

Orange Water and Sewer Authority
Virtual Meeting of the Board of Directors
April 9, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) held a virtual work session on Thursday, April 9, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. utilizing Microsoft Teams software.

Board Members present: Raymond (Ray) DuBose (Chair), Ruchir Vora (Vice Chair), Bruce Boehm (Secretary), Yinka Ayankoya, Jody Eimers, Robert Morgan, John N. Morris and Bruce Runberg.

OWASA staff present: Mary Darr, Monica Dodson, Jesse DuClau, Audrey Eisenstein, Robert Epting, Esq. (Epting and Hackney), Vishnu Gangadharan, Robert Herring, Blake Hodge, Ed Kerwin, Ken Loflin, Andrea Orbich, Dan Przybyl, Ruth Rouse, Kelly Satterfield, Todd Taylor, Mary Tiger, Stephen Winters and Richard Wyatt.

Others present: Meg Holton (UNC Water Resources Manager) and Ellen Tucker (Gallagher).

Motions

1. Jody Eimers made a motion that the OWASA Board approve an additional 40 hours of leave be allowed employees for use in dealing with their or their or their family's needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic; that such leave may be taken in hourly or greater increments, upon such notice requirements as pertain to annual leave; and this additional leave provision shall continue until the Executive Director ends the benefit or no later than December 31, 2020, unless extended by further action of the Board. The motion was second by Ruchir Vora and unanimously approved. The motion was second by Ruchir Vora and unanimously approved.

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Announcements

Ray DuBose announced that due to COVID-19 public health concerns and in compliance with local governments "stay at home" orders, the OWASA Board of Directors was holding this work session virtually utilizing Microsoft Teams software. Mr. DuBose noted Board Members and staff were participating in the meeting remotely.

Mr. Dubose said members of the public are able to view or listen to the meeting but did not have an opportunity to speak during this meeting. The public was invited to provide comments via written materials in advance of the meeting; no comments were received.

Mr. DuBose asked if any Board Member knew of a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to any item on the agenda tonight to disclose the same at this time; none were disclosed.

Mr. DuBose said he attended a session of the Orange County Climate Council and heard reports and an update on the League for Communities training, and on the activities of the Communications Committee.

Andrea Orbich, on behalf of Robert Morgan (Chair of the Human Resources (HR) Committee), reported that the HR Committee met virtually on April 2, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. to review the logistics for the virtual April 24 and 25, 2020 Executive Director interviews. Following the open meeting, the Committee went into a closed session to review and discuss interview questions.

Item One: Quarterly Report on Board and Committee Meetings

The Board received this as an information item.

Item Two: OWASA's COVID-19 Preparations and Response: a) Overview of OWASA's Preparations for and Response to COVID-19 to Ensure High Quality and Reliable Service for the Community; b) Implementation of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and other response measures

Ed Kerwin, Executive Director, provided an update on OWASA's preparations and response to COVID-19. Mr. Kerwin said staff continues to take proactive measures to ensure the Carrboro and Chapel Hill communities have high-quality and reliable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water services during this event. Mr. Kerwin said staff has moved to working remotely or on-call hours and OWASA's administrative office is closed to the public, the lakes recreation season has been postponed, and measures are in place to limit in-person interaction.

Todd Taylor, General Manager of Operations, provided an update on plant operations, biosolids management, water main breaks, sanitary sewer overflow, water quality flushing and locating our infrastructure for third party construction projects with the minimum amount of staffing to adhere to social distancing requirements utilizing personal protective equipment (PPE). Mr. Taylor noted that additional cleaning procedures have been implemented to sanitize the work area as well as tracking cleaning supplies including PPE throughout the organization. Mr. Taylor said critical supplies for the plants and for operations are being monitored to be sure adequate supplies are maintained throughout the event. Mr. Taylor noted that staff is conducting regular check-ins with all employees to maintain open lines of communications and to monitor their health.

Mary Darr, Director of Engineering and Planning, said most of her staff is working remotely except for construction inspectors who continue to work with contractors on scheduled work in the service area. Capital Improvements staff are working with operating departments to continue, delay or reschedule various capital projects. Other engineering staff are providing support throughout the organization during this event.

Stephen Winters, Director of Finance and Customer Service, said his staff is working remotely. OWASA suspended disconnects for nonpayment on March 12, 2020. Customers can make payments by phone, text, U.S. mail or use the drop box at OWASA. Most customer service activities are being handled remotely. However, because certain functions can only be performed

in OWASA's office, members of the customer service staff work in two-person teams rotating one-week shifts in the office. Finance staff are working remotely and are maintaining normal internal control procedures.

