



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

**Customer and Community Service
Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 11, 2006
10:00 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Board Members in Attendance

**Alexander McPhail
Brenda Richardson
Howard Gibbs
Stephanie Nash
Lisa Morgan
Joseph Cotruvo**

WASA Staff in Attendance

**Eva Liggins, Acting Director, CS
Michelle Quander- Collins, PA
Johnnie Hemphill, Chief of Staff
Olu Adebo, Acting CFO
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary
Webster Barnes, Principal Counsel**

Mr. McPhail called the meeting to order at approximately 10:15 a.m.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT

The report was done by exception. Eva Liggins reported that Flippo Construction signed the contract for the final phase of the AMR project. The project will be underway for late May. The total numbers provided to the committee were as follows:

3300 small meters (2" inches or <less) of which 122 are inactive
490 large meters (3" inches or > greater)

Regarding the format of the Customer Service Report, Mr. McPhail requested staff to look at the report and determine how the information provided and format can be updated to reflect the Committee's current initiatives and to provide more analysis. For example, he requested staff to eliminate the call center graph that charts the performance, keep the call volume graph and provide more information regarding why customers call. The Committee also requested that the SPLASH section of the monthly Customer Service Report show: the total dollars that the Salvation Army has received, total dollars distributed and the remaining balance. Staff agreed to take these suggestions under review, examine the overall report and to present suggestions for changes at the Committee's next meeting.

Michele Quander-Collins reported that DCWASA received the 2005 Award of Distinction for its 60-second public service announcement (PSA) "Keeping Catch Basins Clean". The Communicator Awards - an international competition honoring excellence in communications, sponsored the competition. The PSA (bi-lingual) is aimed at audiences 18-34 and airs on Hispanic and Urban-format radios stations in the District.

CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

Mr. McPhail stated that the Committee needs to incorporate the key findings of the recently completed Customer Survey into the Work Plan. After discussion, the Committee decided that the following issues are the most important for the Committee to emphasize in the coming months:

- Water Quality/Communication
- Multiple Contacts (calls)
- Permitting Process
- Electronic Bill Payment (how to increase customer participation in the various electronic bill paying options)

Mr. McPhail asked if it is inexpensive for customers to pay via automated electronic funds transfer and electronically. Olu Adebo reported that the greatest value of electronic payments is that WASA gets the cash more quickly compared to checks mailed by customers. Mr. McPhail asked if Mr. Adebo preferred to have electronic payments or payments via the lock box. Mr. Adebo will conduct an analysis of the lock box payments versus the electronic payments and have a report by the next committee meeting.

REVIEW COMMITTEE'S WORKPLAN

Mr. McPhail suggested that since the Committee is reviewing the staff prepared expanded and revised FY07 work plan for the first time, he would like to see the four issues added from the customer survey before the Committee gives extensive comment on the format and wording. Mr. McPhail requested that the work plan be revised, dated and sent electronically to the Committee.

PROPOSED RATE INCREASE AND PROPOSED GROUNDWATER CHARGES (CSO & RATE INCREASE) (STAKEHOLDERS AWARENESS)

Mr. McPhail asked how can we become more proactive and what measures we could take to get more customers involved.

Michele Quander-Collins reported that two engineering consulting firms that are already working on the CSO project have, as part of the Terms of Reference, a communications component. She will be working with these firms over the coming months and bring a summary of the proposed plans to the next committee meeting.

Michele Quander-Collins also reported that WASA is also developing a special website and special mailings to increase stakeholder awareness about upcoming rates issues.

The Committee requested staff to prepare a 4 – page brief/summary for the communications plan regarding: (i) CSO; (ii) rates in general (iii) digesters; and (iv) the Anacostia River

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

Aleizha Batson from the Office of Public Affairs provided the committee with a community outreach update. To date, more than 14 meetings have been held regarding the Lead Service Replacement program in FY06. Ms. Batson reported that since fiscal year 06 she has attended and participated in 45 community meetings. Ms. Batson stated overall that the meetings have been well attended.

Ms. Batson also reported on the community meetings regarding rates. Ms. Batson reported that WASA met with various organizations and communities to inform the public and stakeholders about the upcoming proposed rate increase for FY07.

Ms. Batson reported that numerous schools have participated in Sewer Science, a mini wastewater treatment laboratory exercise for high school students. The schools that have already participated are Banneker High School and Ballou STAY high School.

The Committee endorsed the staff's emphasis on building up WASA's capacity to reach its Latino customer base and encouraged the Customer Service Department to continue its efforts to reach all minority stakeholder groups.

SPLASH EXPANDING TO COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS

Mr. McPhail mentioned again to the staff that he would like to see the number of commercial customers participating in the SPLASH program increased. The staff responded that this issue is tied up with the question of what role, if any, another vendor would play in assisting the Authority with this program.

Johnnie Hemphill stated that to cancel or substantially revise the Salvation Army contract requires a 60 – day notice that has to be sent before the end of the annual contract. Mr. Hemphill stated the current contract ends in September, thus notice would have to be given in July 2006. Therefore, staff stated that the plan for increasing commercial customers in the SPLASH program would be determined by the end of July 2006 and that staff would inform the Committee as events develop.

EMERGING ISSUES

Mr. McPhail informed the Committee that he will be resigning from the DC Wasa Board of Directors on September 30, 2006.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.