

**WACCASASSA WATER & WASTEWATER COOPERATIVE BOARD MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024**  
**555 2<sup>ND</sup> AVENUE, OTTER CREEK**  
**OTTER CREEK TOWN HALL**

**Roll Call:**

- Joe Hand, Cedar Key Water & Sewer District Board Member
- Zim Padgett, Town of Otter Creek Town Councilor
- Robert Partin, Town of Bronson Mayor
- Sue Beaudet, Town of Bronson Town Manager
- Evan Rosenthal, Cedar Key Water & Sewer District Attorney (via zoom)
- Steven Warm, Town of Bronson Town Attorney

The meeting is called to order at approximately 1:00 PM. The prayer is led by Mayor Partin. Roll call is taken, and all members are present and accounted for.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**Zim Padgett makes a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Joe Hand seconds the motion. The motion passes.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**Zim Padgett makes a motion to approve the minutes from the November 15<sup>th</sup> Waccasassa Water & Wastewater Cooperative Board Meeting. Joe Hand seconds the motion. The motion passes.**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: N/A**

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

The 2024 Meeting Schedule is confirmed, however the meeting on Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> will be held at the Cedar Key City Hall (809 6<sup>th</sup> Street). All of the other meetings in Cedar Key will be held at the Water & Sewer District (510 3<sup>rd</sup> Street). Per the board's request, the 2024 Meeting Schedule will be formally advertised in the *Levy Citizen*.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Request for Qualifications for Continuing Engineering Consultant, Design, Inspection & Related Services Pertaining to the Waccasassa Water and Wastewater System:**

Everything that the board does is dictated by the Consultant's Competitive Negotiations Act (CCNA). The board has the option of advertising the solicitation as developed by Attorney Rosenthal. Any and all proposals would include qualifications, but no pricing would be included. As long as the construction cost is \$5M or less, the board could negotiate a contract with one (or more) engineering firms. The due date for the RFQ is February 29<sup>th</sup>, so the decision could be made at the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. If necessary, the board could schedule a special meeting. Joe Hand makes a motion to advertise the RFQ as presented. Zim Padgett seconds the motion. However, a vote is not taken because there is concern that if an engineering firm bids on the RFQ, would the firm be allowed to bid on the larger project? Attorney

Rosenthal advises that he does not have the technical knowledge to draft that type of RFQ. The board could utilize the \$300,000 from the Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) Grant to fund the facility plan. Should the board hire an engineer to write the RFP? If so, the cost must be under \$20,000 or \$35,000. Is there enough information available vis-à-vis the feasibility study for an engineer to write the RFP? The board could reach out to three engineering firms to obtain written quotes, but they would indeed be precluded from bidding on the larger project. **Zim Padgett makes a motion to table the discussion of advertising the RFQ versus reaching out to three engineering firms to obtain written quotes until the next board meeting. Joe Hand seconds the motion. The motion passes.**

#### **Request for Grant Writing Services:**

Shannon Williams of Gateway Grant Writing introduces herself to the board. Ms. Williams wrote grants for North Florida Professional Services for nine years, and she is in the process of obtaining her doctorate. With the City of Lake City, grant services are provided at a monthly base rate. Ms. Williams offers grant research, grant writing, and grant administration. Should the board put out an RFQ for grant administration? **Zim Padgett makes a motion for Ms. Williams to provide a written proposal for grant writing services for board consideration. Joe Hand seconds the motion. The motion passes.**

#### **Request for Legal Services:**

In the board packet, there are three written proposals for legal services from Edward P. de la Partee, Jr. of de la Partee Gilbert McNamara & Clareville, PA, Douglas Paul Manson of Manson Boles Donaldson Turner, PA, and Norm & Blake Fugate of Fugate & Fugate Law Firm.

