

Water and Sewer Committee Meeting
May 6, 2013
1:00 p.m.

The following were in attendance:

Ray Johnson, David Lybrand, Charles Kerekes, and Bill Houston, Committee Members; Bob Doub and Iris Hill, ex-officio members. Ray Archibald was excused.

Ray Johnson called the meeting to order and agendas were distributed.

Bill Houston moved to approve the minutes of March 28, 2013. David Lybrand seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Public Information:

The Committee met to discuss options for the public information meetings, schedules, venues and content. Administrator Hill distributed handouts from the Denarius Group outlining the mailing and the presentation. David Lybrand suggested the mail out include pictures. Mr. Johnson expressed concern that the cost increase was not adequately described. Mr. Lybrand suggested having a "typical" water bill included in the mail out, showing what portion of the bill would increase (water only, not sewer or garbage). There was discussion of using three different bills, a low- middle- and high-water user, to show how much each would increase. Water customers who currently use whole-house or under-sink reverse osmosis would see a decrease in amount of water used, so it would be difficult to determine the increase in their bill. Councilman Mann offered that some of the Ocean Ridge Master Property Owners were under the impression that the entire bill was going to double, as opposed to just the water portion of the bill. The Committee questioned what pictures the Denarius Group plans on using in the PowerPoint presentation, which will also be available on line. A member of the audience asked the Committee how the current use of an under sink r/o unit would affect water usage. The Committee agreed that that customer would have a lower usage rate with the proposed r/o plant as opposed to an under sink unit. Mr. Houston suggested that on the mail out there be an example of a 24,000 gallon user water bill now, and a 24,000 gallon user water bill with a 70% increase and a 90% increase, as well as a 72,000 gallon +70% and +90%. Mr. Johnson and Administrator Hill decided they would work together to fix the cost. A comment from the audience was made about the possibility of shutting down the water station at Town Hall. Another audience member said that if the Town doesn't need to improve water quality, there doesn't seem to be a need for the water station. The Town Hall water station is paid for by the property owners who pay a water bill. A cost estimate for the water station was given of \$11,000 - \$12,000 per year. An audience member asked about the operational date listed on the "Talking Points" handout from Denarius of 2015. The Committee decided to suggest a change in the wording from "operational by 2015" to "operational two years after beginning construction". Cost issues will be made consistent between the mail out and the "Talking Points" prior to information being distributed. The Committee will remove the "declining Santee aquifer" in point #10.

The Committee decided the public hearings will be scheduled for Memorial Day weekend, Sunday, May 26, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. at the Edisto Beach Civic Center and Saturday, June 15, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. at the Civic Center. Administrator Hill said she would confirm the availability of the Civic Center and let the Committee know. The format will be a presentation by the Committee followed by a question and answer session. Mr. Houston suggested having a booth at the Edisto Beach Fire Department Fish Fry on Saturday May 25 for informational purposes, but no one volunteered to man the booth. Mr. Kerekes suggested that a representative from URS be available to answer questions at both sessions. Administrator Hill informed the Committee that the mailing would need to go out before the public hearings. Mr. Houston asked if the mail out included that the feasibility study and other pertinent information is available on the website. It was suggested that visual aids be brought to the meetings (plumbing fixtures, valves, pumps, Mr. Lybrand's steam pot, etc. that have corroded). Mr. Johnson suggested adding information about absentee ballots in the mail out, along with a copy of the referendum.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:13 p.m.