



## Marion Utilities

1540 N Washington St.

Marion, IN 46952

[www.marionutilities.com](http://www.marionutilities.com)

## Service Board

### **BOARD MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2024 MEETING**

The Marion Utility Service Board held their meeting on Thursday, September 5, 2024 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; Kristy Barney; Doug Carl; Bill Dorsey; and Herschel Lewis. Isaiah Fuller and Al Green were absent

Also present at the meeting were: Robin Shrader, Director; Erika Devine, Council Liaison; Tiffany Snyder, Accounting/Billing Coordinator; Mike Conner, Attorney; Misty Humphries, Secretary.

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

There were no additions or deletions.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Carl, to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2024 meeting. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **FINANCIALS**

Mrs. Snyder presented the July 2024 financials. She explained that sales for all utilities showed growth over 2023 which was attributed to the water rate increase and the timing of billing. Stormwater sales increased by \$20,000 in commercial sales. On the expense side, operations and maintenance expense remained flat or decreased over last months for all Utilities except for Wastewater. Wastewater saw an uptick in Contractual Services due to the TMI Coatings' methane sphere painting. Mrs. Snyder stated that overall, this resulted again in an increase in net operating receipts over 2023 for all Utilities. All divisions except Water saw a positive cash in-flow as total receipts exceeded disbursements. Water saw a negative cash flow because the first debt service payment of \$78,000 on the State Revolving Fund Loan was made July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mrs. Snyder also called the Board's attention to a slight addition to the financials. There was now an entry for Total Long Term Debt Outstanding. This included the balance of the SRF in Water, bond payments in Wastewater, and remaining lease payments in Solid Waste. Mr. Carl moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve the financials as presented. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **UPDATE ON PROJECTS**

Mrs. Shrader presented a picture of the Butler Street overhead tank and reported that the work should have been complete that evening. After that, the logos would go on the tank. The City of



Marion emblem and the Utilities emblem would be the only logos on the tank as it was smaller than the high school tank. Mrs. Shrader explained that there would be a seven day waiting period for inspection to follow. The project would then move to Meridian Street and the same process would be repeated. Mrs. Shrader then shared that all of the 8" water main on Watson Excavating's distribution project was installed as of yesterday. The final connection of the two mains would come together at 7<sup>th</sup> & Western. There were approximately 26 services to install along with the road restoration and the project would be wrapped up. The 34 lead service line projects on Adams Street had been completed by VTF. The traffic control would be moved to Washington Street from 20<sup>th</sup> to the south as it would be the next section addressed and would take approximately four to five weeks. Keith Sullivan was installing a small storm sewer extension of 230 feet on 37<sup>th</sup> Street from Nebraska to the alley just east of the intersection. Mrs. Shrader said that Boots Street would follow. Lastly, the water meter full installation would begin on Monday. It would start slowly and then ramp up from there. Mrs. Shrader stated eventually, 1,200 meters per month would be installed. Contractors would have a Marion Utilities' contractor badges and would have the Vepo and Marion Utilities' magnets on their vehicles. The substantial completion date was scheduled for March, 2025. Mrs. Shrader said she was doubtful that they would be able to make the deadline because of their late start. Mr. Lewis asked where the installation would begin. Mrs. Shrader answered book 205 and explained that the installation team would work closely with staff so that the billing cycles would not be interrupted. Mr. Logan asked if the removal of the old meter and installation of the new meter was well documented. Mrs. Shrader answered yes and explained that photos of the old meter and new meter would also be taken at the time of the removal/installation. Mr. Dorsey then asked about the lead service abatement. He asked if the work would move laterally. Mrs. Shrader said yes. The contractor would like to stay on one street and get everything completed so as not to interrupt traffic any longer than necessary. Mrs. Devine commented that the meter at the shop was installed today, and it took less than five minutes. Mr. Carl asked if customers would be able to log onto a portal and look at their water usage. Mrs. Shrader said no that was misinformation early on. However, the Customer Service Representatives could log on and print a data log or graph showing water usage and send it to customers.

