

**MINUTES OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE WATER WORKS BOARD OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
February 9, 2024**

A Communications Committee meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Monday, February 9, 2024 at 12:30 p.m.

The following Committee members were present: Committee Chairman Tom Henderson, Tereshia Huffman, and William Burbage. Director George Munchus was also in attendance.

Others present were: Michael Johnson, General Manager; Derrick Murphy and Philip King, Assistant General Managers; Cynthia Williams, Board Administrator; Anitra Clark, Corporate Governance Specialist; Brad Steffens, Joi Dulaney, Jessica Fadlevich, Marsha Walker, Jeff Wade, Charles McGee, and Rosalind Jones, BWWB Employees; K. Mark Parnell, Parnell Thompson, LLC; Kelvin Howard, Kelvin W. Howard, LLC; Bill Todd and Angela Riley, O2 Ideas; and Lindsey McAdory, CBG Strategies.

Committee Chairman Henderson declared a quorum in attendance.

Committee Chairman Henderson called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m. and General Manager Michael Johnson opened the meeting with prayer.

Following, Chairman Henderson asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Director Burbage made a motion to approve the agenda and Director Huffman seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Following, the Committee moved to the first item on the agenda, Request Committee to approve the minutes from the Communications Committee Meeting held November 21, 2023. Director Huffman made a motion to approve the minutes and Director Burbage seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Following, the Committee moved to Reports of Officers. The Committee then heard an update from the Public Relations Department. Director Huffman requested the Public Relations team introduce themselves, including their title and duties. Brad Steffens stated he is the Public Information Officer, and he stated the department's role is community engagement. Joi Dulaney stated she is the Communications Coordinator. She stated her duties involve working with the media, assembling packets for community distribution, orchestrating meetings with the community, as well as in-house meetings. Mr. Steffens gave an overview of the goals for 2024. He stated the goal is to build relationships with key community stakeholders to help promote the BWWB brand. He indicated BWWB attended over 80 events in all 5 counties in its service area in 2023. He then gave an overview of the programs BWWB provides to the community. Director Huffman questioned whether BWWB is involved in Governor Kay Ivey's initiative to encourage reading in schools. Mr. Steffans responded he didn't have details regarding that initiative but stated BWWB would be willing to support it. Ms. Dulaney stated Rick Jackson, Public Relations Manager, has visited schools regarding this reading initiative. Subsequently, Ms. Dulaney stated the Public Relations Department is also working to increase communication with BWWB employees. A video from BWWB News was then played for the Committee. Ms. Dulaney stated employees also receive the monthly newsletter, *Water Current*, electronically and in hard copies. The General Manager questioned what has the feedback been from

employees regarding the newsletter. Ms. Dulaney responded the feedback has been positive and the Distribution Department appreciates the printout of the newsletter.

Following, the Committee moved to the second item on the agenda, Request Committee to hear an update on the new media request process. Jessica Fadlevich, Public Relations Department, stated she is responsible for handling BWWB social media, graphic design, and photography. She stated BWWB is constantly trying to enhance its communications with the public. She stated there are levels of approval that must be implemented before information is released to the public or any media outlet. She indicated responses are typically issued 24 to 48 hours after receipt of request. She indicated an email address, publicrelations@bwwb.org, has been established for media inquiries and it is visible on the BWWB website. She stated this will streamline this process and ensure media requests are received by the Public Relations team. Chairman Henderson questioned whether the email address is operational now and Ms. Fadlevich responded yes. She stated it helps with responding faster to requests because it goes to a group versus one person, Rick Jackson. Director Huffman questioned who has access to this email account. Ms. Fadlevich stated the Public Relations Department and Senior Management.

Following, the Committee moved to the third item on the agenda, Request Committee to hear a report from O2 Ideas regarding internal communications. Bill Todd, O2 Ideas, gave an overview of internal communications including the Employee Association, improving executive visibility, and rolling out the 2024 communications plan. He stated 313 employees participated in the Employee Town Hall meetings and provided positive feedback. He then gave an overview of the executive visibility plan. He stated it is recommended to have the Employee Town Hall meetings monthly virtually and one in-person meeting every quarter. He stated the goal is to get the executive team more proactively involved in the lives of BWWB employees. He stated there will be lunch and learn sessions at the recommendation of Chairwoman Huffman. Mr. Todd stated O2 Ideas has been actively involved with Human Resources to develop a monthly newsletter to remind employees of the benefits available to them. He stated employees would also like to see the results of surveys conducted by O2 Ideas, so that information will be shared. He stated the BWWB Intranet has been updated and one component is being able to search employee names and a photo being provided to identify them.

Following, the Committee moved to the fourth item on the agenda, Request Committee to hear a report from CBG Strategies regarding external communications. Lindsey McAdory, CBG Strategies, gave an overview of communication goals and strategic vision. He then introduced the BWWB Builds Initiative and provided an overview of the initiative. He stated this will focus on community engagement regarding infrastructure, pipeline replacement, and technology. He then gave an overview of the public and media strategy, and the social media strategy. He stated the goal is to release positive stories to the community every month. Mr. McAdory stated a crisis communication plan has been put in place to mitigate crises when they arise. He indicated the media request policy will assist with this. Director Burbage left the meeting at 1:14 p.m. Mr. McAdory then gave an overview of promoting the Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) program.

Following, the Committee moved to the fifth item on the agenda, Request Committee to recommend to the Board to enter into a one-year agreement with J.D. Power to provide the 2024 Water Study subscription for training purposes at an out-of-pocket cost to the Board of \$37,500.00. Director Munchus stated he would reserve his comments for later; however, he will be voting no on this item. The General Manager stated BWWB has not scored well in past surveys, and he indicated the survey is a well-respected survey on customer service. He stated discussions were held to determine the benefits of participating in the survey. He stated being a part of the survey will give BWWB access to

information included in the survey and this will allow BWWB to educate and design programs to improve in the areas where J. D. Power rates BWWB the lowest. He indicated he thinks it is a really good investment. Director Burbage returned to the meeting at 1:19 p.m. Chairman Henderson questioned whether the information would be proprietary. The General Manager responded the information can't be distributed publicly. Director Huffman then made a motion to approve the item and to send it to the full Board for approval, and Director Burbage seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Next, Director Huffman made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Director Burbage seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

_____/s/
Michael Johnson
General Manager

_____/s/
Tom Henderson
Communications Committee Chairman

_____/s/
Tereshia Huffman
Director

_____/s/
William "Butch" Burgage, Jr.
Director