

**PORT LABELLE UTILITY SYSTEM  
ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

**December 09, 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  
Han Mouthaan  
Warren Grant  
Paul Samerdyke

**Board Members Absent:**

Richard Bass

**Other Attendees Present:**

Roger Greer, PLUS Director  
Yvonne Cayce, PLUS Staff Assistant

John Capece, PLUS Advisory Board Facilitator

**1) Call to Order**

George Davis, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 09, 2009.

**2) Review of Minutes**

Copies of the September 21, 2009 minutes were distributed and reviewed by members. Motion to accept was made by Han Mouthaan and seconded by Paul Samerdyke. Motion carried.

**3) Director's Report – Roger Greer**

Roger Greer stated that everything was status quo and there has been no new growth. He believes that there is water loss due to leaks in the system. We are losing approximately 80,000 gallons per day according to his calculations. The leaks are often discovered by the Utility personnel, and sometimes the leaks are called in by a customer. The marina reported a leak, which was thought to be the source of the loss. However, after the repair, the water loss was not reduced by much at all. PLUS personnel searched diligently and systematically each unit looking for the loss, but nothing substantially was found. Banyan Village was also checked and ruled out.

John Capece suggested that useful modifications to our piping system may improve the situation with meters being installed at strategic locations.

Roger added that this problem could be due to meter error, rather than actual water loss. One meter, for example, registering water coming back from Banyan Village had some debris with small rocks. This could have an effect on the accuracy of the meter. A call has been made to have this meter, and others, checked out to insure accuracy. Airglades has an ultrasonic meter and it seems to be very accurate. We are, therefore, considering the installation of an ultrasonic meter for Banyan Village. This will let us know just what we have coming back and a true usage can be calculated. In the meantime, we will continue to search for leaks and, hopefully, find the source of the water loss.

#### **4) Water Consumption Data – John Capece**

John Capece invited Board Members to review the graphs in the handouts reflecting water plant and wastewater plant data. He related that since the last meeting there has been just one meter connection, and that was in Banyan Village. In reviewing the consumption rate, the last couple of months has been much greater than in the same period last year. Peak usage has stayed very high since September 2009, and Roger believes that there is a leak somewhere in the system. It is significant since we are 60% above last year, but are still running within our allocation and well below our plant capacity. The water storage tank is full with no related problems. As for wastewater, the graph reflects that we're processing 46% of the water that we're sending out. Summer rains tend to push that average up; however, the lower average may be a result of the water being lost out of the system.

#### **5) Banyan Special Assessment Modification – John Capece**

Mark Lapp asked that we take a closer look at lots in Banyan. We went through each of the Banyan Village units and re-verified our database, comparing it to that of the Property Appraiser to insure that every parcel is included. We found that the databases are total mirrors of each other relative to the number of lots. In comparing the contractor's notebooks and drawings with our database, there are 12 residential lots that do not have potable water access. These lots are basically in stretches that are wet and are owned by CHL. These lots have no roads and no water, so cannot be built on. They were, therefore, eliminated from the special assessment calculation procedure, which resulted in a very minor change. We are also examining units 1-9 reconciling the database.

Board member, Han Mouthaan, asked if the CDD purchased lots. John stated that he believes the CDD owns about 200 lots. Roger stated that if the lots had escrow funds they would have been purchased from General Development prior to General Development's bankruptcy. John added that Jennifer Davis is sorting commercial and residential assessment calculations. How the BOCC will rule on which of these governmental lots is subject to the special assessment will not have much effect on us if the lost fees are reallocated to the residential lots.

#### **6) Water Use Permit Application – John Capece:**

John Capece stated that he, Roger and Shane met with the Water Management District again about a month ago. We tried to assert that we should be granted a water use permit request based on the level of service, that being 92 gallons per day per person. Hendry County is 96 gallons per day per person, and Glades County is 125. The weighted average comes to 96 gallons per day per person. However, the SFWMD wants us to use our historical consumption rates. We've been going back and forth with them about this, but they are adamant that we use our historical numbers. We have rerun the computer models and made modifications based on population projections of BEBR as required by SFWMD. The population projections continue to be revised due to changing BEBR numbers. SFWMD currently has, from us, a set of models and responses to their questions, so the ball is again in their court. The primary point of contention has been the population and the issue of impact on the Caloosahatchee River of estimated water table drawdown from our well pumpage. The modeling shows on the order of 0.05 to 0.2 ft. depending on the specific location along the river. SFWMD has a threshold value of 0.1 ft. for impacts to surface water bodies.

John stated, as a note, that there was some additional discussion about future Hendry County PLUS water supply sources. He said that if we are going to be restricted from the sandstone aquifer then we have a choice of either locating a well further South so we don't impact the river, or going to the deeper aquifer. If we go deeper then it would make sense to team up with the City of LaBelle to share costs for a deep water supply well. If we face the requirement to use a deep well injection system for brine disposal then that becomes the more expensive part of the system. However, in the meeting that Roger had with Shane

Parker, and Lonnie Howard of Johnson Engineering, it was stated that there is some possibility that in reasonable proximity to our service area, that the Floridan Aquifer may be of relatively high quality, therefore, not requiring deep well injection of brine, rather we could continue to blend the WTP effluent with the WWTP effluent at our land disposal site.

**7) Septic Utility – John Capece**

John informed the Board that he continues to look into this issue and draw up various scenarios, looking at the legalities of the alternatives. The spreadsheet presented at the last meeting had built into it certain assumption of revenue collections and disbursements. Now we are looking to refine these numbers. We've been in contact with the septic tank suppliers to get better estimates of septic tank failure rate over twenty years, what percentage require replacement, etc., in an effort to firm up cost structures and present a more accurate spreadsheet. The Environmental Protection Agency is pushing this concept; however, in trying to get examples on how this system would work, it has been difficult to find other municipalities that have this septic system in place.

Board Member, Paul Samerdyke interjected that the City of Clewiston received grants to assist with central sewer. John replied that having more information about this grant would be helpful, and perhaps there is a grant that would assist with our needs. He added, that in certain geographic areas where there is a critical water quality issue, the government will offer assistance.

**8) Other Issues:**

John stated that the Lien assessment is a work in progress.

In response to Paul Samerdyke's question regarding the service area map, John stated that he was, somewhat, surprised by the area directly West of Banyan Village. However, he reviewed this with Shane and Roger. They examined the inter-local agreement, section by section and found that the new map is be correct.

Paul also inquired about the Marina area in regard to providing additional service to this area. John stated that although no new developments are in progress now, he feel that there will be pressure to augment service to that area in the future. Those who have invested want to maximize their resale value and therefore need a commitment from PLUS to provide water to developments envisioned for their properties. So regardless to the demand, these developers still seek a larger allocation. It has yet to be determined as to how the cost of this infrastructure will be distributed among the developers, the customers, and others. John concluded that it will be several years before we have to deal with this particular issue.

**9) Schedule Next Meeting & Adjourn:**

The next meeting is scheduled for 2:00 p.m., Monday, March 22, 2010 in the Hendry County BOCC Chambers.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.