



**Marion Utilities**  
1540 N Washington St.  
Marion, IN 46952  
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## Service Board

### **BOARD MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 3, 2023 MEETING**

The Marion Utility Service Board held their meeting on Thursday, August 3, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the L.E.A.D. Center, Building 101, at Marion Utilities, 1540 N. Washington Street, Marion, Indiana.

Roll was called and those board members present were: Robert Logan, Chairman; Doug Carl; Bill Dorsey; Reverend Al Green; Herschel Lewis. Von Jackson and Dr. Jayda Monteiro were absent.

Also present at the meeting were: Chuck Binkerd, Director; Robin Shrader, Assistant Director for Operations and Maintenance; Mike Conner, attorney; Misty Humphries, Secretary; and Michelle Bunker, IMG.

#### **CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**

Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to make the Health Insurance Presentation Item A under New Business and to shift the other agenda items down. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Carl, to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2023 meeting. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **FINANCIALS**

Mr. Binkerd presented the June 2023 financials. He noted that there was some red ink on the Wastewater Division. The loss was due to a bond payment in June. Mr. Binkerd noted that the real news was that the Water Division only lost \$4,000 last month. Revenues were up a little and the monthly operating expenses were the lowest they had been in 2023. Stormwater saw an increase in cash since the net operating expense was positive. Solid Waste also had a great month with an increase to cash of \$46,000. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Reverend Green, to approve the financials. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **UPDATE ON PROJECTS**

Mrs. Shrader reported that the State Revolving Fund (SRF) paperwork was being worked on and finished up as the deadline was next Friday.

#### **CUSTOMER REQUESTS: 31<sup>ST</sup> St, Jeffras Ave, 4<sup>th</sup> St**

Mr. Binkerd explained that the Water Committee met and had reviewed several customer requests. The first request was for 1533 W 31<sup>st</sup> Street. Ms. Gardner lives at the address by herself, and there was a toilet leaking in the back part of her house. Ms. Gardner doesn't see or



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hear very well, and there were also some mobility issues which prevent Ms. Gardner from reaching the back of her home where the toilet was located. Ms. Gardner's son-in-law, Bart Smith, discovered the leak and repaired the toilet. A request for an adjustment of the wastewater portion has been requested. The wastewater charges totaled \$406.16. The Committee recommended approving the adjustment.

The next request was for 312 Trook Court. The owner was out of town and kids were playing in the sprinkler. The owner was asked to apply for assistance with the ICAP program which he did. Mr. Kennedy did not receive ICAP funds. Again, the request was for an adjustment on the wastewater charges which totaled \$645.67. The Committee was in favor of recommending the adjustment for wastewater charges.

The third request was for 1140 W 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The adjustment was requested by Ms. Destiny Boggs, the owner's granddaughter and Power of Attorney for the owner. It was discovered that the neighbors had ran an extension cord from their house to the property at 1140 W 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and were stealing electricity. The water usage also jumped from a 0-3 to a 10 and then 31 at 1140 W 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The belief was that the neighbors also stole water. A police report was submitted documenting the theft. Ms. Boggs has requested an adjustment for the stolen water and related services. Mr. Binkerd reported that the Committee was in favor of adjusting the two months of high reads back to a minimum bill.

The fourth request was for 721 W Jeffras Avenue by Jane Finch. Mr. & Mrs. Finch were out of town and received a bill for \$19,591. Mr. Binkerd said normally a high bill in error was caught, but this one was missed. Upon receiving the bill, Mrs. Finch called her plumber instead of calling us. The plumber then called customer service, and it was quickly discovered to be a billing error, and an adjustment was made. Mrs. Finch would like the Board to pay her Trademaster's bill of \$180.00. The Committee discussed the request and felt that if Mrs. Finch had called customer service the error would have been quickly discovered and that payment of the Trademaster bill would not be appropriate.

The final request was for 116 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Dream More Properties. Mr. Brian Conwell has submitted a bill from Kennedy's that he would like the Board to pay. The bill was in the amount of \$1,926.65. There was some conversation about the meter and a gasket. The bottom line was that there weren't any problems found on the Utility's side or problems that were related to the fault of the Utility. The Committee recommended not paying the Kennedy's bill.

