 for Miller Burry and Brown easement work
 - Motion to approve by Andy Stoller, 2nd by Jon, motion carried 5-0

- P2 Disbursement Requests:
 - DR #46 \$120 for Miller Burry and Brown easement work
 - DR #47 \$1,723 for Choice One Engineering
 - DR #48 \$9,406 for Wessler Engineering Inspection services
 - Motion to approve by Andy Stoller, 2nd by Dr. Jackson, motion carried 5-0

- P3 Disbursement Requests:
 - DR #45 \$11,653 for Wessler Engineering Inspection services
 - DR #88 \$450 for Miller Burry and Brown for work on 15 easements
 - Motion to approve by Jon, 2nd by Leon, motion carried 5-0

Board Comments

Leon - Is there any way to pay off the county loan early? The board discussed the pros and cons.

Motion by Leon to pay off the remaining loan to the County. Motion was 2nd by Jon. Motion carried 5-0.

Leon – current balance in the benevolence fund is \$4,327.93 for assistance.

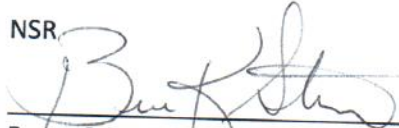
Public Comments

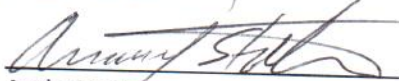
No further public comments.

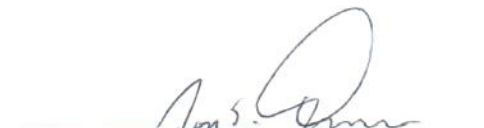
Motion to adjourn – Jon, motion 2nd by Dr. Jackson. Meeting adjourned. 5-0


Next meeting will be on Tuesday October 10, 2023, at 6:30pm.

NSR


Bruce Stinson


Andy Stoller


Jon Oman


Leon Berning

Dr. Richard Jackson