



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

Thursday, October 12, 2006

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present

Alexander McPhail, Chair
Joseph Cotruvo
Lisa Morgan
Brenda Richardson
Kenneth Davis

Staff Members

Charles Kiely, Ass't Gen Mgr, Consumer Services
Eva Liggins, Customer Service Director
Johnnie Hemphill, Chief of Staff
Avis M. Russell, General Counsel
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary

Mr. McPhail called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.

Customer Service Report

Ms. Eva Liggins noted that she would be reporting on the Customer Service Report by exception. With respect to the AMR status, she informed the Committee that there continues to be issues with several customers who are resisting the required shut off to install the new meters. Consequently, the contractor has been instructed to provide the affected customers with a 30-day advance notice of the intended scheduled installation. If the customer still does not schedule the installation, then the Customer Service Department will make calls to the customers in an effort to assist in getting the installation scheduled.

Ms. Liggins reported that there were 19 large meters installed in September and in order to stay on target, staff will have to step up its efforts in contacting customers to assist with scheduling the installations. Mr. Cotruvo inquired about what, if any, legal recourse WASA can pursue in instances where the customer refuses to schedule the installations. Ms. Liggins noted that the meters are the property of the Authority and that WASA should have access to them, however she was not sure what legal action could be undertaken if a customer refuses to schedule an installation. She also explained that several of the issues with scheduling resulted in the contractor attempting to schedule the installations during the day in summer months and that the contractor has since been instructed that the installations can be scheduled on the weekends and/or during the evenings.

Mr. Kiely clarified that the AMR chart included in the report was representative of the 480 large meters (4%) that still need to be replaced. The entire large meter project is

approximately 96% complete. There are also approximately 2,500 small meters left to be replaced and the bulk of them are inside meters.

Ms. Liggins reported that the Process Notification Pilot Project has been very effective and that staff is undertaking efforts to extend the program to include commercial customers. The calls related to this project are made to individual households that include both first time and repeat calls. In addition, the average cost to the Authority to make the calls is approximately .50 to .55 cents per call. Calls are typically made to households with overdue bills of 30 days or more and where the bill amount is \$80 or more.

Staff continues to look at the specific reasons for all customer service calls, specifically the vague categories of billing information and general information. Streamlining the call types will help staff to better understand why people are calling; this process is not geared at eliminating calls, but rather to improve dissemination of customer information. Staff is also stepping up its efforts to direct customers to the WASA website and to the IVR. The call volumes for customer service and for the emergency area show very slight changes as compared to the months of September and August.

With regards to the SPLASH Program, Ms. Liggins noted that there were over 5,000 contributions received for this reporting period, 202 households have been assisted to-date and a little over \$73,000 remains from FY 06.

Mr. McPhail inquired about the response time chart in the October 5th General Manager Report. Ms. Liggins explained that the concern centered on the decline in the response time for peak days, which are typically the days after holidays and Mondays. For the month of September, the call center achieved 47% of their goal for peak days and 85% for non-peak days. Moving forward, staff is paying special attention to minimizing any reoccurrence. Ms. Liggins noted that staff concluded that scheduled training played a significant role in the decline of response time during peak hours. Therefore, staff will avoid scheduling training during peak hours when possible. In addition, staff is looking at a number of other ways to improve response time during peak hours and that the Committee should see progress in the month of October.

Workplan Goals and Missions

Mr. Hemphill noted that the workplan matrix was the latest revision based on the recommendations from the last committee meeting. The Committee commended staff for their work on the workplan. Mr. McPhail asked staff to change the date to FY 2007 and to look into matching up the customer service report with the workplan matrix so that the progress of the action items could be tracked. In addition, the Committee asked staff to forward a copy of their workplan to the entire Board. Ms. Richardson inquired about the Water Use It Wisely soccer game event. Mr. Hemphill informed her that he would follow-up on the event and provide her with a report.

Mr. McPhail asked staff to update the Committee on the permitting progress. Mr. Hemphill reported that the process was going very well. He indicated that staff has been in contact with the head of DCRA and all other the stakeholders. The Authority determined that there are opportunities to work DCRA on their web page. The process was initiated in either late summer or early spring and involved WASA and all other stakeholders. WASA has come up with a set of recommendations. Follow-up meetings are planned to work towards finalizing the process. In addition, a flowchart is being developed which will outline the proposed new process.

SPLASH Update

Mr. Hemphill reported that the recommended comments from the last committee meeting have been incorporated in the proposed agreement. Also comments from the General Counsel and the Internal Auditor are also included in the proposed agreement. Staff is working with the Urban League on the agreement and to ensure a smooth transition. Staff plans to meet with the Urban League in approximately two weeks to sign off on the final agreement and to give the program staff an opportunity to discuss the transition in detail and what the Authority's expectations are with respect to administration of the program. Staff also looks forward to working with the Urban League with some type of kick-off event.

Mr. McPhail inquired about the differences the Authority expects working with the Urban League in contrast to what has been experienced in working with the Salvation Army. Mr. Hemphill noted that administration and responsiveness are two major areas that the Authority believes will result in significant improvements. Another significant change will be the requirements for reporting, which have also been incorporated in the agreement and attachments. Mr. McPhail asked if the Urban League expressed any ideas on attracting commercial customers to the program. Mr. Hemphill indicated that there have been some discussions on this issue, but a plan has not been formulated.

Mr. McPhail asked if there was a projected date for the transition. Mr. Hemphill stated that November 1 is the projected date. Mr. McPhail also asked staff to consider placing a customer testimonial on the website regarding the SPLASH Program.

Emerging Issues

Mr. Hemphill informed the Committee that a celebratory event is being planned for the Authority's 10th Anniversary for November or December. Additional information on this event will be forth coming.

Mr. McPhail noted that this is his last DCWASA meeting and thanked everyone for his or her assistance and for the honor of chairing the Customer and Community Services Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.