

# **PORT LABELLE UTILITY SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**March 10, 2008**

## **1) Call Meeting to Order**

Acting Chairman, Ricky Bass called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on March 10, 2008 at the Board of County Commissioners Chambers, first floor, Hendry County Administrative Building, LaBelle, Florida. Members present were: Ricky Bass, Han Mouthaan and Warren Grant. In the absence of Chairman George Davis and Vice Chair Paul Samerdyke, Ricky Bass introduced Warren Grant, the newest appointed board member to the audience and Advisory Board members. Others in attendance were: Shane Parker, Hendry County Engineer, Roger Greer, PLUS Utility Director; Linda Murray, PLUS Assistant; John Capece, Southern DataStream, PLUS Advisory Board Facilitator; Ron Zimmerly, Hendry County Director of Grants and Special Projects and Kevin Thomas, CHL Holdings, Inc. Requests were made on behalf of Shane Parker and Ron Zimmerly to alter the Agenda sequencing, due to prior engagements, meetings and scheduled bid openings.

## **2) Permits & Planning**

Shane Parker addressed the board to provide an update on West Hendry water service planning. Shane reported that county staff would meet on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 to consider alternatives, noting that PLUS available capacity is still needed for West Hendry. Shane hopes to have more detailed information by the next PLUS board meeting. Shane answered questions from the board regarding water usage, time restraints and permits regarding the West Hendry area.

John Capece noted to the board he had supplied a report outlining the plan regarding West Hendry and PLUS. Even with aggressive Port LaBelle population growth projections, PLUS still has sufficient water treatment plant capacity to provide water, assuming successful water use permit application process. In addition to PLUS demands, we have capacity to serve an additional 500 units within the City of Labelle as well as at least 850 units in West Hendry until the expected completion date of a new City of LaBelle water treatment plant. Demand should be manageable as long as we do not commit to permanent service for these additional areas.

If PLUS intends to serve West Hendry then a letter of request from the county will need to be included in the consumptive use permit (CUP) application response to the Water Management District. John noted that the response on the Water Use Permit should be submitted by Friday, March 14. John further stated that the City of Labelle would have to submit a formal supplemental service request to Hendry County for PLUS to include its potential short-term water needs in our CUP application.

John emphasized the need to show realistic water demand growth for the next decade that levels out at 1.2 mgd, explaining that growing our demand too quickly could impose a serious economic penalty on Port LaBelle by compelling the SFWMD to redirect PLUS to a deeper aquifer. Shane Parker noted to John Capece that additional information regarding West Hendry hopefully would be provided by Friday.

### 3) Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Ron Zimmerly informed the board that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the water plant & Banyan Village projects would be held on March 24 beginning 2:00 p.m. at the new water plant where a tent will be set up. The board was provided a list of invitation recipients. Glades County BOCC members will receive hand delivered invitations today. Mr. Wayne O'Neal, County Administrator, has agreed to MC the event and will tell the attendees about the history and planning of PLUS. Congressman Mahoney has the event on his calendar to attend if his Congressional duties in Washington allow.

The ceremony will include recognition for Harold Reecer. A proclamation resolution will be considered at the Hendry County BOCC meeting on Tuesday, March 11. A commemorative plaque for Harold's service has been ordered and will be presented at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

John Capece suggested the possibility of distributing a final newsletter to all PLB lot owners announcing the ceremony and introducing the "new era" of PLUS, having completed all aspects of the utility's original mandate. Another possibility is to provide ceremony information for customers only, through the monthly billings notices. John will be adding to the website an archive of Mr. Reecer's 42 newsletters published since 1996.

### 4) Review of Minutes from the January 14, 2008 Meeting.

Motion to accept the minutes as presented for the January 14, 2008 meeting was made by Han Mouthaan and seconded by Warren Grant. Motion carried unanimously.

### 5) Director's Report

Roger Greer reported that since our last meeting we have had little or no change in water demand. Our February meter sets were:

New Meter Requests    2        Meter Sets    3        Outstanding    68

The water plant usage for February 2008 was:

	10,389,300 gallons	Last Year	9,948,000
Average	358,251 gallons per day	Last Year	355,285
Max	645,900 gallons	Last Year	413,400

Wastewater treated for February 2008 was:

	9,687,000 gallons	Last Year	5,656,000
Average	434,000 gallons	Last Year	202,000
Max	458,000 gallons	Last Year	219,000

Roger reported that the extra water plant water capacity used in February was due to the line flushing and the bacteriological testing of the Banyan Village lines. The addition wastewater treated is from the water plant concentrate noting the current reject rate is between 15- 20%. John Capece noted to the board that once we achieve an stable operating efficiency, we will need to do another evaluation on the concentrate water quality in order to make these data available for potential reject water users.

