

**CEDAR KEY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 309 / 510 THIRD STREET
CEDAR KEY, FL 32625**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting
Board of Commissioners
November 8, 2021**

Board Members Present: Dottie Haldeman, Joe Hand, Stephen Rosenthal, Leslie Sturmer, Tabitha Lauer.

Others Present: Chad Wisdom, John McPherson, James McCain, Mandy Offerle, Frank Offerle, Nancy Sera, Stephen Preissman, Jim Wortham, Phil Prescott, Sue Colson.

1. Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Stephen Rosenthal, Chair.
2. Pledge and Prayer.
3. Adoption of Agenda. **Motion** by Dottie Haldeman to adopt the agenda as presented. **Second** by Joe Hand. Passed by a vote of 5-0.
4. Approval of Minutes. **Motion** by Dottie Haldeman to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of October 11, 2021, as presented. **Second** by Leslie Sturmer. Passed by a vote of 5-0.
5. Financial Reports. Budget, Balance Sheet, Checkbook Activity, and Employee Leave reports were presented for review. **Motion** by Dottie Haldeman to accept the financial reports as presented. **Second** by Joe Hand. Leslie Sturmer noted that the payroll numbers were high compared to the budget. Passed by a vote of 5-0.
6. Bill Adjustment Request. A request by Cedar Cove for an adjustment to its water bill for excessive use due to pool leak. **Motion** by Tabitha Lauer to deny the request because it does not meet the standards for adjustment, i.e., it is a request to just forgive water usage which the District is not authorized to do. **Second** by Dottie Haldeman. Passed by a vote of 5-0.
7. General Manager Report.

a. Water Plant.

The GM requested discussion on the new water plant, pipeline, and the proposed Mittauer contract that was provided to the Board. The GM noted that he and James McCain had met with the City of Bronson about getting water from its wellfield. Dottie Haldeman requested clarification on whether would by buying water from Bronson, or having our own well there. The GM responded that the District would buy water only if our well there failed. Leslie Sturmer requested more information on the pipeline and condition of new plant. Chad reviewed the situation and the idea of

retrofitting the existing water plant. Leslie noted that there is a consent order for discharge of water from water plant. The GM said that there would need to be discussion with DEP about this. Joe Hand noted flood issues at the existing plant and asked how that would affect retro-fitting the existing. The GM said he has asked but has not received information from DEP. Leslie Sturmer noted the possibility of infrastructure funding under the new act of Congress. James noted that the existing plant would need to be modernized if the Bronson water line failed.

Sue Colson stated that she is a big proponent of the pipeline. She stated that she has been on the phone with SRWMD, and that she felt it was a good time to get a pipeline, due to the existence of funding etc. She felt that the District should aggressively pursue the pipeline and funding over the next 8 months. Need to think big and bold to provide healthy water for Levy County residents. Many people are interested in the pipeline project and there should be a lot of support for it. Should put Mittauer on hold and invite the SRWMD executive director to a Board meeting to discuss the pipeline.

Motion by Tabitha Lauer to put Mittauer on hold and work on the pipeline and retrofit of the water plant. **Second** by Dottie Haldeman. Discussion ensued.

Stephen Rosenthal stated that the Board has worked 5 years or more on a design for a new water plant and should not be giving up on that now. He stated that it is too late for coming up with a pipeline now, and that the District owed Mittauer a lot of money—\$200,000—which is not in the budget. Need to get non-binding vote by Board as to how it wants to proceed.

Leslie Sturmer stated that she agrees that new water treatment plant is expensive, but so is pipeline. Money should now be available for plant retrofit and that this stopgap approach is the way to go.

Joe Hand stated that the District has spent a lot of time and money coming up with a treatment process we think works—GAC and Miex. Should not spend \$12 million on a plant that we are not sure works, whereas water from Chiefland or Bronson would solve the DBP problem. He summarized the conference call with the consultant from California, and stated that she needed more information about our raw water makeup.

Dottie Haldeman stated that the District received assurance that the first design from Mittauer would work, but it didn't, and so she has lost faith in Mittauer. She stated that she is fearful of the economic impact of a new \$12 million plant. She stated that she has suggested the pipeline idea many years ago but it was not accepted then, and that she supports the pipeline as a long-term solution.

Tabitha Lauer asked the attorney whether any money is owed to Mittauer as this point. The attorney stated that it was his opinion that no money was owed to Mittauer as this point. Tabitha Lauer stated that she was very much in favor of the pipeline which will solve problems that new water plant won't solve, and that the District should drop Mittauer.

A vote was taken on the Motion and it passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

Sue Colson stated further support for pipeline and said we need to know what treatment at our end would be needed. The GM stated that chlorination is all that would be needed.

b. Wastewater System.

The GM reported that the District has submitted a funding request to the Legislature for wastewater refurbishment and will be seeking letters of support. He also reported that the District has submitted a request to the City for Covid 19 funds for wastewater repairs.

c. Cell Service. The GM reported that Verizon has completed the installation and has been brought online. Sue Colson stated that service was excellent within Cedar Key School.

Tabitha Lauer asked about the resolution regarding cooperation on the pipeline. **Motion** by Tabitha Lauer to adopt resolution in favor working with other local governments on pipeline with formatting and changes as described by the attorney. **Second** by Leslie Sturmer. Passed by a vote of 5-0.

d. Covid-19. The GM reported that the District continues to follow mask-wearing and separation protocols at the District office, with no symptoms or testing this month. He stated that vaccines are available for essential workers and that all employees are being urged to get them. The Board directed the GM to move the monthly board meetings back to the District office.

e. Personnel Issues. The GM provided information on pay scales for utility workers at other utilities. **Motion** by Tabitha Lauer to raise Gabe Doty's pay to \$17/hour effective as of the date when he obtained his wastewater license, and Alicia to \$15/hour. James McCain spoke in favor of the motion. **Second** by Dottie Haldeman. Passed by a vote of 5-0.

8. **Attorney Report.** The Attorney reported that in the course of the audit for this year, it was discovered that there does not appear to be a signed copy of the general manager contract that the Board agreed to upon the hiring of Chad Wisdom, and that, in the meantime, a question has come up about the way in which Chad is to be credited with annual leave. He explained that in the contract that he prepared and which the Board approved, Chad would be granted annual leave in the same manner as other employees, i.e., a certain amount of leave would be credited to him for each week he worked at the District. He stated that Chad's understanding, however, was that he would automatically receive 4 weeks of leave during his first year, that those 4 weeks of leave would accrue on his first day of employment and be available to him for use from that day forward, and that each year thereafter 4 weeks of annual leave would accrue on the anniversary date of his employment. The Attorney suggested that this would be a good time good time to resolve this issue about the General Manager's leave. There was discussion among the Board and public. **Motion** by Tabitha Lauer to approve the contract version with 4 weeks leave

provided according to Chad's understanding. **Second** by Leslie Sturmer. Passed by a vote of 5-0.

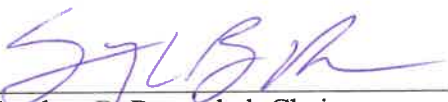
9. Commissioner Comments.

Dottie Haldeman reported that anyone can take the high school course for utility operator certification, and that people in Cedar Key should talk to students about this.

10. Public Input.

- Mandy Offerle commended the District for following through with Verizon and WiFiber and thus improving internet and cell service in Cedar Key.
- Steve Priessman suggested that everyone keep emotions in check as we engage in the difficult negotiations regarding the water pipeline.

11. Adjournment: There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.



Stephen B. Rosenthal, Chairperson



Leslie Sturmer, Commissioner &
Secretary of the Board

Date: 12/13/21