**CUSTOMER REQUESTS: 4313 MIDDLETON COURT; 3056 MONTPELIER PIKE, 1525 N. HORTON ST**

Mrs. Humphries stated that the Wastewater Committee met last week and reviewed three customer requests. The first request was from 4313 Middleton Court. The customer went on vacation. While on vacation, a toilet in the back bathroom was running. This bathroom had not been used a lot so the customer was unaware it was running. The customer requested an adjustment. When it was explained to the customer that running toilets were not given adjustments, the customer requested the board reconsider and review their request. One of the questions discussed was why would the toilet run if it was not used. A further review of the account showed that there had been a spike in usage much like the one being reviewed now a few months ago and throughout last year. Mrs. Humphries stated that arrangements had been made with the customer. The Wastewater Committee recommended making extended payment arrangements with the customer up to 18 months.

The second customer request was for 3056 Montpelier Pike. The customer was a sewer only customer, but water services were available. There were two parts to this request. The first part of the request was to receive water services. Mrs. Humphries explained that the engineering

staff as well as the customer service staff had explained to the customer that while water services were available, the customer would have to pay a contractor to hook onto the available services. The second portion of the request was to remove charges after a house fire in 2022. The customer said that their house caught fire and they had not been able to use any sewer services as they did not have any kitchen or bathrooms. Mrs. Humphries stated that the Google Earth photos show that a new roof was being placed on the home in July 2023 and that it appeared as though someone was living in the house at the time. The Wastewater Committee recommended revisiting the request if the customer could show that there were no electric services to the property for a period of time after the house fire because if there was no electricity then the water/sewer could not be used. Mr. Carl clarified on behalf of the Wastewater Committee that if it could be shown no electricity was on at the residence a refund for the same time period would be made on the sewer charges.

The third request reviewed was for 1525 N Horton Street. This request was similar to the previous in that this customer also experienced a house fire. The water service was disconnected in March of this year due to the fire. However, the water service was reconnected on April 11, 2024 as the owner's son was living onsite in a camper as the house was being rebuilt. The owner was called back and asked where the used water was being dumped at. The owner stated he did not know, but would have his son call after his son got off work. As of the start of the meeting, the son had not called back yet. The Wastewater Committee recommended revisiting the request if the son could explain where the dirty water was being disposed of as the camper was not one that could be driven down here and dumped. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mr. Carl, to approve the Wastewater Committee's recommendations as presented. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Humphries stated that there was one other customer request pending. It was for the property located at 3607 S Western Avenue. The Stormwater Supervisor, Curt Simpkins, had reached out to Mr. Robert Monroe but was unable to reach Mr. Monroe. Mr. Simpkins stated that he had left several voicemail messages explaining that he would like to meet Mr. Monroe at the property to look at services, but Mr. Simpkins had received a return call as of the end of business. The request was on file and once Mr. Monroe called back another Wastewater Committee meeting would be scheduled to review it.

### **TRANSFERS & PAY REQUESTS**

There were no transfers or pay requests.

### **CLARK STREET VACATION**

Mrs. Shrader said Clark Street was near Home Avenue where a correction for a CSO issue would be made under the Long Term Control Plan. The Commonwealth Engineering group drew up the plans and bid the project. Clark Street sits in between two properties owned by the Utilities. Mrs. Shrader stated that an investigation was underway to determine what services might be in Clark Street. The idea would be to request from the City and City Council to take ownership of Clark Street as well as the small alley area that juts into Utility owned property. Mrs. Shrader said that she was not going to ask for any action to be taken tonight. She just wanted to bring everyone up to speed. The future plans were to build a tank that was just shy of 1 million gallons. The reason for the investigation into the street was to determine the position and shape that the tank would take. One of the main sewer interceptors was in the area and could easily be tapped into to alleviate the CSO.

### **MARION ARTS COMMISSION SPONSORSHIP REQUEST**

Mrs. Humphries reported that the Marion Arts Commission (MAC) had submitted a sponsorship request for their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual MAC Gala: A Night of Art and Elegance on September 20, 2024 at the Kennedy Art Center. The primary activities of the Marion Arts Commission include granting money to artists who are working on their artistic business or project in our community. Artists may apply for up to \$1,000 to receive money for artistic supplies, equipment, or materials that support their artistic practice. Mrs. Humphries stated their projects were wrapped up by sharing what was accomplished by receiving the grant. The MAC also plans and provides finances to pay for gallery exhibits for the Kennedy Art Center which touched on topics like racial and ethnic biases and the current Quilt as Art exhibit. There were four levels of sponsorship. The Platinum Sponsorship at the \$2,000 level included a logo on all marketing materials, an optional brief address to the audience, and 12 entry tickets to the gala. The Gold Sponsorship at the \$1,000 level included a logo on all marketing materials and 8 entry tickets to the gala. The Silver Sponsorship at the \$500 level included a logo on all materials at the event and 4 entry tickets to the gala. The Bronze Sponsorship included a logo on the program and 2 entry tickets to the gala. Mr. Dorsey moved to sponsor the event at the \$250 level. Mr. Lewis seconded Mr. Dorsey's motion. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

