



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. Water and Sewer Authority
Board of Directors
Customer and Community Services Committee**

**Tuesday, January 15, 2008
11:00 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present

Alan Roth, Chair
Brenda Richardson
Steven McLendon

Staff Members

Jerry N. Johnson, General Manager
Johnnie Hemphill, Chief of Staff
Michele Quander-Collins, Public Affairs Director
Gordon Fry, Government Relations Director
Charles Kiely, Ass't GM, Consumer Services
Eva Liggins, Customer Service Director
Avis M. Russell, General Counsel
Mujib Lodhi, Information Technology Director
Olu Adebo, Acting Chief Financial Officer
Debra Mathis, Executive Assistant to the Secretary

Call to Order

Mr. Roth called the meeting to order at approximately 11:06 a.m. and noted that the Committee would start with the Customer Service monthly report and update pending Ms. Quander-Collins and Mr. Fry's arrival.

Customer Service

Monthly Report/Update

With the Committee's consent, Ms. Liggins presented the monthly report by exception and noted that she would answer any questions the Committee had regarding the report. She also distributed a sample bill which included estimated impervious area charges and noted that staff is seeking the Committee's input and needs to get all the revisions to Alliance by March 1st in order to have the system programmed for October billing. The Committee noted that pertinent Board decisions may not be concluded by the March 1st deadline, e.g. use of Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), and asked how this would impact the process. Staff explained that in terms of bill design, the spacing needs to be appropriately blocked for the language that will be used on the bills and that the decision on whether to use ERU or square footage is critical in making sure that the data is successfully transported between the databases. The Committee asked if the Retail Rates Committee was aware that policy decisions need to be made by the February Board meeting to meet the March 1st deadline. Staff explained the spacing needs to be blocked off by March 1st; however, the language and the Board's decision as to whether ERU or square footage will be used must be made by the April Board meeting.

In response to the Committee's question regarding appropriate explanations for terms and charges not included on the sample bill, staff explained that there is a plan to educate customers prior to implementing the new bill and that a detailed explanation of all of the associated terms and charges will be included on the back of the bill. Mr. Johnson noted that the sample bill should not have been presented to the Committee as is because it does not reflect all of staff's revisions to date and that staff will provide a revised copy for the Committee's review at its next meeting. In light of the fact that next month's meeting may be canceled, the Committee asked staff to include definitions for IAC and CSO on the bill, and to move all WASA charges above the DC Government charges. With regards to Mr. Bardin's concerns, the Committee noted that this would be an opportune time to look at separating the PILOT Fee from the Right of Way Fee. The Committee also expressed its concerns about educating not only the existing customers but adding information on the bill that would educate new customers as well.

Permit Process Review Update – Maximo Implementation

Mr. Hemphill reported that staff has been making progress with the permitting process in working with the webpage. He noted that staff would be presenting a demonstration of Maximo, one of the systems being used for asset management. Staff recognized that one of the specific challenges of the process is associated with fire flow testing, a part of the permit process that is diverse with respect to coordination of several departments.

Mr. Lodhi noted that the Department of Engineering & Technical Services' (DETS) Water and Design Section and the Permitting Office went live with the Permitting Application Tracking System (PATS) on December 19, 2007. It is expected that the departments of Customer Service, Water Service, Sewer Services and DETS Inspections Section will go live next month. Staff then gave a brief presentation of the Maximo application. The application allows staff to streamline all of the processes, reduces paperwork, and provides visibility and performance. It also allows staff to track all activities associated with the permitting process online including capturing comments, meeting schedules, and meeting minutes. The system generates work orders for flow test, meter set, and water and sewer connections. The system also allows staff to closely monitor all planned activities within any given area and to quickly assess whether there is adequate water pressure to support the work.

Other agencies do not currently have access to the system; however, there is communication between agencies at certain stages of the process. The system automatically anticipates the completion date for each permit application and has the capability of generating summary reports that show the quantity and type of applications received within a specified month and the percentage of applications that were responded to within the performance criteria. To date, twenty-four people have been trained on the system and within the next couple of weeks staff will put together a preliminary staffing plan and begin to work with Human Resources on how best to implement the plan. The next step would be to incorporate a management function that would ensure that the work is being performed. The Committee asked staff to also consider incorporating a customer survey in the system in 6-12 months as an opportunity to collect feedback from customer experiences with the system.

