

METROPOLITAN LYNCHBURG MOORE
UTILITY DEPARTMENT
BOARD MEETING
February 13, 2024

The Metro Utility Board meeting scheduled for February 13, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. was called to order by Shane Taylor, Chairperson. Member's present: Shane Taylor, Glen Thomas, Boo Johnston, Greg Guinn, Ronnie Cunningham, and Brooke Fanning.

Visitors: Mayor Sloan Stewart, Tabitha Moore, *The Lynchburg Times*, and Anna Coburn, *The Moore County News* Bryant Griffin, *Hethcoat & Davis*, Holly Montgomery, Mr. & Mrs. Swann, and Preston Holliday

The motion was made by Glen Thomas and seconded by Shane Taylor to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2024. Motion carried 4-0.

E-Source- Water Loss Consulting Services: Brooke Fanning introduced Kate Gasner with E-Source Water Loss Consulting via Teams Meeting. Ms. Gasner explained the processes E-Source implements to assist water utilities analyze their water loss values by using deductions of known water use and compares it to non-revenue water data. They analyze data from billing software, production meters, and all accounting processes used at the utility to set a baseline for their study to verify the current data sets performance. This would be included in Phase 1 of their assessment. Phase 2 would include further research at the water production plant, the water meters registering the water sold to every customer and walking the water lines searching for leaks in the field. After both phases are concluded, E-Source will then look at the work being conducted by the utility currently and will assist the utility in reporting this work to the state accurately. Engineer Bryant Griffin asked the first question about E-Source's first steps in two parts. Part one being testing the meters for accuracy against E-Source validated meters and part two being E-Source work crews walking the water lines listening for leaks. He clarified that the footage walked would be 30,000 feet. Kate Gasner affirmed that yes E-Source would be walking the water lines to help determine where the water leakage was occurring. When Kate was finished with her presentation the board conducted lengthy discussion trying to decide their best plan of action. Shane Taylor asked if the bid could be broken up into parts? Glen Thomas stated he had been researching a printout of the Ledford Mill and Motlow Road consisting of 113 customers, and it only consists of 26% water loss with 13 customers having no water usage. Boo Johnston asked if those 13 with zero usage were caught during the department's manual reading of the meters this month. Ronnie Cunningham stated that the office staff had corrected those readings, and the customers should get a proper bill next month. It was discovered that those ETR's (Encoder Type Register) had quite working and needed to be replaced. Brooke Fanning stated that she had emailed Kate Gasner to clarify if the quote could be broken up into different phases. Shane Taylor said he felt like the loss was a clerical error in the billing software. He feels like the data assessment will help find a large portion of the water loss. He further stated that he does not feel like the leakage is actual water loss because customers would be complaining they didn't have water on the hills in the county. Boo Johnston said he saw with his own eyes that the meters were inaccurate. Greg Guinn asked how this could be corrected? Ronnie Cunningham explained that office staff would be correcting the readings to start fresh with the customer accounts. Shane Taylor stated that all meters need to be read until the meter

issue is solved. Ronnie Cunningham said he was planning to have the meters manually read for the foreseeable future until a viable solution could be found. Glen Thomas stated he didn't understand why we would need to hire anyone to come in and tell us about the problems we already know we have in the system. He offered the example of a customer that typically uses 10,000 gallons being charged for 4,000 gallons of water to prove the meter is inaccurate. Greg Guinn asked what the costs would be if the utility were to change an entire zone at a time. Ronnie Cunningham explained that the meter costs would be cheaper the more meters you purchase in bulk. Finally, after the discussion portion a motion was made by Greg Guinn and seconded by Boo Johnston to have Kate Gasner draft a contract for Phase 1 services (data assessment) and have John T Bobo's office review before presenting for consideration at the March meeting. A roll call vote was taken Boo Johnston: Yes, Greg Guinn – Yes, Glen Thomas -Yes, Shane Taylor- Yes. Motion passed 4-0.

Whisky Creek Development: The developer was a no show at the meeting. No discussion.

Engineer's Report: Ronnie Cunningham updated the board:

1. 12-inch Waterline: The bore contractor has the original problem fixed but it appears that the old pump has contaminated the hydraulic lines with metal. They are pulling everything out and taking it to the shop for repairs and will let us know when they have it fixed. They won't be able to work until that is done.
2. Cates Booster Station: Southeastern Tank was onsite to pour the foundation for the building as soon as it dries up.
3. TDOT Project: they are almost finished moving the sewer lines. Should be completed this week.
4. Three Rivers Energy on Harry Hill Road is almost finished with installing the 8" water line to their project site.

Manager's Report:

1. Ronnie Cunningham informed the board that he has installed a new Kamstrup water meter at the office, and it appears to be capturing all the low flow water.
2. The Raw Water intake motor is broken, and he is waiting on Flow Serve to give a quote for a replacement motor.
3. Coy Hill Pumping Station: Wascon repaired the pumps and now the pump station is working properly with an alternating set up as required by the State of TN.

Glen Thomas spoke up about the sewer rates and explained that he had conducted some research and found 52 accounts that were being charged incorrect sewer rates. He looked pointedly at Brooke Fanning as he spoke and declared that any business on the square should be charged a commercial rate. He also stated while looking at Mrs. Fanning that she should go to the Property Assessor's Office and see who is zoned commercial and charge these accounts a commercial sewer rate. He went on to say that another way Mrs. Fanning could impose an updated charge

would be to pull all the business licenses and charge those businesses a commercial rate. Boo Johnston spoke up and said what if a person had a small business in their home? Glen Thomas responded that they should be paying a commercial rate. Mrs. Fanning said that when the past utility board had implemented the commercial rates it was based on a list of businesses with a backflow device or grease trap. Glen Thomas then said he wanted to make a motion immediately to change the water and sewer rates to: residential (covering – houses, farm use, apartments, duplexes for residences, county buildings, churches and the masonic lodge) \$5.29 surcharge and an unclearly stated per 1000 gallon charge, Greg Guinn seconded the motion. Shane Taylor spoke up and said he was uncomfortable with Glen's motion. He said a rate change needed careful consideration. Brooke Fanning stated that the utility had paid \$10,000 to a company called Rate Studies to get the rates set to what they currently are. Shane further stated that the current rates had been reviewed and approved by the State Comptroller's office and he was uncomfortable with Mr. Glen pulling the rug out from under them this late in the meeting. He went on to say he would rather have information presented at the March meeting with supporting documents that warranted a rate change. He then asked Mr. Thomas if he would like to withdraw his motion. Mr. Thomas then withdrew his motion and Greg Guinn rescinded his second. Shane Taylor thanked them both for their withdrawals. Chairperson Taylor stated he looked forward to seeing better evidence and would like to discuss it further in coming meetings.

Glen Thomas letter: Glen Thomas wrote a letter he wanted included in the meeting minutes. *"I was appointed to Utility board Oct. 2023. I ask for a budget 2023-2024 and receive it In the Dec. meeting The board received a profit & loss budget. The Income & Expense were for 2023-2024 budget year but the annual budget was for 2022-2023 year. At the Jan meeting 2024 the board was given a budget amendments for 2023-2024. The board was not ask to vote on the amendment budget which went back to July 2023 The budget that we have to work with is the first budget which is the one that the Utility board pass for the 2023-2024 year."* Signed Glen Thomas Dated Feb 13, 2024 – Metro Lynchburg Moore County Utility Department board member.

A motion was made by Glen Thomas, and seconded by Greg Guinn, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM. Motion passed 4-0.

Shane Taylor, Chairperson