



Marion Utilities

1540 N Washington St.

Marion, IN 46952

www.marionutilities.com

Service Board

BOARD MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2024 MEETING

The Marion Utility Service Board held their meeting on Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the L.E.A.D. Center, Building 101, at Marion Utilities, 1540 N. Washington Street, Marion, Indiana.

Roll was called and those board members present were: Robert Logan, Chairman; Kristy Barney, Doug Carl, Al Green, and Herschel Lewis. Isaiah Fuller was absent.

Also present at the meeting were: Robin Shrader, Director; Pat Pinkerton, Assistant Director for Engineering & Solid Waste; Chad Guyer, Assistant Director for Operations & Maintenance; Erika Devine, Council Liaison; Tiffany Snyder, Accounting/Billing Coordinator; Misty Humphries, Secretary; Mike Conner, Attorney; Laura Mack, Chronicle-Tribune; and Todd Fowler, Café Valley.

CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

There were no additions or deletions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Reverend Green, to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2024 meeting. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIALS

Mrs. Snyder presented the financials for October, 2024. Mrs. Snyder stated that sales for all utilities were in line with 2022 and 2023 with the exception of Solid Waste, which increased due to the implementation of the rate increase this fall. Mrs. Snyder explained that on the expense side, the Operations and Maintenance expenses increased over 2023 for all utilities except Water. Water saw a reduction in expenses over 2023 due to an expense correction in contractual services – vehicles, which resulted in a net decrease in expenses year-over-year.

Mrs. Snyder explained that the increase to accruals was an offset to the catch up of entering insurance expense year to date. The insurance expense was high for the month for all the utilities to get the expense put in on the budget line, but this was just a catch up. The actual cash expenditure occurred in April and May and expense be seen and recorded when paid next year.

As far as grants were concerned, Mrs. Snyder reported that Water shifted the grant receipts of \$1 million from loan proceeds to grant proceeds to align with how the SRF Program provided the funding of the projects. This caused the overall loan amount to decrease from last month due to the shift. Mrs. Snyder concluded that overall, this resulted again in an increase in net operating receipts over 2023 for Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste this month. Stormwater saw a small decrease due to the capital expenditures made on the stormwater projects that occurred on 37th & Nebraska and 30th Street. Mr. Carl moved,



seconded by Ms. Barney, to approve the financials as presented. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

UPDATE ON PROJECTS

Mr. Pinkerton said there was not a lot to report on projects. The Lead Service Line project had progressed as had the Meter Installation project. Both had slowed down due to weather and would probably continue to slow. Mr. Guyer added that the tank project had also come to a halt due to the weather not being conducive. There was talk about extending the contract which was anticipated.

3032 N BLUE HERON TRACE & CAFÉ VALLEY REQUESTS

Mrs. Humphries stated that the Wastewater Committee met and discussed two requests. The first request was from Mr. Uhley at 3032 N Blue Heron Trace. Mr. Uhley received his first bill from Marion Utilities after the acquisition of the Bluff's Basin Utility. Mr. Uhley was surprised as the amount of his bill was \$355. This was a \$77 increase from what he had paid to Bluff's Basin. Mr. Uhley called in and it was suggested to him that he have someone look at his sprinkler system which was tied into his domestic service and runs off of one meter. Mr. Uhley had someone look over his system, and he was told that there were some leaks in the system. However, the leaks were not able to be repaired until the spring. Mrs. Humphries stated that the leak adjustment policy has always required that the repairs be completed before adjustments were made. Given this, the Wastewater Committee's recommendation was to table Mr. Uhley's request until spring and after the repairs were completed. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Reverend Green, to table the request until after the repairs were made on Mr. Uhley's infrastructure. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Shrader presented the second item which was a request from Café Valley. Mrs. Shrader explained that Café Valley was a larger industrial user. On a quarterly basis, Café Valley was billed for an industrial monitoring charges and then the associated surcharges for BOD/TSS things like that. Normally, Café Valley was billed \$10,000 to \$25,000 with variation based upon what was happening at their plant and the processes. Mrs. Shrader said that last November the bill was a little over \$108,000. Café Valley was surprised by that and sent over a request for the Wastewater Committee to review the bill. The testing results were evaluated and re-evaluated. Our end was that the test results were accurate. Mrs. Shrader said that the recommendation was to hold them to the charge at this time. Mr. Carl said that there were other items for suggestion that Café Valley could take to investigate why the charge increased. Ms. Barney stated that she could see a sequence where there were lower levels the first two weeks of each month while there were higher levels the last two weeks of each month. Ms. Barney said it was her understanding that more testing might be appropriate. Mrs. Shrader stated that the first step would be to see if some trends could be found initially and then set up additional testing if it were appropriate. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Reverend Green, for the charge to stand. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

TRANSFERS & PAY REQUESTS

There were none.

2025 BUDGETS

Mrs. Shrader reported that all four of the budget committees had met and reviewed the proposed 2025 budgets. Mrs. Shrader highlighted that after having a brief review with Jennifer

Wilson from Crowe, it was recommended that supplemental funding from interest income which improved each budget as listed on the cover page. Mrs. Shrader stated that there was one correction made to the Water budget which was to an advantage. Mr. Logan stated that everyone had a chance to review the budget and asked if there were any further comments or questions. There being none, Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Carl, to approve the 2025 budgets. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 4-2024 LEGAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

Mrs. Shrader presented Resolution 4-2024 a Legal Services Agreement. The Resolution would continue our contract with Mr. Conner for his services as the Board's legal counsel. Mr. Conner did not make any changes to his fees which were \$4,500 per quarter and covered routine items such as board meetings and executive sessions. Any non-routine items were billed at a rate of \$190 per hour. Mrs. Shrader stated that the only thing really changing was the date. Mr. Conner proposed that the contract run from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026 so it would be a two year contract. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve Resolution 4-2024. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Conner joked that there was no inflation for his services. Mr. Logan and the other Board members told Mr. Conner how much they appreciated his services and hard work over the years on the various issues that arose.

