

**MINUTES OF AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE WATER WORKS BOARD OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
January 19, 2024**

An Executive Committee meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Friday, January 19, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., at 3600 First Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama.

The following Committee members were present: Directors Tereshia Q. Huffman (Committee Chairwoman), William “Butch” Burbage, Jr., Thomas E. Henderson, Carl Dalton NeSmith, and Raymond “Larry” Ward. Also, present was Director Munchus.

Others present were: Michael Johnson, General Manager; Iris Fisher, Assistant General Manager; Cynthia Williams, Board Administrator; Anitra Clark, Corporate Governance Specialist; Vanessa Washington, Executive Assistant; Rick Jackson, Michael Tartt, Colandus Mason, Rosalind Jones, Jeff Wade, Charles McGee, Anthony Hazel and David Walker, BWWB Employees; K. Mark Parnell, Parnell Thompson Law, LLC; Kelvin W. Howard, LLC; Byron Perkins, Perkins Law, LLC; Bob Geddie, Joe Fine, and Ben Patterson, Fine Geddie & Associates; Greg Jones, The Jones Group, LLC, and Cynthia Gould, ABC 33/40.

Inasmuch as all Committee members were present, a quorum was declared in attendance. Committee Chairwoman Huffman called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m., General Manager Johnson opened the meeting with prayer. Afterwards, he commented that Assistant General Managers Philip King and Derrick Murphy were not present due to an emergency meeting.

Following, the Committee proceeded to approval of the agenda. Director NeSmith made a motion to approve the agenda and Committee Chairwoman Huffman seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Next, the Committee proceeded to the first item on the agenda, Request Committee to approve minutes of September 18, 2023. Director NeSmith made a motion to approve the minutes and Director Henderson seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Following, the Committee proceeded to the Reports of Officers. Committee Chairwoman Huffman stated the 2024 Committee assignments will be distributed next week during board meeting. Committee Chairwoman Huffman said she hopes to receive 100% participation for the Board’s pledge so there can be full participation this year on the Committees. Director Ward inquired about the date for the Finance report. General Manager Johnson responded that the Finance report and all division reports would be presented at the January 24, 2024, board meeting. Director Ward requested that Rick Jackson, Public Relations Manager, notify the press and legislative of the financial report meeting. Afterwards, Director Henderson commented that it was an honor to be sitting in the seat previously held by his friend and colleague, Director Mims.

Next, the Committee proceeded to the second item on the agenda, Request Committee to recommend to the Board to consider firms for lobbying services. General Manager Johnson stated that the two firms: Fine Geddie and Associates and The Jones Group, LLC, were present and would present an overview to the Committee on who they are and the services they perform. Committee

Chairwoman Huffman asked General Manager Johnson to share with the Committee how the two firms were selected/process. General Manager Johnson stated staff looked at the Board's current government affairs representation to see if the services offered were everything Birmingham Water Works needed to help Birmingham Water Works connect with customers and stakeholders. He stated after vetting firms, Fine Geddie & Associates, and The Jones Group were the final candidates. General Manager Johnson said both firms perform great work. Afterwards, Committee Chairwoman Huffman commented that the lobbyist budget had been cut. She stated Birmingham Water Works received a lot of concern about the lobbyists' budget including which lobbyists' services to terminate. Also, she thanked Director Henderson for leading the lobbyist efforts along with General Manager Johnson.

Next, Bob Geddie, Fine and Geddie Associates, was acknowledged. He introduced Joe Fine and Ben Patterson as part of his team. Mr. Geddie said he knows Greg Jones and that they have done great work together. He said his firm previously represented Birmingham Water Works for 25 years. Mr. Geddie stated he and Mr. Fine started the firm in 1984. The firm has grown and currently has six lobbyists and two support staff. He stated they are qualified to deal with the issues at hand. Mr. Geddie said his firm understands Birmingham Water Works issues, the community, and Birmingham Water Works importance to the community and the State. Mr. Geddie stated that when dealing with issues, they track everything that happens in the legislative body, such as, Committees, bills introduced, etc. Mr. Geddie said his team is on-call twenty-four hours, seven days a week. Director Munchus asked whether their firm represents any other water systems in Alabama. Mr. Geddie responded that his firm represents Southwest Water, which is under the Public Service Commission. Afterwards, Mr. Geddie concluded his presentation.

Following, Greg Jones, The Jones Group, gave an overview of his firm. Mr. Jones stated he is the founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Jones Group. He said his firm is the most diverse governmental affairs firm in Alabama. Mr. Jones indicated that his team consists of seven team members, which includes his support staff. Mr. Jones stated his firm does many of the same things as the Fine Geddie and Associates. Mr. Jones said he applauds the Board for considering keeping The Jones Group as one of its governmental affairs representatives. Mr. Jones stated he is looking forward to working with Fine Geddie and Associates in strengthening the efforts in leading Birmingham Water Works on political issues in Alabama. Director Munchus asked if The Jones Group had merged with the firm Miller Group and if the firm name had been changed. Mr. Jones responded that The Jones Group and the Miller Group (Debra Miller and Jeff Miller) firms merged; however, the firm name is The Jones Group, LLC. He stated the merger is going well and the Miller Group firm has been established for a long time.

Next, Committee Chairwoman Huffman asked General Manager Johnson to state the work assignment to each firm. Committee Chairwoman Huffman stated she would like for the lobbyist firms to help Birmingham Water Works produce bills that will benefit rate payers and not only bills that protect the structure of the Board. General Manager Johnson responded that legislation was drafted a few years ago. He said staff had assistance from Birmingham Water Works lobbyists in drafting three legislative bills. The legislative bills consisted of reviewing the amount required to bid public work projects, non- public works projects, and looking at a local preference (Board Attorney Parnell helped draft). He stated said legislative bills need to be considered again, in addition to others. In addition, General Manager Johnson stated a legislative agenda needed to be

established. Committee Chairwoman Huffman reiterated her request regarding the lobbyists' assignments. General Manager Johnson responded that both firms would focus on Birmingham Water Works efforts in Alabama. He stated Birmingham Water Works will need help from a local and state standpoint and that said firms are able to help in those areas within the scope of their agreement. General Manager Johnson said the lobbyist firms can help with Birmingham Water Works issues being heard. The lobbyists can assist with issues that arise, in need of communication, that Birmingham Water Works is unable to provide. Director Munchus inquired about the referenced legislative bills previously drafted. He asked whether the legislative bills passed or received a sponsor. General Manager Johnson stated the legislative bills did not pass; however, the local preference legislative bill received a sponsor. The public works and non-public works did not. After the discussion, Director Henderson made a motion to recommend said items be moved 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.

Subsequently, the Committee proceeded to the third item on the agenda, Request Committee to recommend to the Board to consider a resolution to re-establish the panel of attorneys. Director NeSmith made a motion to recommend said item be moved to the full Board for approval and Committee Chairwoman Huffman seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

As there was no further business before the Committee, Director Henderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Committee Chairwoman Huffman seconded the motion. On a motion duly made and seconded, the motion was approved, and the meeting adjourned at 9:52 a.m.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Johnson  
General Manager

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Tereshia Q. Huffman  
Committee Chairwoman

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
William "Butch" Burbage, Jr.  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas E. Henderson  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Carl Dalton NeSmith  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Raymond "Larry" Ward  
Director