

RHODE ISLAND WATER RESOURCES BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING #487

Monday, May 18, 2009 * 12:00 Noon

Members Present

William Penn, Chairman
William Stamp III
Harold Ward
Michael Sullivan, PhD
June Swallow
Jesse Rodrigues
Pam Marchand
Jon Schock
Robert Griffith*
Samuel Kitchell
Jesse Rodrigues, Jr.

Members Absent

Ron Gibson
Frank Perry
William Parsons

Guests Present

Henry Meyer
Susan Licardi
Chris Modisette
J Eric Scherer
Ricky Caruolo
Alicia Good

Staff Present

Kenneth Burke, P.E., General Manager
Kathleen Crawley, Staff Director
Romeo Mendes, Supervising Engineer
William Rivero, Programming Services Officer
Peter Duhamel, Principal Planner
Emily Cousineau, Implementation Aide

*Member Designees

1) Call to Order

Chairman Penn called the meeting to order at 12:07, noting that a quorum was present.

2) Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mr. Stamp, second by Mr. Kitchell to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2009 Board Meeting # 486. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

3) Chairman's Report

Chairman Penn reported that the Senate had confirmed the three new board members: Mr. Schock, Mr. Kitchell, and Mr. Gibson.

Mr. Penn and Mr. Burke recently met with Representative Naughton (D- District 21, Warwick). She noted that water allocation efforts should reference the work of other states. She also recommended that the Board consider the effects of global warming when planning future projects.

Mr. Penn reported that the BRMA Ground Water Development Project has been placed on the State Revolving Fund priority list with a relatively high ranking.

Lastly, the office move is again in motion. The staff will be relocating to a much smaller office as early as June 10, 2009. This is necessary due to budget constraints.

4) Chief Business Officer's Report – April 2009

Motion by Mr. Kitchell, second by Dr. Sullivan to accept the Chief Business Officer's Report for April 2009. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

Discussion:

Mr. Penn noted that surcharge 0.01664 had been revised from \$5 million to \$4.5 million because submissions are running behind this year. The finance committee has asked the staff to survey suppliers as to why less water is being consumed. Mr. Penn stated that the staff will report back about this issue.

5) General Manager's Report and Action Items

General Manager's Report

Motion by Dr. Sullivan, second by Ms. Swallow to table acceptance of the written General Manager's report. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

The Board asked the General Manager to verbally discuss the highlights of his report:

- Plans to reengage the Drought Steering Committee. These actions will include notifying appointees of their duties and reporting current precipitation and withdrawal statistics.
- Staff will work on: a) the inter-agency coordination concerning withdrawals and b) the South County well development program.
- He acknowledged his two guests from NRCS, Chris Modisette and Eric Scherer. Mr. Burke invited the Board to the NRCS presentation scheduled for June 4, 2009, at 3p.m. The NRCS Pawcatuk Report is now in the peer review process.

Action Items

Interdepartmental Coordination MOU – Request for Approval

Motion by Dr. Sullivan, second by Ms. Swallow to table action on this item until next month to provide Board members with additional review time. The vote in favor was unanimous. Motion carried.

Discussion:

Mr. Penn noted that a draft MOU had been submitted to the Board. Certain members requested additional time for review and comment, since modifications had been made to the draft on Friday, May 15, 2009.

Water Management and Allocation Program: HAP Pilot – Update

Mr. Burke reported that the subcommittee met on May, 15, 2009. Ms. Marchand introduced Ricky Caruolo of Providence Water. Mr. Caruolo presented the Board with technical information about radio and fixed monitoring systems. He provided a handout (attached).

South County Well Sites Program – Update

Mr. Penn noted that \$10 million has been authorized to protect the well sites but little has been spent. Mr. Burke explained that he wants to empower the municipalities, with board guidance, to develop a program - consistent with the bond's goals - to identify priority well sites. The ultimate goal is to aide communities in the acquisition of these sites.

Mr. Penn instructed Mr. Burke to return with a formal proposal to the Board. Mr. Penn noted that this will be allotted to a committee. Mr. Griffith, chair of the Water Resource Protection & Use Committee, agreed to work with Mr. Burke on the effort.

6) Committee Reports and Action Items

Finance Committee - FY 2011-2015 Capital Budget Draft for Discussion

Motion by Dr. Sullivan, second by Mr. Rodrigues to defer action on this item until the next meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

Discussion:

The Finance Committee reviewed the draft and recommended that the draft be reviewed further by the Committee and re-presented at a later date.

There were no reports from the Water Resources Protection & Use Committee, Construction, Engineering & Operations Committee and Properties Committee as the committees did not meet.

