

RICHLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

SOUTH CAROLINA

SEWER AD HOC COMMITTEE

July 15, 2014
4:00 PM
4th Floor Conference Room

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda was sent to radio and TV stations, newspapers, persons requesting notification, and was posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the County Administration Building

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pearce called the meeting to order at approximately 4:05 PM.

OASIS UPDATE

- ✚ Mr. Hammett stated that the report was emailed to Council members last week and that a hard copy will be provided to each Council member at tonight's Council meeting.
- ✚ Mr. Hammett stated originally a request was brought to Council to purchase the utility system, as well as, several motions from Council members.
- ✚ A motion was made to potentially privatize the operation of the utility system
- ✚ Another option brought forward was to look at a Water/Sewer Authority
- ✚ An RFQ was sent out and responses were solicited. The RFQ requested the consultant to: (1) evaluate the current operation of the utility system; and (2) look at four different means of going forward – (a) County to continue operations (b) implement a Water/Sewer Authority; (c) County continue to own the utility system, but hire a management company; or (d) sell the system
- ✚ The report states that the Utilities Department is a well-managed, well-maintained, properly operated utility that is in general compliance with USEPA and DHEC recommended standards for properly operated utility. In short, Richland County Utilities Department is one of the best managed and best operated utility departments the evaluation team has ever evaluated. Although a small number of items were identified during the screening that needs to be addressed with the utility, none presented a need for any critical or immediate action.
- ✚ Ms. Dixon inquired as to how privatizing the system will impact the current staff



Committee Members Present

Kelvin Washington, Chair
District Ten

Norman Jackson
District Eleven

Bill Malinowski
District One

Others Present:

Julie-Ann Dixon
Paul Livingston
Tony McDonald
Sparty Hammett
Andy Metts
Ray Peterson
Michelle Onley
Monique McDaniels

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- ✚ The consultant's recommendation is creation of a Water/Sewer Authority. The remaining results are as follows: to continue ownership of all assets; to continue ownership of all assets with operations under contract to County; and to sell all water/sewage assets to a private owner to own and operate.
- ✚ *Instituting an Authority to Own and Operate the County's Water and Sewage System:*
 - a. Pros:
 1. Indirect control of actions
 2. Minimal modifications to existing condition
 3. Ability to direct influence Authority
 4. Indirect access to State and Federal grants, low interest loans and assistance
 5. Separate funds from County Budget
 6. Operate Independently
 7. Unlikely displacement of existing County Staff
 8. Potential Financial windfall for County
 9. Reduce administration burden on County
 10. Ability to improve underserved area
 - b. Cons:
 1. Startup costs
 2. Limited control of specific Authority actions
 3. Maintenance of County control could be problematic or a lengthy process
 4. Limited control of customers satisfaction
 - c. The County should retain the services of an attorney to assist with the development of legal documents necessary for establishment of the Authority and to transfer the assets of Utilities Department
 - d. Engage an engineering consultant to assist the County Administrator, attorney and department in the transfer of assets to new Authority
 - e. The department's new Authority and Planning Department should coordinate information resources to fully integrate existing and potential capabilities of the County utilities and comprehensive planning process
 - f. County Government, in conjunction with the department or new Authority, should investigate the consolidation and/or incorporation of the smaller water systems into the County's general utility system
- ✚ Staff is to concentrate on the recommendations to create a Water/Sewer Authority and continue ownership/management of the system.
- ✚ Council members are to forward suggestions/questions to staff during the August recess.

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S O U T H C A R O L I N A



- ✚ Staff will bring the recommendations/Council suggestions back to committee in September.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:17 PM.