Norm Fugate of Fugate & Fugate Law Firm introduces himself to the board. He has vast experience with water and wastewater projects. The firm represents all of the larger municipalities in the county including both Chiefland and Williston. They have experience with renovating water plants and renovating sewer plants in the \$1M - \$10M project range. They are familiar with the Sunshine Law and public records requests. They teach a four-hour ethics class in Cedar Key. They have offices in both Cedar Key and Williston. Mr. Fugate believes that they have an advantage over the other law firms because they are local, which means that they are available. Is there a conflict because the Fugate & Fugate Law Firm represents the City of Cedar Key? Mr. Fugate does not believe that there is a conflict, however Attorney Rosenthal believes that it would be a conflict for Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson to serve as general counsel to the board due to the potential for conflict in light of his representation of the Cedar Key Water & Sewer District. It is noted that the City of Chiefland is not interested in joining the cooperative. At the request of the board, Ms. Beaudet will reach out to Robert William Batsel, Jr. of Gooding & Batsel, PLLC about submitting a written proposal for legal services.

#### **Expanding the Board to Include Levy County BOCC & Levy County School Board:**

Levy County is ready to jump back into the cooperative. As such, Mayor Partin will be reaching out to Commissioner John Meeks of Bronson to represent Levy County and Tammy Boyle of Cedar Key to represent the School Board. Each of these individuals has more clout in Tallahassee. **Zim Padgett makes a motion allowing Chair Partin to speak with Levy County and the School Board about joining the board and expanding the board to reflect five voting members. Joe Hand seconds the motion. The motion passes.**

It is important to note that each of the municipalities must approve of the change in leadership. In addition, both members must be added to the board at the same time to allow for an odd number of voting members.

OLD BUSINESS:

**Cooperative Logo / Regional Handout Designed by Dewberry:**

There is a general discussion regarding whether Levy County should remain in the logo. **Joe Hand makes a motion to accept the logo as shown on Exhibit A. Zim Padgett seconds the motion. The motion passes.** Checks for the cooperative have been ordered, but they will not incorporate the logo due to the timing of the logo approval.

How do we spread the word about the project? The handout that was developed by Dewberry is for legislators, and it is final. The legislators are currently in their second week in session. Representative Chuck Clemons and Senator Keith Perry need to know that this project is a priority. It is a very complicated project with lots of moving parts. In addition to the regional handout, Dewberry developed handouts for each of the municipalities (Bronson/Cedar Key/Otter Creek). The board also needs to reach out to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Suwannee River Water Management District. The answers are the same for all entities. Dewberry could update the brochures monthly to outline funds received and services completed.

**Scott Knight of Wetland Solutions re: Review of Funding Applications:**

Mr. Knight reviews each of the funding applications including the \$8M appropriations project request from Representative Chuck Clemons. Well noticed public meetings will satisfy the grant requirements. The board could host quarterly public hearings to update the public on the status of the project. The problem with the grant applications is that there is not a lot of room to elaborate on a \$100M project.

**Miscellaneous:**

The chair met with the Suwannee River Water Management District to discuss where we are now, and where we are going with the project, and the meeting was very informative. Unfortunately, Cedar Key is precluded from a lot of funding due to their socioeconomic status, but what about the cooperative as a whole? The facility plan will be covered by the \$300K Rural Infrastructure Fund Grant. We need to identify the areas in which the wells could be located (i.e., the existing spray field). We may need to change the type of disposal system to a smaller footprint.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

The board members need to reach out to the legislators to endorse the project. We need to advertise a part-time administrative assistant position to assist with the day-to-day operations. At the request of the board, Ms. Beaudet agrees to draft a job description for the next board meeting.

**REVIEW BILLS:**

**Statement for Professional Services from Attorney Steven Warm:**

Attorney Rosenthal's invoices are currently being paid by the Cedar Key Water and Sewer District. We need to review Attorney Warm's invoice for accuracy (17.52 hours versus 27.90 hours). Joe Hand makes a motion to pay Attorney Warm's invoice subject to reconciliation and checks being received. The motion fails for lack of a second.

The meeting is adjourned at 3:12 PM.