

**MINUTES OF THE CITY-COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS AUTHORITY RECONVENE
MEETING SEPTEMBER 23,2025, AT 5:00 P.M. AT THE CITY HALL COUNCIL
CHAMBERS**

299 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, MOORE HAVEN, FLORIDA

Authority Members Present:

Marc Decker
Clay Browning (Chair)
Alisha Beck
Bradley Smith
RaShonda Croskey
Jerry (Gator) Sapp
Tim Stanley
Hattie Taylor
Jeff Patterson (Vice Chair)
Jeff Barnes

Others Present:

Melissa Arnold, Deputy City Clerk
Brad Simmons, Public Works Superintendent
Steve Ramunni, City Attorney
Larry Tibbs, City Manager
Paul Carlisle, County Manager
Al Brown, Operator

ROLL CALL: Given By Browning.

**ITEM 3: DISCUSS EVALUATION OF WASTEWATER USER RATES AND CHARGES
BY CRAIG A SMITH & ASSOCIATES:**

Tibbs states the current base rate is \$8.00, the commodity charge is \$6.25 per thousand gallons. Over the years the expenses have increased we have done some improvements to the Plant, overall, there has not been enough revenue to make an investment. The result of the study shows they are suggesting we take the rate to \$20.65 since we have not increased the rates in 2007.

Giarratana states this rate could adjust depending on your operator's requirements, depending on who you decide to go with. If you go with U.S Water, we looked at adding approximately 200k to the budget. The remark was noted that it would go from \$20 to \$28.

Tibbs states included in the packet is a proposal from U.S Water. For an elite operator 5- days a week 8 hours a day is about 228k a year, an operator for 2-days a week and 2-hours each weekend

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day is 25k a year, an operation Manager 4-hours a week a week is 33k a year and Administrative for 1-hour a week is about 3k to provide services.

Carlisle states it will be for than \$28 due to the fact we based it off 200k a year, so it will be in the \$30 range.

Tibbs states we did have another company the operates for the Labelle Wastewater Treatment Plant. They did submit a proposal that is a little different, their annual operator fee is based on their actual expenses. I included an option from another company called Operational Technical Services. They offer different types of programs one is they will recruit for you the charge is 25% of the first-year projected salary, it is a one-time cost.

Ramunni states I think before we get to these different issues, we need to figure out what we are doing short term because we lose the license at the end of this month.

Carlisle states U.S Water did say they would do it temporarily on an hourly basis. We can set the number of hours up and they can do the minimum to keep us compliant with DEP.

Tibbs states we have interviewed an individual who holds a license and as accepted the offer. He does have to pass a background check and drug test.

Ramunni states what are we looking at cost wise.

Tibbs states we are looking at a Class C Operator with about 6-7 years of experience and has operated at four different operations. We did advertise for a Lead Operator/ Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator salary for \$70k - \$95k depending on qualifications and experience, so we will bring this individual in at the \$70K rate.

Ramunni states does that get us fix for the license on weekdays and weekends.

Tibbs states yes, he will do a 40-hour week.

Ramunni states do you will know what the temporary rate was on U.S Water.

Carlisle states it is \$140 an hour.

Ramunni states what the turn around time for this individual to start.

Tibbs states he is available once he is clear.

Patterson states I think with the short amount of time we have our best option right now is to enter a negotiation with U.S Water so we stay legal while we are still pursuing this.

Tibbs states I have talked to Brown, and he is willing to extend for a short period of time, as necessary.

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Beck states what are the terms on that short period of time.

Tibbs states we would be paying an hourly rate.

Carlisle states what is the staffing level currently at the Plant?

Tibbs states we have funded three positions out there.

Carlisle states I was looking one from U.S Water where they were going to have an Operator there for 5-days a week 8 hours a day, but they were only going to have two other operators there 2-days a week for 2 hours. If they can run it like that, then why do we have three full time people?

Tibbs states we have always had three positions out there but have only ever filled two of those positions. One of our trannies is getting ready to test for the license. But to do most of the jobs out there you need at least two people for safety reasons.

