WEST ALLEN PARISH WATER DISTRICT

# MONTHLY MEETING

# Tuesday, May 3, 2022

## Opening

The regular monthly meeting of the WEST ALLEN PARISH WATER DISTRICT was called to order at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at the office of West Allen Parish Water District by Rusty Reeves, Chancy Frith prayed.

## Present

Rusty Reeves, Glen Monceaux, Kurt Schultz, Chancy Frith, Thomas I. Savoie, Carl Ritter, Amy Materne, Kris Benoit & Nathan Booher.

**Absent**

Sullivan Fontenot

**Guests**

Janise Williams, and Chris Guillory, Village of Reeves Mayor

## Approve/Amend Agenda

1. A motion was made by Carl and seconded by Kurt to add the DOXO Pay Issue to the agenda and to move Item #10, Charlie & Janise Williams up on the agenda to Item #3, passed.
2. A motion was made by Chancy and seconded by Kurt to move Item #11, Hospital Request, up on the agenda to Item #4, passed.

**Charlie & Janise Williams**

Mr. Charlie Williams was unable to attend, however, his wife, Ms. Janise did attend and addressed the board about her concerns with the price increase of meter installations and how it will affect the development that they are performing in our area. Ms. Janise feels that $750 was already a lot of money to have a meter installed but now that it has increased to $1000 per meter install that it can be a hardship because they are looking at bringing 40 new homes which will need taps (NOTE: the actual cost is $950, she just rounded it up). She asked if they could have a different fee for multiple meter installations and requested that the board discuss if they could help with that cost. She stated that Entergy helps them with the costs.

Rusty explained that we are a political subdivision and that we are not a privately owned water system and that Entergy can help them because they are for profit and are regulated by the public service commission only. West Allen Parish Water District is government and must adhere to the laws and regulations set forth by the state and the Attorney General’s Office which has rendered opinions stating that we have to charge for the cost of the meter installation and parts. Rusty explained to her that if we had the ability to change the cost for her, then we would have to raise the water rates to offset the cost of the meter installations in order to do as she is requesting. Also if we were able to roll back the cost, then we would have to do it for everyone across the board. Rusty explained to her and the Mayor that we have not other money coming into the water district except for what our customers pay for in their water bills. He stated that the district has no tax millage or big industry and that we operate strictly off the water revenue. He said that we could seek a tax millage and all property owners would pay tax to help support the water district but we try not to do that.

Mrs. Williams stated that they are putting up ten homes right in here Reeves and that they have already put thirty down in Topsy and are getting ready to build more. She stated that the water district will be getting money every month from a water bill and she told the board that they are wondering with the meter install price increase “if it is worth it to continue?“ She stated, “What if we stop building? Ya’ll would lose money if we stop building. I’m not saying we are, but what if we do?”

Chris Guillory was in attendance to show his support of Mrs. Williams and the development happening in the Village of Reeves. He asked why we went up on the cost and Ira explained that we were losing money on meter installations.

Mrs. Williams asked if they could hire out the meter installations or do them themselves using their own equipment. Rusty asked if they have an operator with a water license to do so and she stated “No”. Rusty explained that they would have to be certified with the state Dept. of Health to work on our water system. Ira again reiterated that what she proposed would make sense if we were a private company but that again….we aren’t and we just cannot help with that. Chris Guillory did some math and told the board that if they dropped the extra $200 that it would only cost the other customers in the water district .05 cents per month to make up the difference (the actual math works out to be .51 cents/customer). Rusty stated that AG opinions state that we cannot subsidize the installation of meters and that the only thing we could might possibly delete would be the trackhoe mobilization expense because they would mobilize once for three or more meter sets at a time but that being only with the AG’s approval. The board instructed Amy to send a letter to the DA’s office requesting that they seek an AG opinion in this matter.