John Capece explained the final draft letter that was issued to Cliff Miller. The letter was limited to the areas that Larry Hilton, Glades County Planner, had emphasized in his request. The letter stated that PLUS does recognize the project location as being within our service area and the utility does seek to serve the development. The letter further states that PLUS will require the developer to cover all costs of providing service to the development and that we are not waiving any conditions listed in the prior letters.

Han Mouthaan provided the board with a copy of the PLUS report he submitted to the Glades County BOCC; noting that several newspapers printed the report. This article was informative for the general public.

John Capece reported that a letter had been sent to Craig A Smith & Associated regarding the error expense recovery. John Capece requested a copy of the letter for review by the board. This item was tabled until the next meeting.

## **6) Water Consumption Data**

John Capece provided the graphical versions of the monthly water and wastewater processing data. John explained the graphs and history for Warren Grant, newest board member noting the spike of output of 600,000 for charging up the Banyan lines for testing. John noted that we are well below the average consumption rate for the number of homes and credited the effectiveness of the water restrictions currently in place.

John discussed the wastewater spike since July 2007. This represents 3 components: wastewater from the homes, infiltrated water from storm water getting into our sewer system, and the reject stream (concentrate from water plant). We will need to look at how to deal with our limited waste water treatment plant capacities. Our first step is re-directing our concentrate stream to the infiltration ponds upon approval/permission from DEP. Eliminating this waste stream will provide capacity for future growth. John discussed the reject water, salts and contaminants that affects the suitability of our reject water for re-use. Agricultural users for re-use water have contacted John for discussions of PLUS providing service to them.

Roger Greer commissioned a water quality evaluation of PLUS finished water. John reported that the results are posted to our web site along with statistics from other utilities; comparing our water with New York City water, which is considered among the best water in the nation. We compared quite favorably to their water; we are providing a very good product to our customers.

John's university students are continuing their work to test and report on methods for chlorine removal to improve usability of PLUS tap water by customers. Results of this work are on the website. PLUS meeting minutes, agendas, general information and data are all on the web as are items such as an archived email tool to communicate with county administrative staff and PLUS board members. Contents of the site are easily found using search engines.

## **7) Permit & Planning**

Roger Greer reported that he completed the DEP permit application for concentrate water bypass of the waste water treatment plant and submitted it to Danny Nelson, Tetra Tech, Inc. for his final review and professional engineering seal. Other issues to be addressed with DEP include producing a capacity analysis report. Roger noted that we are requesting to improve our capacity rating, not adding infrastructure to the plant. Danny Nelson is going to discuss this issue with Ron Walters of DEP.

John discussed the other application that is in progress - the SFWMD water use permit application. He is processing data from 2007; population issues and possible incorporating the West Hendry area if necessary to complete the changes for the application submission on Friday, March 14, 2008. Any later changes would require a revision request.

### **8) Rate Study**

Roger Greer reported that a meeting for the rate study was held with Tetra Tech, Inc. One of the items addressed was the fact that the rates had been adjusted in regards to the USDA grant and loan bond (PLUS fee changes were made in May 2007). This additional information was taken back with Tetra Tech's staff members and Roger is awaiting their response.

John discussed the second level of the rate study - capital costs (connection fees, waste water plant, transmission lines, pipe networks, etc.) in regards to revising connection fees to reflect current infrastructure costs and sufficiency of the present rates to cover future capital improvements.

### **9) Banyan Pipeline & Network Construction Project**

Roger Greer reported in Danny Nelson's absence that all the bacteriological tests have been completed and all passed. The tests are valid for 30 days. The permits should be delivered to DEP asking that the line be put into service. Roger noted a final walk-through is scheduled on March 19.

John Capece noted that the chlorine injection levels have been reduced at the new plant. The PLUS office has received no complaints since the adjustments. John Capece explained he has a graduate student working on a study and information regarding educating the general public & customers to usage and alternative products for home use. An informative pamphlet will be a product of the study.

### **10) Other Issues**

Han Mouthaan, board member questioned the continued service for PLUS and Tetra Techs, Inc. continued service to PLUS upon completion of the two capital projects. Roger Greer informed the board that they are considered as "consulting engineers" to the utility. They are hired by need. John Capece explained the process and the "request for qualification" processes.

Han Mouthaan, board member requested that "draft" minutes be delivered sooner for review and input. John Capece explained the nature of the delays. Draft minutes will be sent to board members after transcription by the secretary.

### **11) Schedule Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting will be Monday, May 12 at 1:00 p.m. The board will continue with the scheduling of 60 days for the next few meetings at this time

### **12) Adjourn**

Ricky Bass, Acting Chair adjourned the meeting.