

**MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE WATER WORKS BOARD OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
Wednesday, May 24, 2023**

A Human Resources Committee meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Wednesday, May 24, at 12:30 p.m., at 3600 First Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama.

The following Committee members were present: Directors Mims (Committee Chairman) and Blankenship. Also, present were Directors Burbage and Munchus, who are not Committee members.

Others present were: Michael Johnson, General Manager; Iris Fisher and Derrick Murphy, Assistant General Managers; Cynthia Williams, Board Administrator; Anitra Clark, Corporate Governance Specialist; Vanessa Washington, Executive Assistant; Colandus Mason, Rick Jackson, Rosalind Jones, Jacqueline Hill, Paul Lloyd, Platon Crowell, Marilyn Vertison, LaDedra Ruffin, Jeff Wade, Charles McGee, and David Walker, BWWB Employees; K. Mark Parnell, Parnell Thompson Law, LLC; Byron Perkins, Perkins Law, LLC; Kelvin Howard, Kelvin W. Howard, LLC; Kessia Crenshaw, State of Alabama Attorney General's Office; Bill Todd, and Angela Riley, O2 Ideas; Phillip Moultrie, Valent Group, LLC; and Jeff Drew Alexander Insurance Agency.

Inasmuch as two of the Committee members were present, a quorum was in attendance. Committee Chairman Mims called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m.

Following, General Manager Johnson asked the Committee to approve the agenda and to table agenda item 3, Request Committee to hear an update regarding obtaining a work VISA for a job candidate and to approve the agenda. Director Blankenship made a motion to approve the agenda and to table agenda item 3, and Committee Chairman Mims seconded the motion. Agenda item 3 was tabled, and the agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

Next, General Manager Johnson, asked the Committee to hear Reports of the General Manager. General Manager Johnson recognized Paul Lloyd, Human Resources Manager, to give the Committee a status update. Mr. Lloyd stated he would be discussing the future list of various Human Resources agenda items for Human Resources Committee Meetings. The list was provided to Directors at the Human Resources Committee Meeting held March 22, 2023. First item, Mr. Lloyd stated the Board had already approved to renew/add agreements for the four recruiting firms requested. Second item, review amended Conflict of Interest and Outside Employment sections in the employee handbook and management guide, which is being reviewed by legal. Third item, the Compensation Study Recommendations will be submitted to the Executive Committee in July 2023. Fourth item, Safety Update, will be discussed today by LaDedra Ruffin, Safety Representative. Fifth item, the Learning Management System Implementation Statement of Work will be submitted in August 2023 for Human Resources consideration. Sixth item, the Organizational Assessment/Business Process Improvement Status Update recently started. Mr. Lloyd asked Marilyn Vertison, the project manager of said matter to provide an update. Ms. Vertison stated, regarding the Organizational Assessment, the consultants have begun the project. Ms. Vertison pointed out that the consultants made a presentation to the Executive Management Team and BWWB Managers, which included a review of the project's scope, expectations, key stakeholders, and she stated that there would be onsite meetings with Executive Management team. In addition, there will be departmental meetings with Human Capital Services and

Raftelis Financial Consultants in June 2023. She stated, regarding Business Process Improvement, the project began the second meeting in May 2023. Ascent Group was onsite to perform one-on-one meetings with the Executive Management team and their managers. In order to finalize the detailed work plan, Ascent requested initial documents, handbooks, and other certain documentation from the Executive team. The upcoming activities in June 2023 will include one-on-one meetings and onsite meetings. Seventh item, Review amended Driving Policy in the Employee Handbook and Management Guide. Mr. Lloyd stated the next step would be to review the amended driving policy with the Employee Association and legal, before submitting to a Human Resources Committee for consideration. Next, Mr. Lloyd asked Platon Crowell, Talent Management Officer, to give an update on the Career Fair, which was not on the list of items provided. Mr. Crowell stated Birmingham Water Works sponsored a job fair in March 2022 at the Harbert Center, which produced positive results. This year's job fair is scheduled for August 10-11, 2023, at the Harbert Center. The focused areas are distribution, call center, customer service, and the water treatment plants. Mr. Crowell stated the results from last year's job fair were as follows: over 550 participants attended, 178 second interviews were held, from which the company hired 39 candidates. Currently, 18 are still employed with Birmingham Water Works.

