

**MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE WATER WORKS BOARD OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
Monday, June 21, 2021
10:00 a.m.**

A Human Resources Committee meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 10:00 a.m., via electronically [via teleconference/telephone-Public].

The following Committee members were present via a roll call: Committee Chairman Lucien Blankenship, Tereshia Huffman and Tom Henderson. Other directors present were George Munchus and William “Butch” Burbage, Jr.

Others present: Michael Johnson, General Manager; Iris Fisher, Assistant General Manager; Cynthia Williams, Board Administrator; Vanessa Washington, Executive Assistant; Colandus Mason, Paul Lloyd, Joyce Dupree, Sam Day, Cherita King, Rhonda Lewis and Rick Jackson; BWWB Employees.

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

Committee Chairman Blankenship called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Human Resources Manager Paul Lloyd opened the meeting with prayer. Afterwards, GM Johnson announced that former Executive Assistant to the Board, Grace Amison lost her sister on last Friday and he asked the meeting body to keep her in prayer.

Next, Committee Chairman Blankenship called for any additional items to be added to the agenda. As there were no items to be added to the agenda, Director Henderson made a motion to approve the printed agenda, and Director Huffman seconded the motion. The Committee approved the agenda as printed by a unanimous vote.

Following, agenda item one requested the Committee to approve minutes of the October 21, 2020 and December 10, 2020 HR Committee Meetings; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. Director Blankenship made a motion to approve agenda item one, and Director Henderson seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous vote.

Next, agenda item two requested the Committee to review and recommend to the Board to approve an amendment to the COVID-19 Employee Assistance Policy to extend the ending date of this Policy to September 30, 2021; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. AGM Fisher stated that the COVID-19 Policy was approved last year. The policy allowed up to 10 paid COVID sick days for employees, family member or child, respectively. Later, the board was asked to approve 10 additional COVID sick days for each COVID-19 exposure, because a lot of employees were being quarantined more than once. Currently, the COVID sick policy will expire June 30, 2021; therefore, an extension is needed because COVID is still ongoing. Director Henderson inquired about the number of employees that had been vaccinated and if BWWB offered efforts relative to onsite campus vaccination. Mr. Lloyd replied that the results from the voluntary Survey Monkey indicated that

approximately fifty to sixty percent of employees had received the COVID vaccine onsite or somewhere else. Per AGM Fisher, the percentage is in relation to the employees that responded to the survey. However, BWWB was closer to Alabama (30%) in comparison to the entire population. AGM Fisher also stated that the vaccine was offered onsite at the BWWB campus. According to Mr. Lloyd, approximately 100 employees were vaccinated on campus. Director Henderson made a motion to approve agenda item two, and Director Huffman seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous 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 Emergency Pay Policy to allow the option for earned Comp Time by exempt employees to be paid out in salary or in time off; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. AGM Fisher stated that this policy was implemented due to COVID. The BWWB policy allows hourly employees to receive time and a half for working during a state of emergency and salary employees receive 4 hours of comp time for eight hours worked. However, the board is being asked to include an option that allows salary employees the option for earned comp time to be paid out in salary or time off. Director Munchus asked whether the Wage and Labor law allows salary employees to be paid for comp time, which AGM Fisher replied yes (*through regular payroll*). Director Huffman made a motion to approve agenda item three, and Director Henderson seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous 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 a revision to the Vacation Policy for the current year (2021) to waive the mandatory taking of five (5) consecutive days of vacation for 2021 relative to employees with fiduciary or internal control responsibilities due to the impact of COVID-19 on employees using paid time off; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. AGM Fisher stated that certain staff with fiduciary responsibility are required to take off five consecutive days as a level of internal control. However, there are other internal control procedures in process such as dual approval of requisitions, reconciliation, etc. The board waived the policy last year and is being asked to waive the policy this year because of the impact of COVID on employees using their paid time off. Director Henderson made a motion to approve agenda item four, and Director Huffman seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous vote. Said item was moved to the full Board for consideration.

Following, agenda item five requested the Committee to review and to recommend to the Board to approve for employees (and covered spouses) and under 65 retirees (and covered spouses) to be credited as having completed a biometric screening for the purpose of their 2021 health insurance premiums due to the impact of COVID-19 on completing a biometric screening; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. Mr. Lloyd explained that the three-tier premium payment plan for health insurance benefits was implemented several years ago. This structure was setup with incentives to encourage employees to focus on their health with health and wellness programs. Employees completing a biometric screening will receive a credit on the health insurance premiums. However, conducting the onsite biometric screening is not feasible due to COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, the Committee is being asked to give employees the credit for the full year 2021. Director Munchus inquired as to whether the benefit would be extended to retirees, which might reduce the healthcare costs. Mr.

