

**MINUTES OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE WATER WORKS BOARD OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
April 20, 2017**

A Communications Committee meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 11:30 a.m., in the principal office of the Board, 3600 First Avenue North, Birmingham, Alabama.

The following Committee Members were present: Deborah Clark and William Muhammad. Other Directors that were present were: Sherry Lewis, Tommy Joe Alexander, Butch Burbage and George Munchus.

Also attending were: Mac Underwood, General Manager; Michael Johnson, Sonny Jones and Darryl Jones, Assistant General Managers; Grace Amison, Executive Assistant to the Board of Directors; Anitra Hendrix, Executive Assistant to the General Manager; Mary Thompson, Parnell Thompson, LLC and Kelvin Howard, Kelvin W. Howard, LLC; Rick Jackson, George Anderson, Barry Williams, Terrell Jones, Board Employees; Dr. Jesse J. Lewis, Dorian Kendrick and Daniel Rumley, The Lewis Group; Heather Sellers, Sinclair Broadcasting; Iva Williams; and Carlos Chaverst.

Inasmuch as much as two of the committee members were present; Chairwoman Clark declared a quorum in attendance and Assistant General Manager Michael Johnson opened with prayer.

The General Manager stated there were six (6) items on the agenda to be reviewed and discussed.

Following, the Committee moved to the first item on the agenda, Request the Committee to Hear a Presentation regarding the 2017 Communication Budget. The General Manager gave an overview of the budget. He indicated the total budget is \$807,600. Director Munchus questioned whether there was an increase in this budget compared to previous years. The General Manager responded there has been no increase in the budget. Director Muhammad questioned whether newspaper advertising for bids is covered in this budget. The General Manager stated the costs for those bids are covered in a separate department. Director Clark stated she would like to see examples of advertisements and she would like to know the amount of money spent on advertising. The General Manager stated that information could be pulled and they can also provide a comparison of budget to actual for 2016. Director Lewis questioned whether the money spent for the Lewis Group and The Birmingham Times are separate amounts. The General Manager responded yes. Director Muhammad stated he would like the amount of money spent on bids. The General Manager stated that information could be compiled. Director Muhammad stated an agency should be placing the newspaper advertisements. Director Clark stated a bid advertisement is different from public relations advertisement. She indicated those advertisements should be kept separate. A discussion then ensued. Director King stated it sounds as if Director Muhammad is indicating the Board could gain leverage regarding advertising. Director Lewis stated some work should be done internally. The General Manager stated staff would gather information.

Following, the Committee moved to the second item on the agenda, Request Committee to Hear a Presentation from Sinclair Broadcasting – Talk of Alabama. The General Manager stated

Sinclair Broadcast Group can assist in helping the Board communicate positive messages regarding BWWB. The General Manager recognized Heather Sellers to make the presentation. Ms. Sellers stated Sinclair Broadcast Group has several television stations and digital components. She gave an overview of the services they can provide. She indicated there is a live show, Talk of Alabama, which covers several different topics. She stated it would be beneficial for BWWB to have a spokesperson on the show. She indicated they can also interview customers. She indicated their television stations include ABC 33/40, the CW, and My 68. Ms. Sellers indicated she can provide the exact times when positive stories would air. She then gave an overview of viewers that can be reached via the various platforms. She indicated they would produce the commercials for the Board. Director Munchus questioned whether Sinclair Broadcast Group is doing this kind of work for another water system. Ms. Sellers responded no. The General Manager stated content could be developed regarding billing, meter reading, repairs, water treatment, etc. Director Lewis questioned how long are the spots. Ms. Sellers responded 15 seconds. Director Lewis questioned whether there are longer spots in the package. Ms. Sellers stated standalone spots are available. Director Lewis stated she would need more clarification in the contract because all of the spots should not be 15 seconds. Ms. Sellers stated some 15 second spots could be substituted for 30 second spots. The General Manager requested Ms. Sellers to provide a summary of the different options of spots that Sinclair Broadcast Group can provide. Director Clark stated it would be helpful to see examples of the spots that would air. She stated it would be helpful for the Committee to see the segment that will be on the show, including a 30 second spot. Director Muhammad stated Rick Jackson, Public Communications Specialist, and Agency 54 should review this information and bring it back to the Committee. Director Clark stated Mr. Jackson and Agency 54 have reviewed this information. Director Alexander stated the City of Irondale used Sinclair Broadcast Group and it was good publicity for them. Rick Jackson stated he feels it's a great idea and it gives the Board an opportunity to tell its own story and get ahead of the story. He feels it's a great package being offered by Sinclair Broadcast Group and he highly recommends that the Board use this service. Dorian Kendrick, Agency 54, stated it is good to use multiple platforms to convey your message. She indicated they did not see the proposed budget for this particular communication. Mr. Jackson stated he has done research regarding on this type of communication. He stated Sinclair Broadcast Group offers a better deal as opposed to the other stations in the area. Director Clark questioned whether Agency 54 has done the type of work in the past that Sinclair Broadcast Group is offering. Ms. Kendrick responded yes. Director Clark stated she would like to see examples of the work Agency 54 has done in the past including the audience, number of people reached, and a timeline. Ms. Kendrick stated she has a creative report available for the Committee.

