



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Customer and Community Service  
Committee Meeting  
Thursday, July 8, 2004  
10:00 a.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Board Members in Attendance**

**Alexander McPhail  
Stephanie Nash  
James Wareck**

**WASA Staff in Attendance**

**Johnnie Hemphill, Assistant to the  
General Manager for Government  
Operations  
Avis Russell, General Counsel  
Grace Beaman, Acting Director,  
Department of Customer Service  
Olu Adebo, Acting Chief Financial Officer  
Mujib Lodhi, Chief Information Officer  
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary**

Chairman McPhail called the meeting to order at approximately 10:15 am.

**Review of Customer & Community Service Committee Strategic Goals for FY04**

Mr. McPhail requested a status from staff on the committee's strategic goals and assigned new dates where applicable noting that due to the lead crisis, some completion dates were not met.

Grace Beaman informed the Committee that the AMR project was on schedule with approximately 92% complete. The CIS upgrade was completed on April 16, 2004 and the new bill will be ready August 2004. Customer Service is addressing the goal of establishing focus groups and administering a customer survey to measure customer expectations.

Johnnie Hemphill informed the Committee that the lead crisis educated the Authority on customer outreach and because of that the number of the Authority's community outreach efforts has grown. The Authority will hold focus groups and conduct customer surveys to assess customers needs.

Mr. McPhail asked Mr. Hemphill when would the survey be completed. Mr. Hemphill informed the Committee that while this wouldn't be completed this fiscal year; staff will have them completed by 2005.

Mr. McPhail stated that WASA's prior community meetings to promote internal and external stakeholder involvement have had very low turnouts. Mr. Hemphill informed the Committee that the Authority is reaching out to other agencies to build better stakeholder involvement. The Authority recently attended an AOBA meeting and Restaurant Association meeting and will continue with these efforts.

Mr. McPhail informed the Committee that the number of meetings should be limited to those that are legally required by the Authority and get more involved with established meetings conducted by ANC's or other groups. He noted that WASA should take fewer staff members to meetings.

Mr. Hemphill explained that WASA has various members of the staff at community meetings to ensure that there are adequate resources to address any questions that may arise.

Mr. McPhail asked if the Authority was actively participating in industry-related seminars and conventions. Mr. Hemphill stated that the Authority is working with George Washington University to coordinate a workshop with other utilities. Staff will implement an internal and external communications plan by December 30, 2004 and a draft government relation's plan by October 1, 2004.

Mr. Hemphill informed the Committee that the Authority created positive relationships with the Council and Hill staff and as a result of lead, developed a better working relationship. Staff is currently working with the Council on an exemption from the *Distracted Driver Act* and is looking to have an event on the Hill.

Mr. McPhail asked for a government relation's strategy by October 2004 and Mr. Warrick suggested that the Authority look for funding to hire a Government Relations Firm next fiscal year.

WASA will develop and implement a plan for community service involvement by February 2005, and identify and implement at least two specific additional public service activities in 2005 (something not normally associated with our core business).

### **Discounting Options**

Mr. McPhail presented the Committee and staff with his suggestion on various discount options for customer discounts. He indicated that his preference was option four, the 10 Gallon per day no water and sewer charge every month until October 31, 2010 (until lead lines have been removed) and Edleman, WASA's PR firm agreed. This discount would equal approximately \$2.1 million annually.

Mr. Warrick noted grave concern with option four. Ms. Nash supported option four, the 10 Gallon per day no water and sewer charge every month until October 31, 2010 and added that she believed customers would embrace the idea.

Mr. McPhail asked that staff check with the bond agencies to see what they think about this idea. "We want to keep them abreast of what we are doing so that there are no surprises," McPhail said.

The discussion turned to the call center and Grace Beaman informed the Committee that the call center was doing well and other jurisdictions were interested in observing how WASA's call center operates. WSSC is scheduled to come on Friday and the Authority's counterpart in Florida will visit the call center.

Mr. McPhail suggested that staff put together a "brag sheet" for the Board of Directors outlining all the positive things that WASA is doing. Mr. Warrick suggested the "brag

sheet” be in the form of a press release. Mr. McPhail asked that the “brag sheet” be ready for the end of the fiscal year.

Mujib Lodi provided the Committee with an extensive demonstration of WASA’s website. He explained how the website could be used as an outreach tool. He explained how the website came to be and how it has evolved. He reported that every eighteen months WASA reviews the website content and determines what information needs to be updated. The Authority is currently undertaking that task.

Mr. McPhail asked when e-mail messages from WASA’s “webmaster” are sent, could the name be changed to something more identifiable i.e.: “DC WASA Public Affairs” so that messages are not mistaken for junk mail.

Mr. McPhail asked that WASA’s hours of operation for general inquiries be listed under “contact us” on our website.

Mr. McPhail asked Johnnie Hemphill to think about ways to convey to customers that the Authority is more than just a utility. The Authority need to create an image that customers can associate with us like, “ We live where you live” or “We’re connected to you by more than power lines”.

Ms. Nash noted that when she receives her receipt for payment of her water bill online, the subject line reads “customer order status”. She stated that it was confusing and the subject line should be clearer for customers. She suggested “WASA payment information”.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Hemphill stated that the District of Columbia Auditor issued a draft report on the UMI contract, a 1999 contract awarded to test and repair large meters. The Authority provided an extensive response to the draft report. Mr. McPhail asked what are the major issues in the report. Mr. Hemphill stated that the biggest concern is that WASA is using contractors instead of its workforce.

Mr. McPhail adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:10pm

