

**Minutes of
Communications Committee Meeting
of The Water Works Board
of The City Of Birmingham
August 18, 2022**

A Communications Committee Meeting of the directors of The Water Works Board of the City of Birmingham was held on Thursday, August 18, 2022, at 11:30 a.m. at the Birmingham Water Works Board, 3600 First Avenue North – Training Room, to discuss communication issues. The Public has the option to listen by phone by calling (888) 398-2342 Code: 5608731.

The following Committee members were present via roll call: Tereshia Q. Huffman (Chair), Lucien Blankenship and Tom Henderson. Director George Munchus was also present.

Others present were: Michael Johnson, General Manager; Jeffrey Thompson, Iris Fisher and Derrick Murphy Assistant General Managers; Tammy Wilson, Executive Assistant to Derrick Murphy and Jeffrey Thompson; Cynthia Williams, Board Administrator; Anitra Hendrix, Corporate Governance Specialist; Colandus Mason, Information Technology Manager; Rick Jackson, Public Relations Manager; Valecia Dulaney, Communications Coordinator; Tim Garrett, IT/Systems Support; David Walker, Security Manager; Mark Parnell, Parnell Thompson, LLC; Kelvin Howard, Kelvin Howard, LLC; Byron Perkins, Byron Perkins Law; Jeff Wade and Charles McGee, Electrical and Mechanical Shop; Tommy Palladino and Martha Bozeman, Agency 54; Bill Todd, Sherry Stewart, Angela Riley, Howard Pearlstein and Shekeydrah Robinson, O2ideas; John Montgomery, Aaron Gresham, Ashley Foster and Nicky Wenn, Big Communications; Lindsey McAdory, Jr., CBG Strategies.

Committee chair, Tereshia Huffman, called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m. Director Blankenship was not present when the meeting was called to order, however he joined the meeting at 11:35 a.m. A roll call confirmed all Committee members were present, so there was a quorum in attendance. Colandus Mason opened the meeting with prayer.

Following, Committee chair, Huffman asked to amend the agenda to move Item 1.4 to Item 1.1 on the agenda. A motion was made and seconded and the agenda for August 18, 2022, was unanimously approved as amended.

Next, there were no Minutes for Approval. Director Munchus asked if Requests For Proposals (RFP) were issued through purchasing for the firms presenting today. General Manager Johnson responded that there were no formal RFPs issued and RFPs were not required. There was no Unfinished Business.

Following, under New Business, General Manager, Michael Johnson asked the Committee to hear presentations on Public Relations and Communications from four communication firms. Director Huffman asked the presenters to keep their presentations under 10 minutes. Questions would follow each presenter. Martha Bozeman, President of Agency 54, presented information on their firm, which was established in 1954; and is the oldest African American owned communication firm in the country. Agency 54 was founded by Dr. Jesse Lewis, Sr. Ms. Bozeman

gave an overview of their staff, clients, and core services. Past videos Agency 54 has produced for Birmingham Water Works (BWW) were shown to the committee. Tommy Palladino, Vice-President, and currently the Account Manager for BWW, gave an overview of their invoicing and strategies. Director Henderson asked if Agency 54 was fully staffed and if they would be able to handle a crisis if one arose. Ms. Bozeman responded that they are growing, adding they have contractors that they can access also. Ms. Bozeman stated they are at capacity in staff currently. Director Huffman asked how many clients Agency 54 currently provides services for. Ms. Bozeman responded that Agency 54 provides services to 12 clients and another 12 are project based. Director Blankenship asked about strategies and forecasting. Mr. Palladino stated Agency 54 participated in BWW's budget process along with the Strategic Plan. Mr. Palladino said Agency 54 would like to produce some Hollywood style videos as well, which may increase costs. Rick Jackson asked about their approach for reputation repair. Ms. Bozeman stated they owned areas where there are deficits and Agency 54 wants to create positive stories in situations such as reputation repair. Mr. Palladino stated he would add transparency in regard to reputation repair because that is what the public wants.