Mr. Dorsey asked, in relation to the request from 312 Trook Court, if requests like this had come before the board and how those requests were handled. Mr. Binkerd said that similar requests had come before the Board. The requests had both been granted and denied. The decisions were specific to the details of each request. Mrs. Humphries added that the latest request was made by an elderly customer who had left her outside spigot on while watering her flowers. The Board agreed to adjust the wastewater portion of charges in that instance. Mr. Logan stated that he thought an adjustment to the wastewater portion would be appropriate here as Mr. Kennedy was out of town and the water did not flow into the system. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the Committee recommendations as presented. Mr. Carl; Mr. Dorsey; Reverend Green, and Mr. Lewis all voted aye. Mr. Logan abstained as he has a relationship with those making a request. Motion carried by a majority.



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### **HEALTH INSURANCE PRESENTATION**

Michelle Bunker introduced herself and IMG, Insurance Management Group. Mrs. Bunker explained that the current health insurance carrier was UnitedHealth Care (UHC). UHC offers medical and pharmacy plans to the Utilities. Employees can choose a traditional co-pay plan or a high deductible plan. Both plans have a deductible and risk tolerance from a deductible standpoint. With the help of the Senior Leadership Team, Mrs. Bunker has started exploring the opportunities that were available to provide a more comprehensive benefits package for employees and their families while maintaining current costs if possible. Mrs. Bunker said that the research has shown that there were some really good options which included moving the funding structure from fully insured to self-insured. Mrs. Bunker said she was there to talk about self-funding and explain what that meant. Mrs. Bunker explained that all of the pieces- which included Marion Utilities, Stop Loss Carriers, Third Party Administrators (TPA's), Pharmacy Benefit Managers, and Network Providers- were taken and put together to build the best program for the Marion Utilities' group. When a plan was fully insured, everything was part of one cost. With a self-insured plan, there would be the potential for savings. For example, if there was \$1,000 employee only premium, the budgeted amount would be \$1,000. If the claims come in at only \$700, then the carrier has a savings of \$300. Under a self-insured plan, the Utilities would win. However, if the claims come in at \$1,200, the Stop Loss Carrier would come in to help establish a cap based upon our historical claims and those that would be projected to ensure that no more than \$1,000 a month would be spent. This offers Marion Utilities the opportunities to potentially save money on health care spending in regards to medical and pharmacy insurance. Mrs. Bunker said that UHC has been a good partner and was well known in the industry. However, with fully insured plans, employers and employees don't have a lot of choices under the plan. Mrs. Bunker said that Marion Utilities wants to have the ability to have jurisdiction over what was allowed and what was not allowed. This would include ensuring that employees can receive services in town at an in-network price. With a self-insured plan, Mrs. Bunker said we can negotiate with the provider networks to develop a holistic and all-encompassing network. Marion Health has been extremely creative in trying to help local employers to access local health care. It offers another layer to be added into the mix adding an offered Tier program with costs savings and choices being provided to employees. Mrs. Bunker said SHO Direct would be the Tier 1 network that included Marion Health. Tier 2 would be a combination of Encore Combined included IU, St. Vincent, Parkview, and Ascension. The pharmacy benefit would also change. Currently, Optum must be used. The proposal was to use True Rx with a Tiered approach. The idea would be to cast a wide net at first. After the program was up and running, there may be patient assistance care available or recommendations for medication. As far as care that might be split among providers from different tiers, Tier 1 spending could count towards Tier 2 and vice versa. Mrs. Bunker then reviewed the high deductible plan option and noted that there were no out-of-network benefits. Mr. Carl asked if Mr. Binkerd had to go to a hospital, could Mr. Binkerd choose which hospital to go to or was he told where to go. Mrs. Bunker answered that Mr. Binkerd could choose which hospital he wanted to go to. Mrs. Bunker stated that with this change would come more education for employees, moving away from UHC, additional administrative training time for those helping to



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manage the plan, and digging deep with employees on the new tools like price shopping. Mr. Logan asked about Stop Loss coverage. Mrs. Bunker said that with stop loss, Marion Utilities would purchase stop loss at an expected (specific) level and a maximum (aggregate) level. The specific stop loss level was a stop loss per individual for example \$35,000 per employee. An aggregate stop loss would cover an excess amount over the annual total limit. Mr. Binkerd added that Marion Utilities funds would be pooled together with other smaller entities like us using the same approach as us to pool funds in order to pay for claims that are our responsibility. Mrs. Bunker explained that for midsized employers there is a Stop Loss Captive which was the pooling of like sized employers coming together to fund claims together. There is a shared risk within the pool. If we are managing our claims together well, we all stay in our own risk tolerance and make money. There is no guarantee with any of this, but last year, most of Mrs. Bunker's clients made 16%. This is also engineered to ensure there are as many safeguards as possible. Mr. Logan asked if the administration of this would be handled out of Anderson. Mrs. Bunker said yes, Unified Group Services is out of Anderson and have been around for 25 years. Mr. Binkerd said that employee meetings would continue, and the Senior Leadership Team would continue to talk with Mrs. Bunker to get the final numbers. A final packet with all the details would be sent to Board members. Mr. Carl asked if the transition would be at year end. Mr. Binkerd answered yes, and said he would ask the board to take a vote on this at the first meeting in September.