Chancy asked why they couldn’t just add $200 to the cost of the house. Mrs. Williams said it was because the customer is paying $5000-$8000 a year in property taxes and it would cause that number to go up. Chris Guillory explained that when someone calls the tax assessor’s office about a loan and financing $400,000, they assess the property at $400,000 and pay taxes on $400,000. Mrs. Williams said that they are scaling the square footage back to help with this trying to keep most of the homes between 1800-2100 square feet to help with the taxing issues. She stated that it seems nobody wants this place to grow. Rusty interjected that the water district made a 3.5 million dollar loan in 2015 in order to upgrade this water system to help this community grow and that the district pays $12,500/month in a note an another $4,000 in account funding as required by the USDA in order to meet the debt schedule. He said that we could seek a 10 mil tax which would generate about $130,000/year and drop our water rates, but that the board is trying not to do that.

Ira stated that regardless, we as a district, cannot wheel and deal, we have to ask permission from the Attorney General. Kurt asked how long they hold onto a meter in their name and Mrs. Williams stated 5-8 months. Chris Guillory stated that he had a better understanding of the “what and why” of the water district but that the meter installation costs should have been looked at on a yearly basis to avoid a drastic increase all at once. Rusty informed him that the recent Covid delays and price increases caused the price increase in the meter installations. Glen said that we have a good water system and any small amount of money we make goes to sustain and improve the system.

1. A motion was made by Glen and seconded by Chancy to send a letter to the District Attorney’s office to have them request an Attorney General’s opinion regarding a discount on the price of multiple meter installations of 3 or more at one time, passed.

**Hospital Request**

Chris Guillory addressed the board and informed them that the Allen Parish Hospital would like to bring a triple wide and set up a clinic in the water district’s front yard. He stated that we already have water and sewer here so the site development would be easier for us than for the town because it would cost them upwards of $55,000 to have them next door on the vacant town property. He said for the town’s sake, they can’t pay that kind of money to have them there. This triple wide would be a satellite of the Kinder Hospital and Rural Health Clinic. He said it would most likely have a simple pharmacy, operate Monday through Friday and do small procedures and xrays. Carl asked how many people a day would be trying to park here? Kurt felt that we would not have enough parking. Amy reminded them that the bookmobile parks here once a month as well. Rusty stated that with the Post Office coming in and their customers parking here along with ours, the parking would be an issue. Chris said that he mentioned it because they asked him to and that he was going to give them a free spot next door but the ditch is too deep to build up and that they will be putting the new city park at the back of the property on the north end. Someone said that they are a political subdivision and they make a profit and could afford to make the necessary developments on the town’s property. Ira asked where the medical staff is coming from and Rusty answered that there are some incentives for the Rural Health Clinics so they get funding for the staff. Chris asked if the board would like to speak to them. Ira wanted to know the numbers of how many patients a day. Chris stated that we would have to talk to them. Chris looked outside at the space in the front and stated that there is really no room for it anyway. The board felt that there is not adequate space for parking for three separate businesses in the small space we would have left after they installed a triple wide.

## Approval of Minutes

1. A motion was made by Kurt and seconded by Carl to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to accept the minutes of the last meeting as presented and typed, passed.

**Financial Report**

Amy presented the financial report for April 2022 and answered questions.

1. A motion was made by Glen and seconded by Carl to accept the April 2022 financial report as presented, passed.

**Operational Report**

* Nathan presented his operational report for April 2022.
* Nathan presented his water audit report.
* Nathan presented his monthly leak report
* Nathan presented his truck maintenance report.
* Amy provided an update on the Ziptility app and how many facilities have been listed in the app.
* Nathan informed the board that he has gotten a quote from Versa on the tank inspection but that he is waiting for two more.
* Nathan informed the board that Kasey’s truck needed two new tires which were purchased at approximately $600. Also, the Pit Stop worked up an estimate on some other work that needs to be done at a cost of $1724.59. The truck was discussed and it was decided that since new second hand trucks are so expensive right now, it would be best to keep the truck up and running for as long as possible. The board told Nathan to have the work done.
* Rusty brought up the dotties and Charlie Williams developments again and the fact that somebody has to use a truck to go out and mark for the meter installations and haul the track hoe. The Williams’ will have to cover the cost of putting in the water line extensions on Faith Lane because they are planning on looping it back onto Topsy Road with houses on both sides. Glen mentioned that we would be mobilizing the machine 33+ times and that it costs us each time. Kris said that the correct order is for them to put the road in first, then the water line, and he said that he had mentioned this to them.