Legislative & Regulations Committee – Chair Harold Ward

Mr. Ward provided an update to the Board noting that the water suppliers and the water security coalition had met and had come to consensus on yet another sub a version of *The Water Use And Government Efficiency Act Of 2009* (S 0732 Aaa). This will be presented to the Senate tomorrow and it has strong support. Mr. Penn commended the stakeholders for their work on this bill. Mr. Ward also noted that the revised version of S 0732 is a substitute for the Water Conservation And Competitiveness Act (H 5828).

Mr. Penn informed members that staff is preparing for House and Senate Budget Hearings scheduled during the next two weeks and that he will attend.

7) Motion by Dr. Sullivan, second by Mr. Stamp to recess the Board Meeting and start the Board Corporate Meeting at 1:39 p.m. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried.

8) At 1:41 the Board returned from Board Corporate business.

9) Motion by Dr. Sullivan, second by Mr. Shock to adjourn the meeting. The vote in favor was unanimous. The motion carried. The Board adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Emily Cousineau
Implementation Aide

PROVIDENCE WATER'S

AMR PROGRAM

Prepared by : Ricky Caruolo
Date: May 18, 2009

1. Why did Providence Water choose to implement AMR in 1999?

- 33% actual reads across the system
- Estimated bills for over 10 years
- Numerous PUC disputes
- Read to bill lag was close to 30 days
- High workers compensation claims due to slips and falls
- Unable to gain access in the hard to read environments
 - confined space
 - dual income households
 - refused access in certain neighborhoods

2. What type of AMR systems were evaluated?

- Telephone inbound and outbound (*unlisted numbers were a concern*)
- Radio frequency walk by (*similar to touch pad*)
- Radio frequency drive by (*most proven technology at the time*)
- Fixed network system (*unproven technology at the time*)

3. What were the requirements for the AMR system?

- AMR manufacturer with over ten years of experience
- Proven AMR technology (*similar to our climate and conditions*)
- Open architecture technology (*can read any meter type*)
- Path to migrate to new technology (*Implement new ERT types*)

4. What did Providence Water expect from the AMR system?

- Obtain actual reads on a quarterly basis
- Reduce or eliminate estimated bills
- Reduction in workers compensation claims
- Eliminate entering confined spaces
- Reduce customer complaints
- Reduction/Re-deployment of the work force
- Reduction in theft of water
- Reduction in the read/bill lag

5. Why did Providence Water choose the Itron's RF drive by system?

- Proven technology (*Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Houston, etc.*)
- Leader in meter reading manufacturer in the industry
- Offered open architecture technology as opposed proprietary technology
- Offered a path to migrate to new technology
- Cost effective system

6. What are the current results from implementing AMR?

- Our entire system is 99.80% converted to AMR (*150 non-AMR accounts*)
- Obtain 99.68% of actual reads on all AMR accounts
- Bill 99.77% of our accounts on actual reads
- Meters are now read monthly as opposed to quarterly
- Virtually eliminated estimated bills
- Estimated bills do not exceed 1 year
- Read to bill lag has been reduced to 7 days or less
- Reduction in workers compensation claims
- Reduction in PUC disputes
- Reduction in customer complaints
- Re-deployed some of the work force
- Reduction in our aged receivable balance
- Gone from a reactive utility to proactive utility
- Open architecture reduced the cost of meters due to competition

7. What changes in technology have you experienced?

- A. **40W ERT** - The first ERT's installed by PWSB in 1999. It has single lithium battery, 1 milliwatt of power, operates in wake up mode, equipped w/tamper detection and a 12 year life cycle.
- B. **50W ERT** - Installation commenced in 2001. It has **2 lithium batteries**, 1 milliwatt of power, operates in wake up and bubble up modes, equipped w/tamper detection & a 20 yr. life cycle.
- C. **60W ERT** - Installation commenced in 2008. It has 2 lithium batteries, **10 milliwatt of power**, operates in **7 second bubble up mode**, equipped w/tamper detection, **leak detection** & a 20 yr. life cycle.

8. What concerns Providence Water at this time?

- Can we continue to meet industry concerns
- meter reading frequency (quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily, intervals, etc.)
- Technology seems to be changing daily
- Future costs associated with meter reading
- Maintenance of the system

9. What is Providence Water looking to do next?

- Evaluating AMR fixed network opportunities
- Exploring a hybrid fixed network system
- Exploring the possibility of migrating to a fixed network over time

10. What are the results of your fixed network studies?

- Numerous meter manufacturers have entered the meter reading industry
- There are numerous fixed network solutions
- True two way communication appears to be the latest technology
- Greater need for interval data and frequency of reads
- Beware of information over load
- Software solutions for organization and analysis of obtained data
- Leak detection and data logging capabilities
- Storage of interval data within the ERT
- Competition is lowering the cost

11. What fixed network capabilities will Providence Water require?

- Existing infrastructure must be utilized
- Ability to operate in drive by and fixed network modes
- System must have true two way communications
- System must have software to sort and organize data
- Storage of interval data at the end point
- Leak detection capabilities after and before the meter

12. Questions?