

**VERO BEACH UTILITIES COMMISSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2022 - 9:30 A.M.  
CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Jane Burton; Members: Judy Orcutt, Bill Eggers, Mark Mucher (arrived at 9:38 a.m.), Member at Large, JT Mooney, and Indian River Shores Representative, Bob Auwaerter **Also Present:** Water and Sewer Director, Rob Bolton; Assistant City Attorney, Jenny Flanigan and Deputy City Clerk, Sherri Philo

**Unexcused Absence:** John Sanders

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Today's meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. and the Deputy City Clerk performed the roll call.

**2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

**A) Chairman**

Ms. Jenny Flanigan, Assistant City Attorney, called for nominations for Chairman of the Utilities Commission.

**Mrs. Orcutt nominated Mrs. Jane Burton for Chairman of the Utilities Commission. There were no other nominations.**

**Mrs. Jane Burton was unanimously appointed Chairman of the Utilities Commission.**

**B) Vice Chairman**

The Chairman called for nominations for Vice Chairman of the Utilities Commission.

**Mrs. Burton nominated Mr. Bob Auwaerter for Vice Chairman of the Utilities Commission. There were no other nominations.**

**Mr. Bob Auwaerter was unanimously appointed Vice Chairman of the Utilities Commission.**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) November 9, 2021**

**Mr. Auwaerter made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2021 Utilities Commission meeting. Mrs. Orcutt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## 5. NEW BUSINESS

### A) Update on Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Protecting Florida Together Grant Award – Mr. Rob Bolton, Water and Sewer Director

Mr. Rob Bolton, Water and Sewer Director, suggested because there are some new members on the Commission that he would like each member to introduce themselves and give some of their background.

At this time, each Commission member introduced themselves and gave some of their background. After the Commission members finished their introductory, Mr. Bolton then gave some of his background.

Mr. Bolton reported that the City applied for a grant through the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the conversion of septic systems on the barrier island. The two (2) areas staff looked at was South Beach and the Town of Indian River Shores. The City received the grant in the amount of \$1.2 million, however since the time the grant was applied for the City became in a conflict with the Service Territory Agreement. Staff discussed this with the City Council and contacted the DEP to request the grant funds be reallocated to be used for the design or construction of the new Water Reclamation Facility.

Mr. Mucher asked whose idea was it to take City grant funds for the benefit of non-City residents.

Mr. Bolton said the City did not accept the grant yet.

Mr. Mucher said but that was the original direction.

Mr. Bolton explained that the septic to sewer program inside the City limits for the extension of lines is complete. If the City is still going down the line of septic to sewer conversion outside the City limits, it is the responsibility of the entity who is providing service to those residents to come up with a program.

Mr. Mucher asked if some of the funds could be used to assist City residents in hooking up to the STEP System.

Mr. Bolton said not that funding source. The City has applied for 319 grants to do what he (Mr. Mucher) is talking about. This grant is strictly to be used for septic to sewer and advanced wastewater treatment plants.

Mr. Mooney said that he put in the STEP System when they purchased their home. He asked when someone purchases a new piece of property, is it incumbent on the owner to make the upgrade to the STEP System or is it still voluntary.

Mr. Bolton said it is voluntary until there is a septic system failure. It is not at the point of the sale of a home.

Mr. Mooney felt that it would be wise to encourage people to make the change at the point of sale.

Mrs. Orcutt said there has been an effort to get the City to mandate connection on the barrier island. Also, the Water Management District has a new requirement for there to be a mandatory connection policy if you expect to get septic to sewer conversion, however that policy was passed after the City's STEP System Ordinance was written.

Mr. Eggert said if there is any doubt about the harm septic systems do to the river, Mr. Brian Lapointe recently published a paper and made no bones about the fact that septic systems are the second leading cause of harm to the river.

Mrs. Orcutt said that she would be sure that information is submitted (she will provide the information to the City Clerk's office to distribute to the Commission members).

At this time, Mr. Bolton gave a brief update on the stormwater project, the new Water Reclamation Facility project, the stormwater main canal project, and the John's Island Water Management pipeline.

Mr. Keith Drewett said the STEP System is a technical triumph and he is a satisfied user.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

### **A) Annual Report**

Mrs. Burton reported that before the Commission is a draft of the Utilities Commission's 2021 Annual Report.

**Mr. Mucher made a motion to approve the 2021 Annual Report. Mrs. Burton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

## **8. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

None

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Auwaerter made a motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:49 a.m. Mr. Eggert seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

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