## Old Business

**Reeves Post Office Update**

Rusty has been in correspondence with them and they were supposed to send a sample lease agreement for our review but to date we have not received it. They still want the back offices and state that they will remodel them. Utilities will be considered in the lease cost and that the water district will have to do the maintenance. It is still moving forward as far as we know. Rusty stated that we need to work on the agreement and if he hears anything further, he will pass it on to the board.

**Interconnection Update**

Rusty stated that he went to Southwest Allen Water’s meeting to discuss them helping pay for the interconnection but they didn’t have a quorum. He did see Dewith Carrier during the week and told him that we are not going to do the interconnection because we cannot put out $500,000 to complete the project which is now estimated at almost a million dollars. Rusty told him that we would not be generating any revenue either because we would not be picking up any new customers with the interconnection. Mr. Carrier is supposed to be asking at Baton Rouge if there is any way we can get the extra funding or if we could change the use of the funds to the new well project that needs to be completed.

**CWEF Grand Funds Update**

The estimate from the engineer came back at $149,600 to upgrade the Sawmill road water main. This is double the cost from a year ago. Amy informed that this application is complete. It is in the hands of the APPJ at this time.

In regards to the CWEF funds available for the valve installations at Sawmill and Rodeo Pen Road, Amy stated that Nathan is getting quotes from three different contractors to have the work done soon.

**Land Purchase Update**

Rusty stated that he has been talking to Mr. Louvierre and they would like to sell us a piece of that land if the price is right. They want to keep mineral rights as well and they want a fair price for the 3 acres we would like to purchase. Jason Hebert is to do an appraisal for the water district at a cost of $200-$300. Chancy stated that the price should be lower since we are not looking at purchasing highway frontage. Rusty said there would most likely be a 100,000 gallon tank there with pumps in the tank which would pump north and another set that would pump south. There would be variable frequency drives on the motors and bigger pumps than we have at that intersection now. There would also be a standby generator there.

**New Business**

**DOXO Pay Issue**

During the week last week, Amy had emailed the board concerning the events with the DOXO pay issue and KPLC TV News’ false reporting of the matter. There were statements made by DOXO that were incorrect as well. She met with the D.A. and Assistant D.A. on this matter and they instructed her to leave the warning up on the website because we have a right to warn our customers of a possible issue with delay in the payment of their water bills. They also recommended adding verbiage to our water user’s agreement that would have the third party pay warning and a list of all of the ways the customer can pay their bill safely with us. The board would like Amy to write up the wording and have it at the next meeting. This will be addressed at the next meeting again.

**Board Reports**

## Kurt asked Nathan if they have a dottie on Topsy Bel or anything going on at the intersection of Topsy Bel and Hwy. 190. Nathan stated that they marked the line there. Kris said it was just a marker. Kurt told them they needed to clean it up. Rusty told Nathan to have Brandon Rannekliev rework our flag pole and get a flag on it. The board all agreed again that they do not feel having the hospital move a triple wide here would work out.

## Adjournment

1. A motion was made by Kurt and seconded by Chancy to adjourn the meeting, passed

The next scheduled meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on June 7, 2022.

**REEVES, LOUISIANA this 3rd day of May, 2022**

President: William E. Reeves, Jr., President

Attest: Amy Materne, Office Manager

***This institution is an equal opportunity provider.***

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