

# **TAYLOR COASTAL WATER & SEWER DISTRICT**

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## **MINUTES OF BOARD WORKSHOP**

**September 14, 2021**

1. The workshop was held at the District Building at 6:00 PM on September 14, 2021. Present were Commissioners David Dall, Michael Lynn, William Rich, and Thomas Kicklighter. Commissioners Randy Hathcock, Mike Hunter, and Gayle Lundy were absent. TCWSD Staff present were Kristi Hathcock and Lynette Senter.

We did not have a quorum at the start of the meeting, but Commissioner Lynn arrived at 6:10 P.M. Chairman Dall and Commissioner Rich discussed capacity. Commissioner Rich explained that he has reviewed most of the maps and engineered drawings and we do not have up to date line locations and sizes for water and sewer. We will need to work on getting updated maps and information and possibly utilize Diamond Maps. Commissioner Rich explained that the District may not have the capability to provide adequate water pressure to the end of the water line if a lot of additional hookups are added. Commissioner Rich spoke with Ron, who explained that we have a booster pump near Cedar Island that is non-operational and has not been in use for many years. Commissioner Rich will work with Ron and see if they can determine the extent of repairs that would be needed to provide better water pressure down the line. The water improvements project will provide a better system for water pressure, but the project is probably two to three years from completion.

2. Chairman Dall led in prayer and the pledge of allegiance to the flag.
3. There were no guests. The floor was opened for non-agendaed items – there were none.
4. Budget – Ms. Senter explained that she made some adjustments to the budget and kept things as tight as possible. Uniforms for the field staff can be covered within their small tools budget if the staff watch their spending. Commissioner Lynn agreed that uniforms were a good idea. Ms. Senter explained that it would be to the benefit of the District if we could make Ms. Hathcock full time. This would allow for better training and coverage at the office as well as future planning. The budget for legal expenses was increased to \$11,000. Ms. Senter indicated that she could not find an extra \$30,000 in the budget for a website. She discussed the possibility of making this a future project and that we could look for grant funding from other sources. Rate information has been sent to the University of North Carolina for inclusion into their Florida dashboard. Commissioner Kicklighter asked for a Profit and Loss report and Commissioner Lynn requested a copy as well. Commissioner Kicklighter asked about an increase in workers' compensation for increased hours and Ms. Senter explained that it was negligible as Ms. Hathcock's hours would increase about 14 hours per week. Chairman Dall asked about a replacement wastewater operator to take over if David Morgan chooses to retire. Mr. Morgan has not yet let the office know if he will be retiring but Ms. Senter will discuss this with him again. If the District has to hire another Operator the costs will probably increase. We may have to look for new field staff as our current wastewater trainee has not fulfilled his educational requirements. The Board discussed the possibility of hiring a field assistant rather than an operator trainee. Ms. Senter explained that hiring a trainee has not been successful in

**TAYLOR COASTAL WATER & SEWER DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**

**Page 2 of 4**

the past. Chairman Dall stated that it would take a year to get David's replacement trained. Ms. Senter explained that if we hire an already licensed operator, we will be searching for months. There are many job openings and few licensed operators, and our current salary may have to be adjusted. Commissioner Rich asked about using Ron Bennett as our dual operator and Ms. Senter explained that Ron actually has three licenses, water, wastewater, and distribution. Commissioner Rich stated that we could possibly use Mr. Bennett for both plants, and find a trainee somewhere like a vocational school. The board had further discussion on where to look for a trainee. Ms. Senter explained that Florida Rural Water has an apprentice program that might be of some assistance. FRWA provides the training and education, and the District could require an employment requiring reimbursement if the employee does not work a certain number of years. Chairman Dall asked if we needed to include salaries for two people in the budget and if so, how would those costs be covered. Commissioner Lynn asked if this budget reflects our projected income and Ms. Senter confirmed that it does. Ms. Senter explained that it may be possible to ask Mr. Bennett to work as a dual operator with an increase in salary and proper field assistance. Chairman Dall asked if we had contacted the County and Ms. Senter said she had spoken to several people, and they are all searching for operators. If we get in a bind, Florida Rural Water can supply a contractor to fulfill David's position, but they will be very expensive and will most likely not perform any field work. Chairman Dall ask how many hours we need an operator to work each week. Ms. Senter said at least 2 ½ hours a day. Chairman Dall then asked how many hours for a Backhoe operator. Ms. Senter explained that we only need a backhoe operator for installs or if we had a break. We had used a contractor for those services but several years ago the District purchased a tractor, blade, and backhoe so that the installs could be done in house. Commissioner Lynn asked why we quit using Melvin and Ms. Senter explained that the reason of that is the District wanted to keep the costs lower for our customers and we had more control over the installations and repairs. The tractor is also used to mow the spray field approximately two or three days each month.

Commissioner Kicklighter said perhaps we should offer a significant signing bonus to attract a new wastewater operator and ask them to sign a contract. Commissioner Lynn asked if our laborers had ever worked for an hourly rate and Ms. Senter explained that we have done that in the past. She then explained that all of the employees are salaried as their hours and days varied, and it was difficult to get someone to work at an hourly rate. Commissioner Lynn asked if any of our employees were on an hourly rate and Ms. Senter confirmed that we are all salaried, but David got paid hourly to do water work.

Commissioner Kicklighter asked about alternatives for the payment of grinder pumps and Ms. Senter explained that we really don't have any alternatives. Commissioner Lynn stated that he had someone ask him about the price of the grinder pump and Ms. Senter said our current cost for a new pump package is approximately \$3,000. We do have a cost breakdown that gives a District a \$400 to \$600 cushion depending upon the installation site. The Board agreed that our current price of \$1,000 for water and \$6,000 for sewer is satisfactory.