Next, the Committee proceeded to agenda item one, Request Committee to recommend to the Board to approve a Statement of Work (SOW) with Onsite Health Diagnostics to complete the 2023 Biometric Screenings prior to open enrollment at an estimated out-of-pocket cost to the Board of \$36,000.00; and to authorize the General Manager and/or the Assistant General Manager to execute the agreement. Director Blankenship asked whether the item was budgeted. General Manager Johnson responded yes. Committee Chairman Mims asked how the \$36,000.00 cost to the Board compared to past cost for biometric screenings. Mr. Lloyd responded that the cost for last year's biometric screenings was \$22,000.00. He stated the item is being brought to the Committee early, because there were limited onsite testing slots last year. The number of onsite tests has increased by several hundred slots, which is the driving factor for a higher cost this year. Director Blankenship made a motion to recommend said item be moved to the full Board for approval and Committee Chairman Mims seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by unanimous vote.

Following, the Committee proceeded to agenda item two, Request Committee to recommend to the Board to approve a Retirement Gift and Party Policy. Mr. Lloyd stated that staff met with the Employee Association for feedback on said policy. The main issue of the original policy submitted to a prior Committee Meeting was that suggested funds to be provided for onsite retirement expenses was \$1,000.00 and \$500.00 for offsite retirement party expenses. The Employee Association asked that \$1,000.00 be given for expenses related to retirement parties, regardless of whether parties are held onsite or offsite. Mr. Lloyd stated staff reviewed the policy and made the requested change, which allows up to \$1,000.00 for retirement expenses for onsite and offsite retirement parties. In addition, he stated that Birmingham Water Works' funds cannot be spent to purchase alcohol for retirement parties, because of liability. Mr. Lloyd stated there is a notification form that the retiring employee must sign and acknowledge for offsite retirement parties, which states the funds cannot be used to purchase alcohol. Committee Chairman Mims pointed out that alcohol cannot be brought to Board sponsored events. Director Blankenship made a motion to recommend said item be moved to the full Board for approval and Committee Chairman Mims seconded the motion. The agenda item was approved by unanimous vote.

Next, General Manager Johnson commented that agenda item three was tabled.

Following, the Committee proceeded to agenda item four, Request Committee to hear a presentation on Safety Projects / Metrics. Mr. Lloyd acknowledged Ms. Ruffin. Ms. Ruffin gave an overview of the Safety Project List. She stated that some of the projects have been implemented, some are in developmental stage, and some are finished. The projects are divided into three categories: Centralization, Saw Operations Corrective Actions, and the Safety Manual. The first category, Centralization includes Water Treatment Safety Items (*Respirator Fit Testing and Mitigation of Risks -Chlorine Leaks*), Fire Alarm Maintenance, Protective Footwear, and Automated External Defibrillator – AED. Ms. Ruffin stated that Respirator Fit Testing was previously done at the individual facilities by different vendors. In addition, the records of compliance were also being held at those facilities. This year, it was all combined to a central location, which reduced cost. She stated that Carson Filter Plant and Putnam Filter Plant expressed safety concerns to the Safety Department regarding not having dry scrubbers for chlorine leaks. Dry scrubbers are used for chlorine leaks to vacuum and dilute toxic gas before being exposed to the atmosphere. Ms. Ruffin stated that the Safety team recommended the installation of the dry scrubbers at the two plants. Carson Filter Plant is 35% complete, and Putnam Filter Plant is 75% complete. Also, the Safety team recommended automatic shutoffs for the two facilities, in case of a chlorine leak. Ms. Ruffin said Shades Mountain Filter Plant is the only treatment facility with sodium hypochlorite, which is like chlorine. She stated that chlorine is more toxic than sodium hypochlorite and maybe in the future the company will switch. Next, Ms. Ruffin stated that the Fire Alarm Maintenance was transferred to the Security Department because they have experienced personnel, 24- hour monitoring, and can access the alarm panel locations. Committee Chairman Mims asked David Walker, Security Manager, whether he agreed with the transfer of responsibilities. Mr. Walker responded yes.

