



**Town of Sullivan's Island, South Carolina**  
**Water and Sewer Committee of Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, May 18, 2023**

**1. Call to Order & Freedom of Information Act Requirements:**

The Water and Sewer Committee of Council met at 8:45 a.m. on May 18, 2023 at Town Hall, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied. Present were Council Committee members Bachman Smith, IV (Chair), and Gary Visser. Staff members present were Water & Sewer Manager Greg Gress, Andy Benke, Jason Blanton, Charles Drayton, Joe Henderson, Bridget Welch, and Max Wurthmann. There were no members of the public and no members of the media present.

Chair Bachman Smith called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m., and stated the press and public were duly notified pursuant to State Law.

**2. Communications/Additional Items from WWTF Manager, Greg Gress**

- a. Construction updates as to the Lift Stations and WWTP

Greg Gress stated they are still in permitting for the rip-rap at Lift Station 1 and are waiting on OCRM. The \$250 application fee was paid yesterday.

**3. Discussion/Motions:**

- a. Approval of Minutes from the April 27, 2023, Committee Meeting

**Motion was made by Mr. Visser, seconded by Chair Smith, to approve the Water and Sewer Minutes from April 27, 2023 as submitted, passed unanimously.**

- b. FY 2024 Budget Overview

There have been no changes to the Budget since second reading, other than the rate increase that will likely be 3.7%

- c. Rates discussion and consideration of a 4<sup>th</sup> tier

There was discussion about the process for irrigation systems. Mr. Gress confirmed there is no impact fee and the cost of installation for residents is the construction fees for the department. A fourth tier would mainly be for irrigation and could possibly encourage users to be more responsible with their water usage. Currently, the average irrigation rate per customer is around 25,000 gallons, according to the Raftelis report presented the week prior. Mr. Gress stated one possibility is to set up a separate tier in the system only for irrigation, matching the domestic one, two, and three tiers and add the fourth tier to irrigation only. This would prevent users from moving into the fourth tier due to a leak and would only impact those with irrigation meters.

Town Administrator Andy Benke agreed a fourth tier would probably encourage high consumption users to conserve water. It could also help with alleviating what many consumers consider high water rates (comparatively). Chair Smith agreed and stated this could help generate revenue, which could possibly fund buying more water capacity from CWS in the future, which is also something Raftelis mentioned in their presentation. Chair Smith confirmed that adding a fourth tier would be a resolution and not an ordinance change. He also stated they need to keep the commercial district in mind when making changes that could impact their bills. Mr. Gress spoke about how the rates are determined and mentioned some historic homes have second structures built but are only on one meter, that impacts the usage. He suggested having these situations designated as multi-family units and installing two separate meters. Chair Smith agreed but said this would need to be a conversation for all of Council. As for the fourth tier, the Committee agreed the conversation should continue with the next Committee. Chair Smith stated these items should be addressed in the near future and the Committee can decide what needs to be recommended to Council.

Mr. Gress will ask Raftelis to run numbers for the different alternatives and report back to the Committee with the data to better inform them of their decision. Comptroller Jason Blanton voiced his support for what the Committee is considering.

#### **4. Review of Active and Pending Projects:**

- a. Wastewater Treatment Plant Retrofit
  - i. Screening of the WWTP
- b. CWS contract revisions
- c. Written Cost Recovery Program
- d. Private Sewer Lateral Policy for I&I Reduction
- e. Pump/Lift Stations flood proofing project
  - i. Protection using rip-rap
  - ii. Aesthetic changes/considerations
- f. W & S Ordinance clean-up
- g. Update Capital Improvement Plan
- h. Updated rate study

Mr. Gress reminded the Committee that the FY 2023-2027 CIP plan has not been approved yet and is only waiting on funding for going to AMI meters, or “fixed-based meter reading.” Raftelis gave options of self-funding, an SRF loan, or using part of the capital to fund it. AMI meter

readings mean readings would be done hourly and sent to a database that residents have access to. Users would also be notified if their usage moves beyond the set parameters. It would cost around \$700,000 to install new meters and implement the system. Mt. Pleasant and Isle of Palms have both switched to these plans. Chair Smith requested that it be on the June agenda to discuss.

**5. Set the date for the next W&S Committee Meeting**

- a. The next Sullivan's Island W&S Committee meeting will (tentatively) be held on Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 8:45 a.m.

Mr. Gress thanked Chair Smith for his service.

**6. Adjourn**

**Motion was made by Mr. Visser, seconded by Chair Smith, to adjourn the Water and Sewer Committee meeting at 9:27 a.m., carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Bridget Welch