

**MINUTES OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE WATER WORKS BOARD OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
July 11, 2017**

A Communications Committee meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Tuesday, July 11, 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, Brett King, Brenda Dickerson, Ronald Mims 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; Rick Jackson and Cynthia Williams, Board Employees; Mary Thompson and Mark Parnell, Parnell Thompson, LLC and Kelvin Howard; Dorian Kendrick, Agency 54; Heather Sellers and Matt Eady, Sinclair Broadcasting; Cynthia Jones Parks, Jones Worley; Rickey White; Dez Wilson; and Chastiti Shepard.

Inasmuch as much as two of the committee members were present; Chairwoman Clark declared a quorum in attendance and the meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m. and Assistant General Manager Sonny Jones opened with prayer.

The General Manager stated there were four (4) 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 an Update regarding Communications for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter and Communication Plans for 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter. Rick Jackson, Board Employee, stated 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter communications centered around collections and in notifying customers that normal billing processes would return. He stated customers were notified via door hangers, IVR calls, radio spots, television interviews and extended business hours to include Saturdays. Director Lewis arrived at the meeting at 11:33 a.m. Mr. Jackson stated a short-term agreement was entered into with Sinclair Broadcast to assist with getting messages out to customers via television. Director Dickerson requested draft Op-Ed articles be sent to all board members prior to them being published. The General Manager stated the Op-Ed story was sent to all board members prior to it being published. Mr. Jackson gave an overview of recent initiatives stating the *Learning the Wonderful Works of Water* school program held its annual poster contest; the *Hydrate the City* program distributes water throughout the BWWB service area via pop up stations; and the *Water Boy* program visits high school athletic programs during the summer months to distribute water and educates regarding the importance of hydration.

Mr. Jackson indicated the school program will be “refreshed”. Director Lewis questioned whether the program will continue to work with 3<sup>rd</sup> graders or go back to working with 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Mr. Jackson stated the program is being reviewed to determine which grade would be best for the program. Director Lewis recommended speaking with school boards to get them involved. Director Munchus stated \$150,000 was put in the budget for communications and the directors

have been waiting on Agency 54 to say what they think that money should be spent on. Director Lewis stated she only recalled someone wanting to spend \$150,000 on billboard advertisement. The General Manager stated Agency 54 and Rick Jackson had a budget; however, during the 2016 budget process the Board recommended adding \$150,000 to the budget but that money was not designated for a specific purpose. Director Muhammad stated Agency 54 is being blocked out from presenting information to this Committee. Director Clark responded Agency 54 is not being blocked out. She stated Agency 54 made a presentation at the previous Committee meeting and indicated she has an upcoming meeting with Agency 54. Director Muhammad expressed his concerns to having Agency 54's presentation made to the Committee and stated they were removed from today's agenda. Director Clark stated Agency 54 was never on the agenda for today's meeting. Director Lewis stated she would meet with the Communications Committee to discuss the direction of the committee.

Following, the Committee moved to the second item on the agenda, Request Committee to Hear an Updated Proposal from Sinclair Broadcast Group. Heather Sellers, Sinclair Broadcasting, gave an overview of last month's advertisements. Matt Eady, Sinclair Broadcast Group, stated they have three television broadcasting stations: CW21, My 68 and ABC 33/40. He stated for the June campaign stations CW 21 and My 68 were used and they were able to reach 80 percent of their viewership. He stated over 900 commercials ran with over 5,000,000 impressions. He indicated they would like to continue the campaign for July and August. Ms. Sellers stated scripts would be provided for the production of educational programming for customers. She stated there are a variety of topics that can be communicated to customers. She then gave an overview of the monthly advertisement schedule. She stated there is a proposal included for the months of July and August. Director Mims questioned is there a reason as to why there are no commercials included for ABC 33/40. Ms. Sellers stated BWWB's customer base watched CW21 and My 68 stations, which would keep advertising costs at a reasonable amount. She indicated there has been some advertisement on ABC 33/40. Director Muhammad questioned what is ABC 33/40's share. Mr. Eady responded around 24 percent of the market. Director Muhammad stated ads were being ran on lower rated stations. Mr. Eady responded the stations are not necessarily lower rated; however, it's based on the time of day the ads are being ran and being cost efficient. Director Clark stated Sinclair Broadcasting was providing an update on what work has been performed and a discussion will be held at a later date regarding future services, if any. Director Muhammad questioned how does the Committee know the advertisement worked. The General Manager stated it would be hard to determine how effective the advertisements were because communication was sent out by various sources.

