



**Marion Utilities**  
1540 N Washington St.  
Marion, IN 46952  
[www.marionutilites.com](http://www.marionutilites.com)

**Service Board**

## **BOARD MINUTES OF THE MAY 4, 2023 MEETING**

The Marion Utility Service Board held their meeting on Thursday, May 4, 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; Al Green; and Herschel Lewis. Von Jackson was absent.

Also present at the meeting were: Chuck Binkerd, Director; Pat Pinkerton, Assistant Director for Engineering and Solid Waste; Robin Shrader, Assistant Director for Operations and Maintenance; Tiffany Snyder, Accounting/Billing Coordinator; Mike Conner, Attorney; and Misty Humphries, Secretary.

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

Mr. Dorsey moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to add Addition of Customer Requests for 704 Lenfesty Avenue and 1310 North Horton Street and Water Rate Case update under Old Business as well as Abonmarche Agreement under New Business. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2023 meeting. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

### **FINANCIALS**

Mrs. Snyder presented the financials for February, 2023. She stated that the Water Utility was able to maintain the two months of Operation and Maintenance balance at \$626,000; but operating expenses were in excess of revenues in February. Mrs. Snyder explained that revenues were typically lower than the annual average for February since it was winter and a short month. The Depreciation fund had been fully depleted so any capital funding was coming from the Equipment and Replacement fund. Any deficit in Operating was also made up with a transfer from Equipment and Replacement to Operating. Mrs. Snyder stated at the end of February, the Equipment and Replacement fund balance was \$391,500. The operating expenses were higher than average with contractual expenses being a larger portion of the pie and employee being benefits larger than typical.

As for the Wastewater Utility, sales were higher than the prior two years annual average as well as the monthly operating expenses. Employee benefits portion was larger than typical as noted for the Water Utility; but overall, operating receipts exceeded operating expenses.

The Stormwater Utility saw sales stay steady, but the accounts receivable increased so



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cash receipts were lower than usual. Mrs. Snyder again, said that operating expenses were higher than average with employee benefits being a larger amount than typical.

Mrs. Snyder closed out the February financials by stating that the Solid Waste Utility had depleted all funds except for operating. The Utility made the capital lease payment in February, but the cash had been set aside monthly for it. Mr. Dorsey moved, seconded by Mr. Carl, to approve the February financials as presented. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Snyder then presented the financials for March, 2023. Mrs. Snyder stated that the net gain/loss was a loss for all utilities except Wastewater. These losses were due to the larger than usual payroll expense since there were three payrolls in March. Wastewater had a gain because it saw a large decrease in Accounts Receivable of almost \$100,000 which added to the receipts for the month.

The Stormwater Utility would have seen an increase in cash except there was a large outflow for capital of \$147,000 primarily for the projects Sewer Construction and Motor Equipment.

Mrs. Snyder reported that the Water Utility's Operating Cash was able to maintain the two month minimum balance with no funds in Depreciation and \$341,000 in Equipment and Replacement. Solid Waste continued to experience a decrease with the loss of \$17,000 for the month, and the continuation of the monthly transfer for the capital leases which would be due next February. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the March financials. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **UPDATE ON PROJECTS**

Mr. Pinkerton stated that the soil borings report at the old Thompson site was still being worked on along with the 2023 sewer linings. The water mains in conjunction with the SRF loan being applied for will have a proposal submitted by Jason Miller. Mr. Miller would be able to complete the work in a timely manner while relieving some pressure of figuring out which items to work on first. Mr. Pinkerton said he would bring the proposal to the board when it's received.

#### **HR SPECIALIST POSITION**

Mr. Binkerd said this was brought before the board some time ago. Mr. Dorsey has been kind enough to work on this item as well. Mr. Binkerd said that as the Utilities continue to grow, regulations continue to shift, and responsibilities continue to evolve, this position needed to be upgraded. Mr. Binkerd stated that Mrs. Humphries was the primary contact for intricate HR issues. There was a need to upgrade this position so that this position would take care of some of the higher level day to day functions and duties. This position would be able to offer more assistance to Mrs. Humphries. Mr. Binkerd explained that the job description had been rewritten and was submitted to each board member for review. Amongst the changes, were the degree of supervision as well as the upgraded responsibilities. Mr. Binkerd added that the job description was reprinted after the rewrite. The original job description had the job description at a Range 13. After the point factoring was completed, the Range would increase to Range 17. If the standard policy of providing a 5% increase was applied, it would place this individual at a





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17-5. Mr. Dorsey added that this was a position that would continue to grow and more responsibilities would be added. Mr. Binkerd asked that the pay be made retroactive to April 1, 2023 as the position has been filled since last September. Mr. Carl asked if the job description presented was the final draft. Mr. Binkerd stated that it was. Mr. Dorsey added that one item of discussion was the importance of privacy and the ability to maintain confidential information. Mr. Dorsey stated that the HR Specialist needed to be housed in a private office where records could be locked and securely stored. Mr. Binkerd stated that with the upstairs renovation, the HR Specialist now has their own private office with a locking door as well as locking file cabinets. There being no further discussion, Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Dorsey to approve the job description update, to move the Range from 13 to 17, and to make this retroactive to April 1, 2023. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **CUSTOMER REQUESTS 704 LENFESTY AVENUE AND 1310 NORTH HORTON STREET**

Mr. Binkerd said from time to time customers request adjustments for leaks or breaks. Lately, there had been an inordinate number of requests due to outside faucets being turned on. The first request was for Mr. and Mrs. Boxell on Lenfesty. While the Boxells were in Florida, someone turned on their outside spigot which flooded their basement and ruined their furnace. The Boxells requested that the wastewater portion of the bill be adjusted as the water went under their house. Since the request was submitted, Mr. Boxell had passed away unexpectedly. The recommendation was to adjust the wastewater portion off given the circumstances. Mr. Dorsey asked how much that would be. Mrs. Humphries said \$1,273.

