The Utilities Board of The Town of Cedar Bluff

November 21, 2023

STATE OF ALABAMA

CHEROKEE COUNTY

The Utilities Board of the Town of Cedar Bluff met for a regular business meeting Thursday, November 21, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. at 4971 Alabama HWY 68, Cedar Bluff Alabama 35959. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Bond.

Roll Call:

Allen Baker Present Jack Bond Present

Linda Pickelsimer Present Mattie Williams Present

William Warren Present

Meeting attendees: Linda Sutherland, Larry Sutherland, Brenda Pardue, Darrell Sears (LADD Environmental), James Payton (LADD Environmental), Marsha Kastel

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairman Bond followed by the prayer, led by Board Member Williams.

**Approval of Minutes**

Office Manager Joshua Bolton presented the minutes from the meeting of October 17, 2023. Board Member Warren made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Board Member Williams.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

Office Manager Joshua Bolton presented the minutes from the meeting of October 26, 2023. Board Member Warren found a correction that needed to be made to the minutes. Board Member Warren made a motion to accept the minutes once the corrections were made, which was seconded by Board Member Baker.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

Office Manager Joshua Bolton presented the minutes from the meeting of September 21, 2023. Board Member Warren made a motion to accept the minutes as written, which was seconded by Board Member Baker.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

**Manager Report**

Manager Steven Dutton presented the Managers Report to the Board. The report consisted of 5 water taps, 4 sewer taps, 25 water leaks, 1 meter or fitting repair/replaced and 11 fire hydrant repairs. There was a total of 111 completed Work Orders.

Board Member Williams asked Manager Dutton if customers are charged for having a meter reread. Manager Dutton stated usually the rereading was not charged to the customer.

Chairman Bond asked if the sewer line had been run on County Road 604. Manger Dutton stated the sewer lines have not been run yet and he would need to order more pipe to complete the project.

Board Member Warren asked for an update on the shoring box. Manager Dutton reported the shoring box had arrived and was put together. He also reported he purchased cables to lift the shoring box using the new excavator.

Board Member Warren asked for an update on the old excavator. Manger Dutton reported he did not have an update.

Board Member Warren asked for an update on the new truck. Manager Dutton presented the Board with four quotes for the new truck. Chairman Bond stated he would continue the discussion of the truck under new business.

Board Member Warren asked for an update on the spray field. Manager Dutton stated he would have an update once the cotton harvesting season was finished.

**Financial Report**

Treasure Pickelsimer presented the financial report from September 2023 to the Board. Office Manager Joshua Bolton stated the financial report from October 2023 was not complete. Treasure Pickelsimer stated she did not have a chance to review the financial report and made a motion to table the financial report until the next meeting, which was seconded by Chairman Bond.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

Office Manager Bolton presented the Check Registry to the Board. The Board did not have any questions concerning the Check Registry.

**Customers**

The following customers who requested to address the Board with concerns were not present: Julie Branham and Brian Shepard

A.M. Brown addressed the Board concerning the water and sewer tap fees. He stated he was unable to pay the fees in one payment and asked the Board if they could set up a payment plan. Chairman Bond stated the Board was unable to set up a payment plan because it was not part of the policy.

Brenda Pardue addressed the Board concerning a leak. After some discussion, the Board decided to give Ms. Pardue’s a credit of $47.43.

**Old Business**

Board Member Baker addressed the Board concerning raising the water and sewer rates. Chairman Bond reminded the Board they had tabled any discussion on raising the rates during the October 17, 2023 meeting for three months. After some discussion, the Board decided to retable any discussion on raising the water and sewer rates until the three-month period ended.

Chairman Bond asked for an update from LADD Environmental on the grant for a new water tank. Darrell Sears, from LADD Environmental, addressed the Board. He stated there were two increases to the grant amount. The first was from the tank company whose prices had increased from 1.2 million to 2 million. The second increase was changing the water line from a 6-inch main to an 8-inch main. This would increase the grant amount from 2.1 million to 3.2 million. Board Member Warren asked if the Board should submit a new grant or amend the current grant. Mr. Sears suggested amending the current grant would be the best course of action. Board Member Warren made a motion to have LADD Environmental to amend the grant and resubmit it as soon as possible, Chairman Bond seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

Board members pay raises were discussed at this time. Board Member Warren stated he had not received a paycheck for being on the Board. Office Manger Bolton stated he had the paperwork that he would have to fill out to receive a paycheck. Board Member Warren stated he looks at serving on the Board as a community service and did not need to receive a paycheck and would not agree to give the Board a pay increase. Board Member Pickelsimer did not agree to giving the Board a pay increase. After some discussion, the subject was tabled.