Mary Tiger, Sustainability Manager, said OWASA's communications are boosted through the new website which rolled out in March 2020. Some of the features include an alert banner, chat features, and boil water information. Ms. Tiger said the website and social media have been instrumental in communicating critical messaging to customers. She said that staff continues to stay in close communications with local and regional partners to coordinate communications.

Dan Przybyl, Director of Information Technology, noted his department started preparations to work remotely six years ago by implementing Microsoft Office 365. His staff has been very busy assisting employees develop at home technical solutions, setup remote Board meetings and procuring computer supplies.

Stephanie Glasgow, Director of Human Resources (HR) and Safety, said her staff is working on: the Safety and Return to Work Protocol; continuing the day to day HR operations; implemented a temporary cell phone stipend to provide information to all employees related to employee assistance program; and healthcare and 457 plan updates. Ms. Glasgow said she continues to stay in communication with local entities and with the assistance of other staff established an internal online OWASA Trading Post designed to connect employees for various reasons.

Ruchir Vora suggested providing employees information on ergonomics at home/remote worksites and changes in fresh air intake for OWASA's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units; staff will follow up.

Ms. Glasgow summarized the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act – Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Emergency Family and Medical Expansion Act – which is effective until December 31, 2020. In addition to the benefits in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Ms. Glasgow explained an option for a temporary benefit of up to 40 hours of COVID-19 annual leave to provide employees an opportunity to address personal and/or family situations related to COVID-19, this benefit would end by December 31, 2020.

Ray DuBose said he is in favor of temporary benefit of 40 hours of COVID-19 annual leave.

Jody Eimers said she supports the temporary benefit and asked what the financial implications are if all or most employees used this benefit.

Mr. Kerwin said the financial impacts are relatively low and can be managed by staff.

Bruce Boehm said he supports the temporary benefit.

Jody Eimers made a motion that the OWASA Board approve an additional 40 hours of leave be allowed employees for use in dealing with their or their or their family's needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic; that such leave may be taken in hourly or greater increments, upon such notice requirements as pertain to annual leave; and this additional leave provision shall continue

until the Executive Director ends the benefit or no later than December 31, 2020, unless extended by further action of the Board. The motion was second by Ruchir Vora and unanimously approved. Please see Motion 1.

Mr. Kerwin expressed appreciation to the Board for approving the supplemental leave for COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Kerwin informed and requested feedback from the Board regarding other local entities/ organizations that are providing their employees supplemental pay (staff is not recommending supplemental pay at this time). However, given the uncertainty of the duration and economic impact to OWASA and the community, staff will continue to monitor and provide updates as received. Mr. Kerwin said staff's focus is on keeping employees safe and earning a paycheck.

Item Three: Review Employee Health and Dental Insurance

The Board received an employee health and dental insurance update from Stephanie Glasgow, Director of Human Resources and Safety, and Ellen Tucker, Area Vice President with Gallagher. OWASA is currently anticipating a decrease in medical insurance and small increase in dental insurance renewals. The Board is scheduled to approve health and dental insurance renewals at the May 14, 2020 meeting.

Item Four: Review Draft Fiscal Year 2021 Budget and Rate Adjustment Information Considering COVID-19

Stephen Winters, Director of Finance and Customer Service, provided an update on the draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Budget. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff has revised the draft budget to include no rate increase. The Board will continue budget discussions and hold public hearings in May before approving a final budget in June.

John Morris supports no rate increase in for FY 2021.

Ray DuBose supports no rate increase for FY 2021.

Item Five: Review Board Work Schedule

The Board agreed to begin the April 23, 2020 virtual meeting at 6:00 p.m. instead of 7:00 p.m. and added two items to the agenda: verbal update on forest management and Resolution Accepting a Low-Interest Loan Offer from the State of North Carolina and Authorizing Executive Director to Execute and Administer all Related Loan Offer and Acceptance Documents.

Item Six: Summary of Work Session Items

Ed Kerwin noted the following items for staff follow-up:

- Provide an update to Board and staff on ergonomics at home.

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- Guidance regarding air handling systems once buildings are occupied.

The Board meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Orbich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Orbich
Executive Assistant/Clerk to the Board