Mr. Binkerd said there was a spoken request from 1310 North Horton. However, there was no written request as required submitted. Our staff had contacted the customer several times, but a written request with the details of what happened was never received. Mr. Binkerd said that the Board had considered a request from 312 Trook Court as well. The customer had applied for assistance as recommended, and he was awaiting the results of that application. Mr. Conner mentioned that several residents in Jonesboro were also experiencing high bills due to their outside spigot being turned on. Mr. Green moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the adjustment of the wastewater portion for the customer at 704 Lenfesty. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **WATER RATE CASE UPDATE**

Mr. Binkerd said that correspondence was received this morning regarding a settlement offer. The OUCC has submitted settlement terms which would mean that testimony before the IURC wouldn't be needed. The OUCC recommended an overall increase of 62.5% instead of the requested 64.44% over five years. Mr. Binkerd stated that this was an incredible offer. He also said that the only exception to the terms was the statement that the Utilities should bill and pay themselves. Mr. Binkerd clarified that the terms stated that the Water Utility should bill the Wastewater Utility and vice versa. Mr. Carl asked if the dollar differential was over the five years. Mr. Binkerd said yes. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Green, to approve the settlement terms as presented. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.





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

There were none.

#### **HILL & NELSON WATER MAIN EXTENSION QUOTE**

Mr. Pinkerton stated that last fall there was a manhole that collapsed in the middle of Hill and Nelson. The manhole was 23 feet deep and made of brick. The contractor had to rent a box and an excavator to reach the area. By the time the manhole was replaced, there had to be two line stops on the water main which was over \$100,000. Now that the intersection was being repaired, two private water lines were discovered. The lines were tapped off the main in Nelson Street. Mr. Pinkerton said he was sure the lines were lead. Since there was an upcoming project to eliminate lead lines, he wanted to take care of those lines now. The contractor that had been working submitted a quote for \$35,000. Mr. Pinkerton said that there had also been quite a bit of interference with other utilities in the area. This sewer may have been one that was installed in the 1900s. A lot of the brick manholes have been lined to help keep the brick from collapsing. Mr. Pinkerton said that in looking at old drawings, the sewers weren't 23-24 feet deep. They may have been 12-14 feet deep and had dirt thrown on top of it. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Green, to proceed with the work at the quoted price. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **ABONMARCHÉ AGREEMENT**

Mrs. Shrader said the Indiana Finance Authority announced funding that was available to Water Utilities seeking assistance on their lead services inventory. The initiative helps Water Utilities and guarantees more accurate data reporting. Type 1 projects, utility records, review and analysis, funding and Type 2 projects, lead service review and planning, were made available now. Mrs. Shrader said Type 3 project, service line inspection and inventory validation, funding would be available later. Marion has approximately 11,000 service lines which qualifies for \$45,000 of grant funding. Mrs. Shrader explained that at the end of this, a data matrix would be available to identify and provide a framework for updating the lead service inventory, the lead service inventory will have been updated to the EPA in a timely fashion, the development of a function asset management program will have begun, and a website with updates and information will be available to the public for use. There's a handful of other deliverables as well. Mrs. Shrader said that process consisted of the Utilities selecting a provider for the lead service inventory. Mrs. Shrader stated that it would make sense to select Abonmarche as that provider since they are already working on a project with us. Additionally, Abonmarche has been contracted by 40 other utilities in Indiana so they have an established procedure. Abonmarche went a step further and said that they won't complete an amount of work that would exceed the grant that the Utilities would receive from Indiana Finance Authority. Mrs. Shrader said it is a win-win process. Mrs. Shrader and Mr. Binkerd reiterated that the Utilities would qualify for up to \$45,000 grant from Indiana Finance Authority. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the Abonmarche agreement. All board members in attendance voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.





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**SENIOR LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

**P. Pinkerton, Assistant Director for Engineering & Solid Waste**

Mr. Pinkerton had nothing further to report

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

Mrs. Shrader reported that there was a vacancy in Wastewater Maintenance. The opening was posted internally and comes down tomorrow. If there are no internal candidates, it would be posted externally.

**C. Binkerd, Utility Director**

Mr. Binkerd stated that there was a Customer Service Representative position open. Interviews would be scheduled over the next week. Mr. Binkerd also reported that the Earth Day event was a huge success. The rain barrel raffle was held again this year. \$1,240 was raised for the H2O Community Fund. One mother donated \$1,000 for her child's barrel. Mr. Binkerd added that there were probably 30 or more employees that volunteered their time. There were also over 40 vendors and 300 attendees.

In closing, Mr. Binkerd shared some numbers related to the assistance programs available to customers. Through the IERA, the customers have received \$21,022 in assistance. From the ICAP program, \$100,554.64 has been received. The ICAP program was a seasonal program, but there has been some discussion at the state level about extending the program.

**BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

There were no comments.

**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Mr. Logan congratulated everyone on a successful Earth Day event. He's attended in the past, and it was a good time. Mr. Logan also thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next meeting was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 18, 2023.

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

Meeting adjourned 6:13 p.m.

Robert Logan, Chairman  
Marion Utilities Service Board

ATTEST

Misty Humphries  
Its Secretary

