

MINUTES OF THE UTILITES WORKGROUP MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2022 AT 5:30 P.M.

ST. TAMMANY GOVERNMENT COMPLEX

21490 KOOP DRIVE, MANDEVILLE, LA.

Call to Order by Honorable Michael R. Lorino, Jr., Chairman

Roll Call: Marty Dean – absent
Michael R. Lorino, Jr. – present
James “Jimmie” Davis, III - present
Christopher Canulette – present
Michael “Mike” Maxwell Smith – present
Jerry Binder – present
Thomas “TJ” Smith - present

Other Attendees: Ashley Gonzales, Assistant Council Administrator; Emily Couvillon, Civil DA; Karlin Fitzmorris, Council Administrator

PUBLIC COMMENT: a three (3) minute time limit is established for each member of the public wishing to speak (for or against) an item on the Agenda.

1. General update on Tammany Utilities since last workgroup meeting

- a. No members of administration in attendance.
- b. Chairman Lorino read memo from Parish President Mike Cooper to Chairman of Council Utilities Workgroup Lorino dated April 11, 2022 into the record.
- c. Chairman Lorino read Public Notice of chlorine burn into record.
- d. Chairman Lorino read Chris Tissue’s Chlorine burn status report dated April 11, 2022.
- e. Councilman Binder discussed Parish President’s Memo, and failure to attend or allow staff to attend tonight’s meeting.
- f. Councilman Binder discussed emails and photographs councilmembers have been receiving of rashes, etc.
- g. Councilman Canulette discussed Parish President’s absence from tonight’s meeting. Discussed that running the system is not the job of the council; council provides budget for operations. Discussed incident that occurred last Easter week.
- h. Chairman Lorino’s update on Council actions.
 - i. Former TU director is no longer in that position.
 - ii. Are working to find a third-party operator. Administration is not in favor of this.
 - iii. Expressed concerns about the same DA giving both Council and Parish President legal advice.

2. Report from Acting Director since appointment

- a. Acting Director Chris Tissue did not attend, but sent a report. Chairman Lorino distributed said report for the record.

3. Status of Chlorine Burn

4. Legal opinion discussion on 3rd Party management company

- a. Ms. Couvillon broadly discussed her legal opinion on hypothetical possibilities of hiring a third party to operate Tammany Utilities.

5. Public Comment

- a. Jim Maschek: Water is dirty. Had a rash. Had the same stuff everyone else has. Has been having this issue for at least two years. Wants to know where the \$23 million went. Thinks the steam from the water is getting into their lungs and causing coughing. It's not covid, it is the steam from the water.
 - i. Councilman Binder discussed ARPA funds.
- b. Ashley Schenk: Read a letter into the record recounting her experiences over the last year. She and her family have been experiencing bladder and skin issues. Her cat has had urinary issues. Had gastrointestinal issues last Easter.
- c. Allison Fronistas: Disappointed in Mike Cooper and embarrassed she voted for him. Her son experienced bleeding eyes. Her pediatrician instructed her to rinse his eyes with bottled water after she bathed him. How did Tim Brown not lose his job? Discussed various shortcomings of TU over the last several years. Is disappointed that Mike Cooper didn't allow Chris Tissue to attend. He could have answered some of their questions and they could have gotten to know the new director. ATT told her that there is a "massive void" under the road that is "the size of a car". Believes the break is still there. Is concerned that someone will fall into the void.
- d. Janice Sloan: Lives in Turtle Creek. Is frustrated that there is nothing the Council can do about the administration. Feels that there is a severe lack of transparency in the water system.
- e. David Binder: Is glad that he has met his neighbors during this process. These neighbors are so vigilant about their water systems because they are being harmed by their water. His wife was harmed by this water caused by the sewer spill. Referenced June 2018 SOPs for TU and believes these were not followed. Asks for an investigation.
- f. Steve Leech: Claims nothing in the memo posted online is done. Commented on Chris Tissue's report. Advised that he took a walk with Chris Tissue, and at the time the lines were marked by a fiber optic company. Told Mr. Tissue that Dept. of Utilities is hurting people. In December of 2020 he had leg problems. His son and grandson had rashes. He uses creams on his skin because of this. It gets down below his skin and into the muscles. Feels that he is being mocked.
 - i. Councilman Canulette asked him about his testing. He said the numbers go up and down.

- g. Councilman Mike Smith: Has been asking for a chlorine burn since May 2021. Has not been able to get the administration to allow interim and appointed directors to attend meetings, either workgroup meetings or his district meetings. Doesn't have a problem with Chris Tissue, who seems to be trying to do his job, although he seems to be shocked at the state of disrepair of the system. He has a problem with administration not allowing Chris to come to meetings and not giving him the tools he needs to do his job. Would like this workgroup to create a report and give it to the full council. Would like for Dept. of Utilities to post numbers during chlorine burn. Heard that there was a hearing by LDH in July but didn't get any notice. Claims if there was a meeting that administration knew about it and didn't let the council know. Is trying to get copies of those minutes.
- h. Steve Leech: Says more than 100 written complaints had been filed to LDH.
- i. David Binder: Can we please try to make what we are doing as clear as possible to the public. Referenced facebook post about chlorine burn that the facebook administrator asked citizen to DM them to report brown water because they have no active water reports.
- j. Councilman Binder: Turtle Creek, Willow Wood, Crossgates, The Landings, The Bluffs. Discussed complaints not being filed. Read boil water requirements from the CDC.
- k. David Binder: Asked the Council to pass an emergency boil water ordinance.
- l. Councilman TJ Smith: Asks legal to advise us on the possibility of an emergency boil water ordinance.