### **UNITED WAY DAY OF ACTION**

Mrs. Shrader said this item was a different type of sponsorship. On September 19<sup>th</sup> the United Way was having a day of work. The United Way was asking for volunteers that could be matched with needs. The United Way was targeting those who may have a disability or who were elderly. Mrs. Shrader asked for permission for up to 20 employees to volunteer at the event from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Mrs. Shrader explained that this was an event would be similar to helping with the Second Harvest Food Bank. Mr. Lewis asked if employees would stay on the clock. Mrs. Shrader answered yes. Mr. Dorsey asked if the offices would remain open and if the employees would be wearing their branded uniforms. Mrs. Shrader said yes to both. Ms. Barney stated that she was participating in the Day of Action and thought it would be a worthwhile event for employees to help with. Mr. Dorsey moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to approve up to 20 employees to volunteer at the event from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. All board members present voted aye. Motion carried unanimously.

### **SENIOR LEADERSHIP REPORTS**

#### **R. Shrader, Utility Director**

Mrs. Shrader stated the search for the Assistant Director for Operations continued. The candidates would move forward and speak with Adam Binkerd. A date for the candidates to meet with the Personnel Committee was also being worked on. Mrs. Shrader said that she would like to make a hiring recommendation at the September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mrs. Shrader reminded the Board that a few years ago leadership training was started for employees. This year the Invest Program had been started. The program takes 1 hour a month where employees were presented ways to improve themselves, loved ones, finances, and a host of areas of life as the series had included end of life planning, a presentation by a dietician, and retirement planning. Future programs were going to include work/life balance and stress management as well as a John Maxwell presentation. Sherry Loshnowsky, the Communication Specialist, was heading up the program. Each session was recorded and could be viewed later if someone could not attend. Mr. Dorsey asked why employees would miss. Mrs. Shrader said that if there was a main break the distribution team might not be

able to attend. Mrs. Humphries said that she didn't go to one of the sessions because of a prescheduled day off. Mr. Dorsey said that he understood those events, but why wasn't this mandatory. Mrs. Shrader said that she didn't want to dissuade employees by making it mandatory. Mrs. Shrader stated that future work related programs could be mandatory. Mrs. Shrader said that this program also worked with the "added value" portion of the mission statement. This program was a way to add value for employees.

**M. Humphries, Executive Assistant**

Mrs. Humphries shared some information from the customer service and accounting workgroups. In August, 10,795 bills were mailed out. Of those 10,795 bills only nine accounts had to be estimated. Unfortunately, one of those accounts had to be estimated because there was human feces in the meter pit. Other reasons for estimating the accounts included two meters with debris in the pit, two pits needed pumped, and four were inaccessible. Mrs. Humphries also shared that there were 29 meters pulled in August for illegal usage whereas there were four meters pulled in July for the same reason. As far as a disconnection for non-payment, August had 192 service disconnections with 118 reconnections after payments were made (74 remained disconnected). July had 170 disconnections due to non-payment with 117 reconnections after payments were made (53 remained disconnected). Mrs. Humphries stated that this was typical for the time of year as schools were back in session which meant families were often taxed with back to school shopping and school fees. As for methods of payments the following was presented:

Payment Type	July	August
Credit Cards	4,786	4,972
Money Orders	61	49
Checks	3,308	2,813
Cash	914	938
VANCO (Other Locations)	993	894
Total Payments	10,001	9,666

Mr. Carl asked if it was known how many payments were made in the drive through and at the kiosk. Mrs. Humphries stated that she did not have those numbers with her, but those numbers could easily be run and shared. Mr. Logan suggested that Mrs. Humphries share information like this as a regular item on the agenda. Mrs. Shrader said that she was going to suggest that as well.

**BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

There were no comments at this time.

**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Mr. Logan thank everyone for their attendance. He said it was wonderful to see everyone. Mr. Logan thanked Mrs. Devine for her attendance and service.

The next meeting was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 19, 2024.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Robert Logan, Chairman  
Marion Utilities Service Board

ATTEST

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Misty W. Humphries". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Misty Humphries  
Its Secretary