Next, Bill Todd, with O2ideas, introduced his team. Mr. Todd said O2ideas is interested in the mission and product of BWW. O2ideas was founded in 1967. Mr. Todd mentioned a partial list of O2ideas clients, which included Honda, BBVA, Brasfield & Gorrie, Samford University and The University of Alabama at Birmingham. Mr. Todd talked about their utility and crisis management experience. Mr. Todd shared a video with the meeting body. Director Henderson asked if O2ideas is fully staffed. Mr. Todd responded that they are fully staffed and capable of handling BWW's needs. Director Henderson asked if O2ideas had the training to deal with the media. Mr. Todd responded that O2ideas would be at the side of BWW and is experienced in all aspects of media relations. Director Blankenship asked what the Public Relations (PR) needs of BWW are. Mr. Todd responded that it is important to build proactive and reactive capabilities. Mr. Todd also stated there are a number of potential pitfalls and O2ideas is prepared to handle these. Mr. Todd says a big part of the job is to be able to relate and they are an inclusive team. Mr. Todd also said O2ideas provides detailed billing statements for their clients. Mr. Todd described O2ideas' overall strategy in response to Director Blankenship's question. Director Huffman asked what percentage of O2ideas' strategy includes community engagement. Angela Riley spoke on outreach and how they plug into events and communities to engage the public. Rick Jackson asked about resources to execute strategies presented. Mr. Todd responded that BWW would have their full commitment. Mr. Jackson asked about a budget. Mr. Todd responded it would be in line with what BWW is currently paying unless there are very extenuating circumstances, such as full-time staffing.

Following, John Montgomery, with BIG Communications presented information on their firm. Mr. Montgomery introduced his team. A video was played for the meeting body. BIG employs 56 people and they consider themselves a modern and creative PR firm that solves problems. BIG does everything relating to media and visual content, as well as videos, in-house. Ashley Foster talked about knowing the barriers BWW faces and being able to tell a positive story. BIG also is versed in crisis communication, Ms. Foster stated. In terms of content capabilities and services BIG would work closely with the BWW PR team. The biggest selling point of BIG is how they work, which is collaborative when they can embed with their clients to better understand the challenges and opportunities that produce solutions and results. BIG's catch phrase is "Win from Within". Aaron Gresham talked about some of their clients, such as Alabama Power

Company (APCO), where they partnered with the Economic Development Team. A video in conjunction with this effort was shown. BIG also worked with APCO on the winter high bill campaign and getting ahead of it with messaging. A short video piece was shown to the Committee in conjunction with the campaign. A couple of other pre-roll demographic videos and animations were shown to the Committee, which BIG had produced. BIG partnered with Jefferson County and surrounding counties, along with Birmingham's mayor, to develop a brand for recruitment and retention, in which a television spot was produced. Director Henderson asked if BIG would provide in-person media training for the BWW PR team. Ms. Foster said BIG was well versed in training in this area and working closely with their client's teams. Director Henderson said he noticed some open positions posted on BIG's website and asked if they are well-staffed. Mr. Montgomery responded that BIG is always looking for new talent. Director Blankenship asked about the budget. Aaron Gresham responded that their pricing would fit into the current retainer BWW is paying. Director Huffman asked how much of BIG's strategy is community driven. Ms. Foster stated BIG conducts a discovery session to determine what the key pillars for a client actually are. Mr. Jackson asked if there is diversity on BIG's staff. Ms. Wenn responded that BIG has a majority of female employees. The number of BIG's staff totals 52 to 56.

Next, Lindsey McAdory, Jr., with CBG Strategies presented information on their firm. Mr. McAdory gave an overview and background on CBG Strategies. CBG is data driven, they dissolve the space between their client and those their clients serve, they have an extensive network of elected officials and community leaders, and coalition building through community engagement. Mr. McAdory talked about CBG's impact and approach to public relations. Mr. McAdory stated his company believed in being proactive instead of reactive. Expectations from CBG Strategies would include a strategy director, a digital strategist, communications strategist, project manager, graphic manager, production team, engagement plans, monthly impact reports, bi-weekly project reports, monthly communications briefs, and broad situational awareness. Director Henderson asked if CBG is fully staffed. Mr. McAdory responded that his firm is fully staffed, at 9 people. Director Henderson asked about media training internally for BWW. Mr. McAdory stated CBG partners with entities who can help in this area. Director Blankenship asked what CBG's initial approach would be. Mr. McAdory stated they would collect data for about 45 days because you cannot measure success unless you track. Mr. McAdory stated he believed the number one issue for BWW is trust within communities. CBG has experience in this area and they do the leg work to get to the heartbeat of issues. Director Huffman asked how much of a percentage of CBG's business is community-driven. Mr. McAdory stated his heart is in making our region better. Mr. Jackson asked about diversity. CBG worked with the Alabama Department of Health during COVID-19 and CBG incorporates all groups according to Mr. McAdory.

As there was no further business before the Committee, a motion was made and seconded and the Committee adjourned at 1:14 p.m.

/S/

Michael Johnson
General Manager

/S/

Tereshia Q. Huffman
Second Vice-Chairwoman

/S/

Lucien Blankenship
Director

/S/

Tom Henderson
Director