Next, Ms. Ruffin talked about the Automated External Defibrillators Maintenance. She stated that the maintenance will consists of replacing the expired Automated External Defibrillators. Also, she stated its maintenance program consists of changing the batteries, changing the pads, and training. Next, Ms. Ruffin talked about the Protective Footwear Program. She said currently, employees are reimbursed for purchasing protective footwear; however, the process is being streamlined. The vendor is working on a barcode that will allow employees to go to a storefront or there may be a boot truck that comes to the Birmingham Water Works' facility. The vendor would scan the barcode from the employee, and the barcode would identify what category of shoe is needed, within the company's price point. A general ledger number would also be associated to the barcode/purchase, which would be beneficial to the Accounting Department. Committee Chairman Mims asked who determines the style and type of shoe for the employees. Ms. Ruffin responded that the style and type of shoe is determined by the Safety team. She also indicated that a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) assessment would be performed. The assessment will indicate the best protective footwear for the employee. General Manager Johnson asked Ms. Ruffin to provide information regarding the need for streamlining this process. She stated that there has been non-compliance with employees purchasing/wearing the correct footwear. Also, Ms. Ruffin stated there have been instances of footwear/boots being purchased by employee(s), whereas Birmingham Water Works reimburses the employee for the purchase based on the receipt provided, then the employee would return the footwear back to store to receive a refund from them, too. Birmingham Water Works is trying to prevent said action from continuing.

Next, Ms. Ruffin discussed the second category, the Saw Corrective Action Plan. She stated there has been three known cut-off saw injuries. The cut-off saw is dangerous but is needed by the company. It is used to cut into pipes and concrete. A focus group was selected to assist with identifying corrective actions to reduce the risk of injuries. There were four corrective actions reviewed, which

consists of: cut protection PPE, procedural changes, hands on training and research safer equipment. As it relates to cut protection PPE, Ms. Ruffin stated that the Birmingham Water Works has purchased the safety helmets, hardhats with earmuffs, and face guards. The company has the protective gloves and safety glasses in stock. She stated the company is using the safety pants and vests on a trial basis to ensure it works for Birmingham Water Works' operations. As it relates to procedural changes, a rotary saw has been suggested as a safer saw option, because in some operations, the saw is being used in compromising situations. As it relates to hands on training, there has never been any provided for the employees. She stated that, Steel, the manufacturer of the cut-off saw does not provide hands on training due to liability; however, they provide a video. Ms. Ruffin stated that a company from Minnesota came and provided hands on training in Distribution. She said the team intends to bring the said company back in the fall to provide additional training. As it relates to Research Safer Equipment, Ms. Ruffin stated that the Guillotine Saw does not have a blade. It operates with a diamond wire. The manufacturer came to Birmingham Water Works and gave a demonstration. The guillotine saw is costly, but it will reduce injuries/risks tremendously. The guillotine saw costs approximately \$15,000.00 and the diamond wire used for cutting is approximately \$800.00. Ms. Ruffin stated that said equipment is beneficial to the company compared to the cost of an injury.

Last, Ms. Ruffin discussed the third category, the Safety Manual. She stated she is working on developing an employee guide and safety manual. The safety manual will contain procedures that employees can use as a resource to follow the procedures for various safety topics/issues.

Subsequently, Ms. Ruffin discussed highlights of ongoing and future projects and the Safety Dashboard. Ms. Ruffin announced that a Health, Wellness, and Safety Fair will be held the entire month of June 2023. She stated that the Safety Dashboard contains up-to-date information on the company's injuries and accidents, by departments. Afterwards, Committee Chairman Mims asked whether implementing chlorine safety would alleviate the type of problem that occurred at Shades Mountain Filter Plant. Assistant General Manager Murphy responded yes.

As there was no further business before the Committee, Director Blankenship made a motion to adjourn meeting and Committee Chairman Mims seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald A. Mims  
Committee Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Lucien B. Blankenship  
Director

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Mashonda Taylor  
Director

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