

**PORT LABELLE UTILITY SYSTEM
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

June 25, 2009

**Hendry County Board of County Commissioners Chambers
25 E. Hickpochee Avenue
LaBelle, FL 33035
2:00 P.M.**

Board Members Present:

George Davis, Chairman
Paul Samerdyke
Warren Grant
Richard Bass

Board Members Absent:

Han Mouthaan

Other Attendees Present:

Roger Greer, PLUS Director
Yvonne Cayce, PLUS Staff Assistant

John Capece, PLUS Advisory Board Facilitator
Danny Nelson, Tetra- Tech

1) Call to Order

George Davis, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, 2009.

2) Review of Minutes

Copies of the March 31, 2009 minutes were distributed and reviewed by members. Motion to accept was made by Paul Samerdyke and seconded by Ricky Bass. Motion carried unanimously.

3) Banyan Special Assessment Modification – John Capece

John Capece spoke in behalf of Mark Lapp and Jennifer Davis concerning the Banyan special assessment modification. He stated that the estimate was coming in at approximately \$200.00 more than the prior assessment of \$1640.00 per lot bringing the amount to approximately \$1836.00 per residential lot. This assessment is for delivery of the water lines to the property making water available to each lot in Banyan Village. The connection fees will be additional to the assessments. Property owners who elect not to pay the lump sum of \$1836.00 will have the total amount distributed over twenty years included on their annual tax assessments.

Currently, there is only one home under construction in Banyan Village. However, there have been large governmental and non-governmental entities that are looking for opportunities where there are a large number of lots with utility access already provided. When stimulus funds come and there's a ready-to-go project, we may be in a position to be considered. One of the things being worked on right now is the inland port, and Hendry County is a serious contender. It looks like it will come down to the Governor's decision between Palm Beach County and, probably, Hendry County. Many environmental groups are in favor of the Hendry County location at Airglades. Their reservation, however, is the sprawl that would accompany such a facility. They are, therefore, looking for sprawl limiting opportunities, and Port LaBelle, specifically Banyan Village, offers such an opportunity because these lots are already platted with utilities in place.

4) Director's Report – Roger Greer

Roger presented to the Board the following statistics:

Water Plant Usage for May = 11,873,700 gallons	This Time Last Year = 12,337,675 gallons
Average Per day = 383,022 gallons	This Time Last Year = 397,989 gallons
Max. Per day = 462,700 gallons	This Time Last Year = 531,300 gallons

Wastewater Treated for May = 6,435,000 gallons	This Time Last Year = 9,560,000 gallons
Average Per day = 208,000 gallons	This Time Last Year = 308,000 gallons
Max. Per day = 425,000 gallons	This Time Last Year = 373,000 gallons

Jan. - Mar: Meter Sets = 5 New Requests = 2 Outstanding = 64

Roger stated that there's very little construction going on. With the current economic situation, people are just not building at this time. As for the new system at the water plant, all is going great. It is easy to operate the system, the water is very good, and the customers are happy.

5) Water Consumption Data – John Capece

John related that he had recently spoken to Mayor Puletti of LaBelle about water issues. John took the opportunity to state to the Mayor that Port LaBelle Utility had offered to apply for additional water from the Water Management District to perhaps provide water to the City of LaBelle. The City, however, requested that this not be included in our application. More relevant, he added, is that the Public Works Department of the City requested a letter from our utility to state that we could not provide water. The letter was provided stating we could not allocate water to them, given that the PLUS water use permit from SFWMD did not allocate sufficient raw water supply for this or other purposes. In its initial Consumptive Use Permit request to SFWMD, PLUS did request additional supply to supplement the City of LaBelle, but that aspect of the request was later removed since the City of LaBelle declined to provide a letter that water supplemental water supply from PLUS would be needed by the City.

John discussed the water consumption data graph with the Board. April showed an increase in water production from the water plant; however, Roger Greer stated that several leaks in the Wild Goose Circle area had contributed to this increase. As for the wastewater plant, there was a high peak in May which was most likely an artifact of the heavy rains during that month bringing the water table up. Typically each summer we get additional infiltration in the system from storm water.

6) 2009-10 Budget – Roger Greer

In reviewing the proposed budget handouts to the Board, Roger stated that the budget has been and continues to be cut as much as possible. There are no salary raises included in the budget again this year, and capital improvements will be given only by special permission. One operator left the Utility and went to work for the City of LaBelle, thus, the budget was cut tremendously by not hiring to fill that position. Roger directed the Board's attention to particular budget line items for discussion. Costs and regulations associated with sludge hauling were discussed. Although it's felt that we're being charged fairly, alternatives to disposal will be considered to lessen the amount that's being budgeted each year.

There are no improvements this year on budget, and the only increase in dollar amount is the line item Other Contract Services. Roger said that last year when doing the budget, we were looking at hiring an engineer to do work to relieve John Capece. That did not happen, so the money was put back into the budget. It, therefore, looks like an increase, but it is not.

Other budget line items were discussed and an error was noted concerning the projected amount for insurance. Roger will get that corrected. The PLUS budget was reviewed by the County Budget Director, Jennifer Davis, and she expressed her approval. In the past our expenses were a little more than our revenues, so at this time we are actually making a little more than we are spending.

Ricky Bass made a recommendation to endorse the budget with modification to the insurance line and it was seconded by Paul Samerdyke.

7) Water Use Permit – John Capece

The application has been submitted to SFWMD. They are reviewing it and have questions about computer models, and we are working on that with them.

8) Replacement Well Construction – Roger Greer, Danny Nelson

The well has been sunk and is giving us the water capacity that we need. Currently the well house is being built around it, and it should be online in about a month. The diameter is 16 inches and as for pump capacity, it is preferred that each well be capable to run all three trains. Currently, we do not need this, but to have this capability in the future, we would have to replace the pumps that we have now. Replacement will cost around \$15,000 each. Therefore, we will connect the system so that each well will run two trains with the pumps having the capability of pumping 750 gallons per minute.

9) Other Issues

Ricky Bass asked about profits for the utility. Roger answered that we are making money and are gaining interest on the money in the bank. It is not a lot of money, but we continue to lessen our expenses and are gaining with revenues. Also, with the rate study, a small increase in rates has been suggested, as well as, some readjusting as to allocation. We don't want to raise rates now with the economic situation as it is, and will endeavor to make do with what we have.

10) Schedule Next Meeting & Adjourn

Roger Greer said that the next meeting will be held sometime before the end of September 2009. When the specific date and time are determined, the Board Members and associates will be notified.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman, George Davis at 2:53 p.m.