#### **TRANSFERS & PAY REQUESTS**

There were none.

#### **WASTEWATER UTILITY LOAN TO WATER UTILITY**

Mrs. Shrader explained that the Water Utility has been losing cash recently. In order to make sure that the operating fund was maintaining a sufficient balance while continuing to operate, Mrs. Shrader recommended \$1,000,000 loan from the Long Term Control Plan Cash Reserve Fund in Wastewater to the Water Operations Cash Account. Mrs. Shrader said that there had been a series of equipment failures and malfunctions that had happened a lot recently. All of those occurrences were nickel and diming the Water Utility. Mrs. Shrader presented Resolution 6-2023 which would authorize the loan from Wastewater to Water. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Carl, to approve Resolution 6-2023 authorizing a \$1,000,000 loan from Wastewater to Water. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **WELLNESS POLICY UPDATE**

Mr. Binkerd said that wellness has been an important issue for several years. For many years, employees could receive a benefit which would pay for their fitness center usage to the YMCA, Anytime Fitness, or other center they chose to use. The benefit for visiting a fitness center four times a month has been \$20 for quite a while. The YMCA has increased its costs. Mr. Binkerd asked to modify the policy so that if someone goes four (4) times a month, a monthly \$20 reimbursement would be given. If someone goes to a fitness center eight (8) times a month or more, the Utility reimburse them in an amount equivalent to a monthly single membership at







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the YMCA. Mr. Carl asked how many people participate in this program. Mr. Binkerd said he wasn't sure. Mrs. Humphries said that there were approximately six that visit the YMCA along with several more that attend Anytime Fitness. Mr. Logan asked how much the monthly single membership at the YMCA was. Mr. Binkerd answered \$36 currently. Mr. Green moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve reimbursing employees visiting a fitness center four times a month at the \$20 level, and reimbursing employees visiting a fitness center eight times or more at an amount equivalent to a monthly single membership at the YMCA. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

### **SENIOR LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

#### **R. Shrader, Assistant Director for Operations & Maintenance**

Mrs. Shrader reminded the board that at the last meeting a couple of additional slides were requested. Mrs. Shrader presented those to the board. She explained that the slides were retirement eligibility based upon the current employee population. Part-time employees were surrounded by purple. Those currently eligible for retirement were surrounded in red. Those surrounded in yellow would be eligible for retirement in five (5) years. The second chart illustrated seniority. Mr. Dorsey asked that those slides be sent to the board members. Mrs. Shrader then shared the feedback reports of two summer college interns which were both very positive. Lastly, Mrs. Shrader gave an update on the current interns. Emma Deaver was continuing with a work-to-school program as she has been homeschooled. A senior from Oak Hill was also joining the work-to-school program in the coming week.

#### **C. Binkerd, Utility Director**

Mr. Binkerd reminded the board of the Open House on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be food trucks, tours, and lots of fun and educational displays for the community to enjoy. Mr. Binkerd reported that the water rate increase had been approved by the IURC. The final approval was received yesterday. The rate itself could go into effect yesterday. However, due to logistics, the new rate would be effective with September's usage. A true up of the final numbers will be taken to the City Council for approval. In closing, Mr. Binkerd stated that the Growth Council had been working to garner new leadership. A search for a new director was underway. In the meantime, those on the Executive Board were working to help out with duties. Mr. Binkerd found himself helping out with funding. Mr. Binkerd said he was reaching out to many entities that have supported the Growth Council and was again asking for support. Mr. Binkerd asked that the Board make a donation in the amount of \$1,000 to the Growth Council. Mr. Binkerd said this was not like a charitable contribution. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Reverend Green, to approve a \$1,000 contribution to the Growth Council. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

### **BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

There were no board comments at this time.





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**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Mr. Logan thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next meeting was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 17, 2023.

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Green, to adjourn the meeting. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 6:44 p.m.

Robert Logan, Chairman  
Marion Utilities Service Board

ATTEST

Misty Humphries  
Its Secretary



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