Lloyd stated it is offered to the under65 retirees and active employees because they are under the same Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) Plan, but not to post 65 retirees. The Post 65 retirees are on a different health plan. However, Mr. Lloyd stated he would review the possibility of adding this benefit with the benefits consultant to see if there are advantages for the Post 65 retirees. GM Johnson stated that there is cap on the Post 65 insurance. Mr. Lloyd said the cap on their benefits is currently one million dollars and BWWB was under the cap last year. Director Henderson made a motion to approve agenda item five, and Director Huffman seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous vote. Said item was moved to the full Board for consideration.

Next, agenda item six requested the Committee to the Board to approve revisions to the Education Assistance Policy in Section 7.9 of the Employee Handbook and in Section 7090 in the HR Management Guide as set out in Exhibits “A” and “B” attached hereto for the following purposes (1) add language to clarify that certificate programs may be covered under the Policy, (2) remove provision that employees cannot participate in the program during their Introductory Period, (3) raise the maximum allowable lifetime reimbursement from \$34,000.00 to \$60,000.00, and (4) add language that allows the General Manager to make exceptions to the Policy based on business needs; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. Mr. Lloyd gave an overview on the topic. He stated that this is a good program which pays for tuition, books, etc. Currently, the lifetime cap on the program is \$34,000.00. Their research on approximately eleven colleges revealed that tuition cost has increased to approximately \$55,000.00 for undergraduate programs and \$44,000.00 for the graduate programs. Per Mr. Lloyd, increasing the tuition reimbursement limit for this program would make BWWB more competitive with other employers. In addition, they want to create a reimbursable Certificate Program to help fill future vacancies in the company and make the program available when an employee employment begins as opposing to an employee waiting until after the 180 days introductory period after hire. Director Huffman inquired about the participation level in the Education Assistance Program and whether an employee that participates in the program pays the money back if employee leave company before completing the program. Mr. Lloyd stated that currently there are seven employees (*1.1% per AGM Fisher*) in the program. Also, the company has a two-year reimbursement period; therefore, if an employee leaves the organization early, they are required to pay the money back. Director Munchus asked about the reasons for the drawbacks to employees not participating in the program. Rhonda Lewis, Training Organizational & Safety Officer stated that many of the new hires joining the company already have a degree and the Certificate Program was not covered under the policy, which may have impacted participation. Per AGM Fisher, an increase to the policy reimbursement limit may increase the program enrollment. Director Henderson made a motion to approve agenda item six, and Director Huffman seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by a unanimous vote. Said item was moved to the full Board for consideration.

Following, agenda item seven requested the Committee to hear an update on the Organization’s Succession Planning Program; necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the governmental body. AGM Fisher gave an introduction on said program. She stated the program initially focused on the managerial roles; however, it has been revamped and centered more to employees interested in leadership roles such as Supervisor, Superintendent, etc. Afterwards, she turned the presentation over to Sam Day, Organizational Development Specialist, who presented information to the directors on said topic. Mr. Day discussed building

up the various processes in place for the program. Director Huffman expressed concerns regarding the low percentage of women participants (76% male / 24% female) in the program and the number of women employed at the BWWB. Per Mr. Day, some applicants did not meet the minimum qualifications or if there were multiple applicants in a department, it had to be narrowed down to one of those applicants. Joyce Dupree, Human Resources Assistant Manager stated that the greatest percentage of workers at the BWWB is male. Director Munchus asked Ms. Dupree to generate a report and confirm whether 70% of BWWB workforce are male and 30% female. Per GM Johnson, most of the administrative staff are female based on the BWWB workforce. However, there are not a lot of female applicants. GM Johnson stated that part of the strategic planning will target certain positions to encourage and recruit females for its water treatment plants. Committee Chair Blankenship stated that staff needs to ensure employees are aware of the requirements for the program.

Subsequently, the Committee proceeded to agenda item eight, which addressed new business. Mr. Lloyd introduced his Human Resources Team. Afterwards, Ms. Dupree announced that she generated the requested report and stated that the company's workforce for females is at twenty-four percent.

As there was no further business before the Committee, Director Henderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Director Huffman seconded the motion. Thus, Committee Chair Blankenship adjourned the meeting at 11:13 a.m.

_____/s/_____
Lucien B. Blankenship, Esq.
Director

_____/s/_____
Tereshia Q. Huffman
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

_____/s/_____
Thomas E. Henderson
Director

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