Manger Dutton gave an update on the Fire Hydrant repairs. He stated all but five of the Hydrants have been repaired. The estimated cost for repairing the five remaining hydrants was $1285.00 per Hydrant. After some discussion Chairman Bond made a motion to have the remaining Hydrants repaired for $1285.00 per Hydrant, Board Member Williams seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

Board Member Warren stated there was a budget of $50,000 toward the repair of the Fire Hydrants. There was some discussion on the spending limit that Manger Dutton is allowed to spend without Board approval. Manager Dutton stated he was under the assumption that the Board had given him permission to repair the Hydrants during the October 17, 2023 meeting. Board Member Warren stated he believes Manager Dutton’s spending amount should be raised and the Board should not interfere with the day-to-day operation of the facility. After some discussion, the subject was tabled.

Manager Dutton presented the Board with three quotes for the tank inspection. He suggested using Southern Corrosion due to the cost, and they would also clean the tank. After some discussion Board Member Warren made a motion to accept Southern Corrosion proposal, Board Member Williams seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

The Board discussed the Utilities Employees Holiday Schedule. Office Manager Bolton presented the Holiday Schedule to the Board. He stated he added Juneteenth to the schedule so the Board could see where it would fall. Board Member Williams drew the Boards attention to the personal day that was on the Holiday Schedule. Board Member Pickelsimer stated the personal day was added last year in leu of receiving Juneteenth off. After some discussion Board Member Pickelsimer made a motion to drop the personal day and add Juneteenth to the Holiday Schedule, Chairman Bond seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

Board Member Baker addressed the Board concerning pay raises for the Board members. After some discussion Board Member Baker made a motion to increase the monthly Board stipend from $100 to $250, Chairman Bond seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (3-2)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Williams

Nye: Pickelsimer, Warren

Abstained: None

**New Business**

Office Manager Bolton addressed the Board concerning the customer bills. He stated he has been receiving multiple complaints every month from customers who have not received their bills. He reached out to the Centre Post Office to discover the issue. A representative of the post office explained to him that the postcards may be getting damaged in the sorting machines. She also suggested printing statements instead of postcards. Office Manager Bolton stated he reached out to RVS, the billing software company, to get a quote for the statements. The cost would increase from $52.99 per thousand, for the postcards, to $74.25 per thousand, for the statements. He also stated there would be an added cost for the postage and envelopes and added time cost for the office employees to stamp and stuff the envelopes. After some discussion Board Member Williams made a motion to contact and have Attorney Bob McWhorter draft a letter to the United States Post office to inquire and confirm direct delivery of our bills to our customers or to give a reason as to why it has not been done, Board Member Baker seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

James Payton, from LADD Environmental, addressed the Board. He presented a proposal to do a study on Cedar Bluff Utilities sewer and water system. The study would provide a list of water and sewer mechanical equipment that is expected to be replaced and a list of water distribution and sewer collection systems needing rehabbed or upgraded. They would evaluate and recommend a priority list of those projects they feel like are in immediate need of replacement. They would also provide engineering support and help with the application for additional funding. The study would not exceed over $10,000. After some discussion Chairman Bond made a motion to review the proposal and get similar proposal from other engineering companies, Board Member Baker seconded the motion,

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

The Board continued the discussion of purchasing a new truck. After some discussion Board Member Baker made a motion to purchase a truck from Team One Chevrolet of Gadsden for $47,709.46, Chairman Bond seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

At 5:16 P.M. Chairman Bond made a motion to go into executive session for good name and character.

The Board reconvened at 5:46 P.M.

The Board discussed letting the full-time employees share their PTO time. Chairman Bond made a motion to allow the full-time employees to share their PTO time in emergency, but it was not mandatory and can only be shared once the receiving employee has exhausted all their PTO time. Board Member Pickelsimer seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

The Board discussed moving the Utilities Maintenance Staff hours back to 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. After some discussion Chairman Bond made a motion to have the Utilities Maintenance Staff hours back to 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Board Member Baker seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

The Board discussed giving the employees raises. After some discussion Chairman Bond made a motion to give full-time employees a $1000 bonus and give part-time employees a $500 bonus in lieu of getting a $0.50 raise, Board Member Board Member Baker seconded the motion.

Motion Carried (5-0)

Aye: Baker, Bond, Pickelsimer, Warren, Williams

Nye: None

Abstained: None

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 P.M.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Jack Bond, Chairman Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Joshua Bolton, Secretary Date