Public Affairs

Board LSR Review – Update

Ms. Quander-Collins pointed out that the information in the draft lead service replacement (LSR) program and policy review included information on research, EPA data as it relates to drinking water regulations, and other information intended to educate the public on issues relevant to the Board's upcoming discussions on the review of the program. She also noted that staff is in the process of preparing a slide presentation that includes baseline information to be used for various public meetings. Ms. Richardson asked staff to email her a copy of the flyer for the January 30th public meeting in Ward 8.

There was also a discussion on making sure the planned public meetings are adequately advertised and to the extent possible having appropriate experts attend the meetings to be prepared to state the facts. It was noted that the whole process is about giving the public the tools they need to make up their own minds on the issue and to understand the cost and benefits of the different alternatives. Dr. Tee Guidotti, who attended the committee meeting, noted that he has a pool of three professional people and two students and that the plan is to have at least two people attend each meeting.

Monthly Report/Update

The Public Affairs monthly report was also presented by exception. Ms. Quander-Collins pointed out that the Gallup survey conducted in 2005 revealed that the respondents were not knowledgeable on the level of community service that WASA provides in terms trying to improve the quality of life in the areas that WASA services. In addition to the recent suggestion to highlighting employees on a bill insert, Public Affairs has designed an insert that talks about WASA's volunteerism and the employee engagement in various community service activities. She also pointed out that the eBrief newsletter has been delayed so that briefings can be added on the proposed rate increase and the infrastructure upgrades planned for the Georgetown area and east of the Anacostia.

As a result of an email from Mr. Roth regarding the budget and rate proposal, Ms. Quander-Collins distributed a news release that went out on January 14th which has generated two articles in the Washington Post and one on the Post website. One of the articles appeared on the front page of the Washington Post and tied in the proposed WASA rate increase with the proposed rate increases in neighboring jurisdictions. She noted that the handouts also included a list of agencies that WASA has already met with to discuss the impervious area billing. The Committee discussed its concerns that staff missed an opportunity to tell a good story by focusing on the proposed 2009 rate increase, rather than on WASA's commitment to environmental improvements in its capital improvement program and its minimal increase in proposed operating expenses. Mr. Roth noted that being more transparent as an organization does not mean "leading with our chin," and that the main story coming out of the Board's recent actions was not the rate increase alone but the important uses for which the additional funds were needed. Mr. Johnson noted that the Authority will have a second opportunity to present

the story at the media briefing next month. This will actually be the lead-in to the upcoming community meetings.

Mr. Roth shared a report prepared by the Congressional Management Foundation in conjunction with the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, Ohio State, and the University of California entitled "2007 Gold Mouse Report: Lessons from the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill." The Congressional Management Foundation is an independent foundation that works with congressional offices on how to improve congressional operations. He noted that the report may provide some helpful ideas/information as staff works on rebuilding WASA's website.

Government Relations

Monthly Report/Update

Mr. Fry updated the Committee on legislative activities. He noted that Mr. Johnson updated that Board on two significant issues at the last Board meeting. The President signed the Appropriations Bill on December 26, 2006 in which WASA was appropriated \$6 million for FY 08 for CSO, and \$2 million for FY 08 for infrastructure projects at the Baseball Park to be match by local funds. He noted that on January 3rd the Committee on Public Works and the Environment passed the permanent "Fire Hydrant Maintenance and Repair Act 2008". WASA has worked closely with the Committee to come up with satisfactory language. Mr. Fry also stated that he expects the legislation to be up at the next legislative meeting of the Committee of the Whole. In addition, Mr. Fry stated that WASA is working with Councilmember Harry Thomas' office on a Back-Flow Rebate bill.

In response to the Committee's question regarding the status of the DC personnel legislation, Mr. Fry noted that there is a 60 day legislative review on the Hill (not the more usual 30 day review, because the bill contains a criminal provision), and that it would likely be effective in late April or early May. Mr. Johnson noted that the legislation will be discussed at the January 22nd Human Resources/Labor Relations Committee meeting at which time staff will make its recommendations on how the Authority should move forward on this issue.

Adjournment

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:55 p.m.