Following, the Committee moved to the third item on the agenda Request Committee to Hear a Presentation from Jones Worley. The General Manager recognized Cynthia Jones Parks to make the presentation. Ms. Parks stated Jones Worley is a 27-year-old marketing communications firm based in Atlanta, GA. She indicated they have managed brands for transportation, federal, and corporations around the United States. The firm's projects also include work for the Olympics, Coca-Cola and the Center for Disease Control. She stated they have worked on projects locally for MAX, Birmingham Transit Authority and the Birmingham Airport Authority. She then gave an overview of the services the firm provides. Ms. Parks then gave an overview of her findings from research of BWWB. She stated positive stories need to be shared to overcome negative stories. She then gave her recommendations to improve BWWB's brand. She indicated the directors, management and staff are the messengers for the BWWB brand. She stated there can be a

difference of opinion but you must create a building consensus to work through differences. Director Muhammad stated the Board is “extremely” divided and questioned Ms. Parks’ recommendation to get the Board to work together. Ms. Parks stated the Board must have the will to serve the people and make it work. She stated the Board has to be proactive in sharing its story and its behavior must be changed. Ms. Parks then gave an overview of the services Jones Worley can perform for the Board and stated their commitment. She indicated she promises she can transform the Board. Director Munchus questioned whether there is a local Jones Worley office. Ms. Parks responded no and stated she does partner with local firms. Directors Burbage and King left the meeting at 12:50 p.m. Director Munchus stated he really liked Ms. Park’s presentation and thinks she has a grasp on the Board’s needs. Director King returned to the meeting at 12:52 p.m. Ms. Parks stressed actions and words stated by the Board and staff regarding the organization determines the brand. She indicated that a person should respect the brand from which it receives a check. Director Muhammad stated he didn’t agree with that statement and indicated some of the directors were appointed by the Birmingham City Council and they feel they represent the citizens of Birmingham and not the Board. Director Alexander stated he represents all citizens. Ms. Parks questioned whether the directors can represent the Board and the citizens at the same time. Director Muhammad responded he could not. Ms. Parks stated she felt the Board could work together and indicated it would be in the best interest of the people. Director Muhammad questioned whether he should go along with a Board that is not transparent because he’s getting \$1,000 a month. Ms. Parks stated she doesn’t disagree with being transparent; however, the question is how does the Board do that without destroying the brand. Director Muhammad indicated the Board needs “work”. A discussion then ensued. Director Muhammad then questioned Ms. Parks whether she had worked with a client that did not respect her marketing plans and the staff determined how Public Relations would be handled. Ms. Parks stated traditionally she has been hired by executive management and has rarely been hired by a board. She indicated she has been hired by the person running the agency and never reported to the board. Director Munchus responded that this board operates a little different. Ms. Parks indicated she has reported to the person responsible for executing the plan, which is the director of the agency. Director Muhammad questioned whether the director comes up with the plan or does Ms. Parks develop the plan. Ms. Parks stated she would have an immersion session with senior staff, the board and front-line employees. She indicated the front-line employees have a wealth of information and know what the customers thing, the Board does not know that information. She indicated once that information is gathered a strategic plan is then created. Ms. Parks thanked the Committee for inviting her to speak and stated, if chosen, she would discuss with staff and come up with a plan that would benefit the Board. Director Munchus stated he wanted Ms. Parks to know what she was getting herself into. He stated there is very vicious press that is anti-Birmingham and particularly anti-black Birmingham. He stated Ms. Parks will have her work cut out for her.

Following, the General Manager stated the Payment Center is open on Saturdays through July and extended hours will continue.

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 1:12 p.m.

/s/  
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Mac Underwood  
General Manager

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

/s/  
\_\_\_\_\_  
William Muhammad  
Director