Commissioner Rich discussed the problem of locating lines once David retires. Ms. Senter explained that Mr. George Glover of Florida Rural Water will work with Ron and David to help get the appropriate information loaded into Diamond Maps. Chairman Dall asked about calculating capacity on the lines and Commissioner Rich explained that once we had the appropriate line size and location, we would be able to determine capacity. Chairman Dall asked if Diamond Maps is

**TAYLOR COASTAL WATER & SEWER DISTRICT**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Page 3 of 4**

CAD compatible and Ms. Senter said she would talk to Mr. Glover about that. Chairman Dall explained that developers will need to know our current and future capacity and should be able to access that information on our website. Commissioner Lundy called into the meeting and asked about the mapping of the lines by our current and past engineers and if that was Diamond Maps. Ms. Senter explained that was a different project that Jones Edmonds has provided mapping information to Dewberry, and they were working on maps as well.

Commissioner Kicklighter asked if it is a requirement that the budget be balanced. Ms. Senter explained that our auditor said that the budget is a living document for our District, and as long as we show that we can make our loan payments and reserves, it's a fluid document. Ms. Senter stated that the budget must be approved by USDA on September 29 but other than that we allowed to make changes to the budget throughout the year

Ms. Senter explained that we have received a quote from Coastal Hauling to repair Sandhill Road. The quote is for \$10,500 which would make it a Capital Improvement because we have never touched the road and the amount is over \$10,000.

5. Refinancing USDA Loans – Commissioner Kicklighter stated that if we paid off one of our loans, we could use that money for something else. Ms. Senter explained that we pay around \$80,000 a year and \$55,000 is interest so it frees up some. Commissioner Lynn stated that need to look at paying off a loan or possibly making extra principal payments each year. Ms. Senter spoke about corresponding with Brunilda Robles from the Lake City office of USDA to ask for some information on our loans. Mrs. Robles explained that there was no pre-payment penalty and there was the possibility of refinancing our loans. However, she did state that she was not sure that refinancing by USDA would remove any loan conditions. Ms. Senter also asked her about the letter of conditions not being on our in our financial documents and Mrs. Robles stated in the emails that she will contact the State office for a response.
6. Funding Sources for Refinancing – Commissioner Dall asked if we had put in an application with Co-Bank and Ms. Senter stated that the Board had not asked her to do so. Chairman Dall and the Board discussed this and asked Ms. Senter to contact Co-Bank. Commissioner Lynn stated that he is not concerned about the restrictions, and we need to work towards paying off the loans. Commissioner Lynn also stated he would like to seek different legal services and he asked Ms. Senter to add that to next meeting's agenda. Commissioner Lynn explained that he doesn't see anything wrong with asking about refinancing or a bank proposal to see if we can get a cheaper interest rate. Ms. Senter said she could email Mrs. Roble and ask about the procedure for making additional principal payments. Ms. Senter will also ask our Auditor to review the reserves that are set aside each year to see if they can be postponed and funds put towards other needs.

Chairman Dall asked if the board wanted to continue to pursue any other local financing. There was some discussion regarding lines of credit and the Board decided to see what information we get from Co-Bank before proceeding. There was discussion regarding the District Funds and what was unrestricted. Commissioner Lynn stated that we have around \$400,000 of unrestricted reserves at this time.

**TAYLOR COASTAL WATER & SEWER DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING**

**Page 4 of 4**

7. Feasibility Study for Water and Sewer – Ms. Senter explained that she hasn't heard anything back yet on the Feasibility Study.
8. Impact Fee Study – Ms. Senter explained that Florida Rural Water has given us a quote of \$5,500.00 to perform an Impact Fee Study. This is a discounted rate because we are a member. Chairman Dall discussed that this would help meet the County's 2060 Vision Plan. The board discussed where the 2060 plan for the County is going, how far is it going to reach, and what part the District will play. Commissioner Lynn stated that the City of Perry has an Impact Fee and that if he builds a development, he is required to pay for all the infrastructure. Taylor County does not have any impact fees at this time. Ms. Senter explained that the District could ask a contractor to pay for the expansion of our lines to provide service with the possibility of a discount if any other customers would be served by a line extension. Ms. Senter explained that she looked at ten other municipalities and their impact fees ranged from \$600 to \$10,000. There was some discussion regarding the need for an engineer to review our lines, but Commissioner Rich explained that the engineer would likely rely on field staff. Commissioner Kicklighter explained that you would be paying for the engineer's expertise and stamp. The Board agreed that we do not need to start an Impact Fee study at this time but would discuss it again in the future.
9. Financial Measurements – Chairman Dall spoke about the American Rescue Act and explained that the County has already allocated the monies to their projects. Ms. Senter explained that there are limitations on the funding and according to the Association of County Governments, the American Rescue Plan Act is limited to mostly low-income area projects. Chairman Dall explained that we need to have an acting committee for grant applications and for developing a relationship with the developers. Ms. Senter explained that we will need to have projects in mind when applying for funding. Chairman Dall stated that we need to get working fire hydrants and Ms. Senter explained that the County not the District is in charge of fire service. Chairman Dall discussed increasing our line size to provide service to the hydrants but that it would be a major project. The County was asked in the beginning about working with the District on this portion of the Water Improvements Project, but they declined to participate. Chairman Dall suggested that we offer more detailed financial information and asked Ms. Senter to review QuickBooks to see what was available.
10. Closing Remarks Commissioners/Staff - There were no closing remarks.
11. Motion to Adjourn

**Chairman Dall requested a Motion to Adjourn. Commissioner Kicklighter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lynn offered a second. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 P.M.**



BY: Lynette Taylor Senter, District Manager  
Taylor Coastal Water and Sewer District