SPONSORSHIP REQUESTS

Mrs. Humphries presented four sponsorship requests. The first was from Meals on Wheels of Grant County. There was a new executive director in place, and they were requesting a sponsorship in order to help provide nutritious meals for clients throughout the county. Meals on Wheels had been servicing the area for over 46 years. There was not a specific amount requested for the sponsorship. Mr. Carl asked how much had been paid out in sponsorships this year. Mrs. Humphries answered approximately \$360.

Mrs. Humphries presented the second request from The Training Center. The Training Center was trying to provide holiday blessings for Giving Tuesday. Giving Tuesday had passed, but The Training Center was still in need of sponsorships. The Training Center was in hopes of sending out 48 care boxes which would impact the lives of 113 children. The gifts would vary from reading items, toys, craft kits, hygiene products, food assistance, and clothing items. Again, there was not a request for a specific amount.

The third request was from the Mississinewa 1812 group. A new site was purchased on Garthwaite Road. The request was made in order to help prepare the new property for the 2025 season. There was not a specific amount requested. The group anticipated that a large number of people would donate labor and various items.

The fourth and final request was from The Community Foundation. They were hosting a Give to Grant Fund which provided a matching opportunity at a two to one ratio. Mrs. Humphries stated that like the others a specific amount was not requested. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Reverend Green, to sponsor each request at \$250 each. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

RETIREE SPOUSAL INSURANCE COVERAGE

Mrs. Shrader explained that in the process of reviewing the insurance policies for the upcoming year, the insurance provider told us that there was some language in the Employee Handbook that was not consistent with State Law requirements. Mrs. Shrader stated that current language

provides that an employee that retires may continue health benefits for spouses and dependents for a period of up to six months. Moving forward the law requires us to carry that for a much longer period of time. Essentially, the law states that a public employer must provide health coverage until the spouse becomes eligible for Medicare or for two years after the retired employee passes away. Dependents were to be provided coverage until the earliest date of no longer being a dependent, the coverage termination date as a retiree; or when a dependent becomes eligible for another employer-sponsored medical plan or Medicare. Mrs. Shrader said that to keep the spouse or dependent on the coverage currently, the retiree must pay the difference of the employee only contribution and the family contribution or whatever the covered benefit status was at the time of retirement. Mrs. Shrader stated that each Budget Committee reviewed the issue and the recommendation of all the Committees was to ask that the spouse/dependent coverage contribution be at 15 % of the difference between an employee only benefit premium and the benefit in place at the time of retirement whether that be employee spouse, employee dependent, or a family premium. Mr. Logan stated that 15% would be a consistent figure and thought it was a fair and reasonable amount. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Reverend Green, to approve the change to the retiree spousal insurance coverage and the recommended 15% contribution. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP REPORTS

M. Humphries, Executive Assistant

Mrs. Humphries reminded the Board that at the last meeting there were only four illegal turn-ons. Unfortunately, this month there were 37. The number has increased because the number of Kamstrup meters installed has increased. This has allowed us to receive a notification of illegal usage. Mrs. Humphries stated that there were 13 of those 37 addresses that required our crews to turn them off more than one time. Mrs. Humphries reminded the Board that services were not disconnected until a period of 67 days had passed without payments or arrangements being made. Mrs. Humphries stated that she was able to speak with one property owner who came in, paid his account, and brought it current. Mrs. Humphries stated that the landlord was able to assist with another account and their renter. Hopefully, illegal turn-ons would slow or stop as people realize that the new meters would send alerts of illegal usage. Mrs. Humphries also reported that the new meters send leak or burst alerts. Administrative Assistant Lori Pierce was able to reach a customer at work today when she received a leak notification.

P. Pinkerton, Assistant Director for Engineering

Mr. Pinkerton reported that for November the Transfer Station saw 804 tons which averaged 50 tons per day. Mr. Pinkerton said this put the Transfer Station back to the pre-COVID levels. Before the year was out, there would be 10,000 or 11,000 tons for the year. Mr. Carl asked if rolls offs or toters were being loaned to the neighborhood cleanups. Mr. Pinkerton said not for the Clean City Marion events, but we did for other events.

C. Guyer, Assistant Director for Operations & Maintenance

Mr. Guyer had no report at this time.

R. Shrader, Utility Director

Mrs. Shrader reminded everyone of the Christmas luncheon on December 19th at 11:30 a.m. and invited them to join in fellowship with employees that day.

BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS

There were no comments.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Logan thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He also stated that if a meeting wasn't needed on December 19th, it would be rescheduled until January. However, if a meeting was needed it would be held at 11 a.m. so that the Board could immediately attend the Christmas luncheon. Mrs. Shrader stated that she did not anticipate needing the December 19th meeting.

The next meeting was preliminarily scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2024.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to adjourn the meeting. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Robert Logan, Chairman
Marion Utilities Service Board

ATTEST



Misty Humphries
Its Secretary