Following, the Committee moved to the third item on the agenda, Request Committee to Hear a Presentation regarding Annual Communications Plan. Mr. Rick Jackson stated the main focus is to communicate with our customers with a focus on notifying customers regarding our collection process. He stated the plan is to "drown" customers with communications regarding collections for the 60, 90 and 120 days overdue. Director Munchus questioned whether there are really customers that are 60, 90, and 120 days delinquent and their water is still on. The General Manager responded yes. Mr. Jackson indicated there were customers behind in paying the bill prior to the billing system issues. He then showed an example of the reminder letters that will be mailed to customers. He indicated customers are being given the option of making payment arrangements regarding their bill. Mr. Jackson stated communication will also be sent to customers to make them aware to pay attention to their consumption. He stated detailed door hanger tags will be left

at customer's homes. Director Munchus expressed that he feels that there may be some backlash for playing "hard ball" with customers. The General Manager stated customers will be given the opportunity to make payments arrangements. He indicated the collections process has to start back. Director King questioned what was the collection process prior to the billing system issue. The General Manager stated customers were being disconnected that were 45 to 60 days past due. Director Munchus questioned whether these are customers with limited incomes. The General Manager responded no. Chairwoman Lewis stated the company has to get back to the business and it is also the customer's responsibility to contact us if they are having difficulties making payments. Director Alexander stated in the City of Irondale, if a customer did not pay their water bill they were cut off. Director Muhammad questioned what are the hours for customer service. Mr. Jackson stated customer service is available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. because business hours have been extended. A discussion then ensued.

Next, Mr. Jackson stated BWWB TV captured customers' issues to provide educational pieces. He then gave examples of the educational pieces that would air. He referred to one customer's issue that involved a landlord. Director Munchus stated BWWB should go after the landlord. The General Manager stated the customer has to go to their landlord to resolved their issue. Mary Thompson, Board's Attorney, stated that legally the Board cannot go after landlords because the account and contract is with the customer. Director King stated Pine Bluff Water Authority requires the landlord to sign with their tenant. A discussion then ensued. Director Clark stated accounts could be tagged when there have been issues with payments being made on a particular property. Director King questioned how long will it take to get customers back up and delinquent accounts receivable to a reasonable level. The General Manager responded six months. Director King stated he does not want to see customers dig a deeper hole. Chairwoman Lewis stated she agreed and felt that communication via letters, phone calls, etc. to customers will encourage the customers to contact us. Next, Mr. Jackson stated the Learning the Wonderful Works of Water school program will host its year end celebration on May 12, 2017. He then gave an overview of the upcoming programs for the remainder of the year.

Following, Ms. Kendrick gave an update regarding communications handled by Agency 54. She stated their theme is to be more customer service focused and environmentally driven. She then gave an overview of Agency 54 and introduced their staff. She then gave a creative report and overview of events. She then played a video showing prior events. Ms. Kendrick then presented the Committee with a marketing budget. She then recognized Daniel Rumbley. Mr. Rumbley stated the agency is not given free rein to handle public relations and advertising. Chairwoman Lewis stated she has participated on the Communications Committee for a number of years and it has never been a problem for the Board to allow a company to do their job. She indicated if there was a problem, it should have been communicated. The General Manager stated the agency has never been prevented from bringing forth projects. Mr. Rumbley then gave an overview of functional enhancements that could be implemented that includes the customer's interaction with BWWB. He indicated the board's website is clunky and needs to be updated. Chairwoman Lewis questioned what is the difference in the website being proposed opposed to the current one. Ms. Kendrick stated the goal is to redesign the main website to make it more user friendly and place visually engaging content that shares insights into the water system. She stated the new site can be developed to showcase current projects. Director Muhammad questioned whether Agency 54 has the capability to develop a website in-house. Ms. Kendrick responded yes and stated markups are included in the creative report. The General Manager stated a front-end

portal would be developed for payments, another portal for the company and another portal for news. Subsequently, Mr. Rumbley stated there is a need for focus groups to understand how the board's customers engage with it. Director Muhammad stated he agrees with the need for focus groups because he feels the customers have been left out. Ms. Kendrick stated there are also plans to redesign the board's bill. Director Muhammad questioned what Agency 54 is asking of the Board. Ms. Kendrick stated let them get started. Director Muhammad stated he does not see what needs to go to the Board for approval. Ms. Kendrick stated she would like for their 90-day plan to be approved. Chairwoman Lewis questioned the cost for the bill redesign. George Anderson, Board employee, stated he will contact the bill print provider and give them the specifications to obtain the costs. Director Munchus questioned why the design of the bill is being changed. Ms. Kendrick stated it would further explain to customer's how to read their meter and CCFs. Ms. Thompson left the meeting at 1:50 p.m. Chairwoman Lewis stated the account number needs to be more pronounced on the bill. The General Manager recommended the directors bring back their recommended changes to the next board meeting. Chairwoman Lewis questioned Agency 54 what they were asking from the Board. Ms. Kendrick stated their request is to move forward with the proposed marketing budget as well as development of the website. Director Clark requested Agency 54 to provide a timeline for the proposed projects.

Following, the Committee moved to the fourth item on the agenda, Request Committee to Discuss Speakers' Policy. The Committee decided to table this item. Director Clark stated the Board will continue operating under its current policy.

Following, the Committee moved to the fifth item on the agenda, Request Committee to Discuss the H2O Foundation. Director Muhammad stated he would like for this Committee to make a recommendation to the H2O Foundation for them to expand the assistance they provide to customers. He stated currently the foundation assists the elderly and he would like to expand that. He stated he would like to put more money into the foundation. Chairwoman Lewis stated the Board can make recommendations to the foundation; however, it does not control the foundation. Director King questioned how much money the Board gives to the foundation. The General Manager responded \$100,000.00 per year. He then gave an overview of the foundation and its guidelines to provide assistance.

As there was no further business before the Committee, a motion to adjourn the meeting was duly made and seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

/s/
Mac Underwood
General Manager

/s/
Deborah Clark
Second Vice Chairwoman/Second Vice
President

/s/
William Muhammad
Director