

**MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE WATER WORKS BOARD OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
Thursday, December 10, 2020
11:30 a.m.**

A Human Resources Committee meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 11:30 a.m., via electronically [via teleconference/telephone].

The following Committee members were present via a roll call: Committee Chairman Lucien Blankenship, Tommy J. Alexander, and Brenda J. Dickerson. Other directors present were Deborah Clark, William R. Muhammad and George Munchus.

Others present via teleconference/telephone: Michael Johnson, General Manager; Derrick Murphy, Jeffrey Thompson, and Iris Fisher, Assistant General Managers; Cynthia Williams, Board Administrator, Vanessa Washington, Executive Assistant; Colandus Mason, Marsha Hammonds, Paul Lloyd, Cherita King, Barry Williams, Rick Jackson; BWWB Employees, K. Mark Parnell, Parnell Thompson Law, LLC; Emory Anthony, Esq.

Inasmuch as all of the Committee members were present, a quorum was in attendance.

Committee Chairman Blankenship called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. Human Resources Business Partner Cherita King opened the meeting with prayer.

Next, Committee Chair Blankenship called for any additional items to be added to the agenda. GM Johnson indicated he had an edit to the agenda. He stated the agenda needed to be amended so that agenda item two would reflect the corrected dollar amount of \$4,460.00. As there were no items to be added to the agenda, Director Alexander made a motion to approve the agenda. Director Dickerson seconded. The Committee approved the agenda as printed by a unanimous voice vote. The amended agenda was approved with the motion and second by a voice vote.

Following, agenda item one requested the Committee to approve minutes of the May 21, 2020 HR Committee Meeting; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. Director Dickerson made a motion to approve agenda item one. Director Alexander seconded. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Next, agenda item two requested the Committee to review and to recommend to the Board to approve an engagement letter with Armstrong Law, LLC, in the amount of \$4,460.00 to pay for legal services and required filing fees to apply for an extension of a current employee's H-1B Visa; and to authorize the General Manager or the Assistant General Manager to execute the engagement letter; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. A director inquired as to why BWWB was being requested to pay the fees for said employee. GM Johnson explained that the referenced employee works in the Project Management Office and has been with the company for 3-4 years; however, his VISA expires next year. Committee Chair Blankenship inquired whether there was concern that conflict exists with the attorney representing the board and employee. Per Attorney Parnell, this area of the law is specialized. The attorney handling the case is specialized in immigration law. It is standard practice and required by law for the employer

to pay certain fees relating to an H-1B VISA and certain parts are the employee responsibility. Director Dickerson indicated that the representing attorney addressed her services, potential conflict and other information per an email included in the board's package. GM Johnson stated the amount changed because the filing fee was more when the engagement letter was prepared a month ago. However, a legal recommendation to increase the fee did not pass, which caused a reduction to the fee. In addition, directors expressed concerns regarding whether approving the request would be viewed as preferential treatment to said employee. After further discussion, Director Dickerson made a motion to approve agenda item two. Director Alexander seconded. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. Said item was moved to the full Board for consideration.

Following, agenda item three requested the Committee to review and to recommend to the Board to approve an amendment to the Smoking Policy (Section 6.11) in the Employee Handbook and (Section 6110) in the HR Management Guide; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. Director Alexander made a motion to approve agenda item three. Director Dickerson seconded. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. Said item was moved to the full Board for consideration.

Next, agenda item four requested the Committee to review and to recommend to the Board to approve an amendment to the Sick Leave Policy (Section 8.7) in the Employee Handbook and (Section 8070) in the HR Management Guide; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. GM Johnson explained the current sick leave policy vs the amendment. The amended policy would allow employees to take sick leave without waiting six months from the date of hire/probationary period. Directors confirmed with staff that an employee would only receive the sick time he/she had earned up to that point. Director Alexander made a motion to approve agenda item four. Director Dickerson seconded. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. Said item was moved to the full Board for consideration. AGM Fisher joined the meeting at 12:07 p.m.

Following, agenda item five requested the Committee to review and to recommend to the Board to approve the following amendments to the COVID-19 Employee Assistance Policy; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body: (1) allow Part-Time Employees to be eligible for COVID-19 Employee Assistance Sick Leave Pay on a pro-rated basis effective March 17, 2020 (part time employees would be allowed up to 7.5 days or 60 hours vs full time employees are allowed up to 10 days or 80 hours); and (2) extend the expiration of the Policy to June 30, 2021. GM Johnson explained that the only amendment to the policy is to add part-time employees, as it originally only addressed full time employees. Director Dickerson made a motion to approve agenda item four. Director Alexander seconded. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. Said item was moved to the full Board for consideration.

Next, agenda item six requested the Committee to hear an update on the SuccessFactors HR/Payroll Implementation; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. Business Systems & Operations Manager Barry Williams presented information on said topic. He gave an overview on the revised timeline. Per Mr. Williams, the GO-Live date for this module is January 1, 2021. He indicated that there were no issues in rolling out benefits, open enrollment and performance goals. Thus, he anticipates a successful launch for said Payroll module. After answering a few questions, Mr. Williams concluded his presentation.

Following, agenda item seven requested the Committee to hear a presentation on the process for approving PARFs; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. HR Manager Paul Lloyd presented information on said topic. Directors had many questions regarding new hire approvals, promotions being vetoed, hiring employees, and the overall process for PARF's and staff/management's responsibility. Director Munchus reminded HR that their role is an Advisory role as concern was expressed on whether HR had the authority to veto potential hires/employees' promotions. GM Johnson assured directors that HR does not have that authority. Next, staff was asked to revisit the PARF's flow chart language and send the memo to directors before the December 16, 2020 Regular Board of Directors' Meeting. Also, discussed were two plant operator positions that were needed and why they were never pursued. Per AGM Jeffrey Thompson, the positions were not included in the budget due to cost and the financial impact of COVID-19. There is risk in currently having one operator, BWWB has operated as such for a long time. However, security precautions are in place to minimize risk.

Subsequently, the Committee proceeded to agenda item eight, which addressed new business. Director Blankenship notified directors of a request received from the City of Birmingham. It requests BWWB participation/commitment relating to a \$1,000,000.00 infrastructure investment in the City of Birmingham and the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District's Choice Neighborhood application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regarding revitalization of the Smithfield neighborhood. Management was asked to submit this request for the December 16, 2020 Regular Board of Directors' Meeting. Next, under new business, Director Muhammad inquired about the overlapping of salary grades. Mr. Lloyd explained the process and stated it was common practice to have some overlap. Also, Director Dickerson asked that GM Johnson send a hard copy of the AWWA salary survey to the HR Committee. Lastly, Director Munchus stated that there is urgency to the request sent from Director Blankenship. He indicated that a US Government Secretary would be in town next week, and if a director received an invitation to please attend.

As there was no further business before the Committee, Director Alexander made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Director Dickerson seconded. Thus, Committee Chair Blankenship adjourned the meeting at 1:33 p.m.

_____/s/_____
Lucien Blankenship, Esq.
Director

Brenda J. Dickerson, Ph.D.
First Vice Chair/First Vice President

Tommy J. Alexander
Director

_____/s/_____
Michael Johnson, MBA, CPA
General Manager