Patterson states is there any way to raise the rates in increments? We were just discussing that we have meters that are currently the wrong size.

Ramunni states with the different size meters we may want to do an analysis, I think we need to come up with some type of mechanism where we can do meter by meter analysis overtime to see who is paying their fair share. But then how do we stop that in the future when there is new construction coming in?

Tibbs states in that resolution under residential wastewater “to be paid at the time of application for billing permit files with local governments.” We are going to require them to submit what they plan to do and have it evaluated for size.

Browning states what is the process of pulling a building permit.

Tibbs states they submit their plans, we review it. Then they go to Building and Zoning for the permit. I think on our end we need to scrutinize what is coming in.

Patterson who reviews it for you.

Arnold states we do. Most of the things that come in are residential and most of those are $\frac{3}{4}$ meter. We may have one or two residents that have requested a bigger meter because they have an irrigation system. As far as any new commercial coming in it goes through the Board because they have to have engineering plans.

Ramunni states between an application going in and the Building Department doing their thing how do we catch that they are properly sizing everything.

Giarratana states DEP permits require flows an architect and engineer has to internal come figure that number. For example, I have been talking to the architect out there at that new development across from the St. Joseph’s Church. We discussed what the initial flows are. He said it is 350

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gallons per day, per single family home and there will be about thirty-six homes we than came up with a flow rate. We can do that for you with any project and factor it into water usage.

Carlisle states you may want to look at a criteria for when projects need to be evaluated by Giarratana.

Council agrees.

Browning states Simmons how many meters do you think are undersized.

Simmons states we have about nine hundred residential meters.

Carlisle states based off the analysis over two hundred meters. That is a Brod look, so it could be more.

Tibbs states we are changing the rates and the ERU's so we are going to have to go back and look at the billing for these two hundred meters to identify who it is.

Ramunni states the easiest fix is to go with the recommended changes per the chart. That with get us to where we are mandated and recouping money that is needed. If we go with a public hearing that is the premise for that. All the other stuff we have been discussing regarding meter sizing can come later because it will require a formula. I want to make sure we have our legislation that gives us the authority to do so.

Patterson states I am going to suggest. But if this individual says no in a few days or does not pass the background and drug test, we are still at square one. So, I would go ahead and make the motion right now to enter into the contract with U.S Water just so we have a licensed Operator.

Beck states Brown said he would stay on. Even if it is just for a month and if this individual does not work out, my opinion would be to go the other route with the company that finds employees.

Ramunni states to do that we would need to do an RFQ.

MOTION: By Beck to contract Al Brown until the end of October, seconded by Crosley motion carried. 9-1

MOTION: By Stanley to hold a public hearing on 10/27/2025 regarding the rate changes in coordination with the rate study completed by Craig A. Smith & Associates, seconded by Beck motion carried.

ITEM 4: DISCUSS PROPOSAL FROM U.S. WATER SERVICES CORPORATION FOR OPERATIONS A THE WWTP:

Patterson states I think we need to put this out for an RFQ.

Ramunni states would you want to do an RFQ not or wait 30-days.

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Tibbs states I will say the one option they presented would not meet the requirements for an RFQ due to the dollar amount. If you look at Chapter 287 it states the dollar amounts for requiring an RFQ. If they charge that 25% for the first year's salary, then it does not trigger the dollar value to do an RFQ.

Ramunni states my suggestion would be to wait 30 days and see how things go.

Beck states I want to apologize for yesterday. I think we may need to change our meeting to a different date that is before your night meeting. Just because I feel like we are rushed, and I want to make sure we do have enough time.

MOTION: By Beck to change the CCPWA meetings to the fourth Tuesday of the month at 5 P.M starting January 2026, seconded by Croskey motion carried.

ITEM 5: DISCUSS ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL FROM OPERATIONAL TECHNICAL SERVICES (OTS) FOR STAFFING AT THE WWTP:

ITEM 15: ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: By Stanley to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Taylor motion carried.

Melissa Arnold, Deputy City Clerk
Meeting adjourned at 5:28 P.M.

Clay Browning, Chairman

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM, IF ANYONE WISHES TO LISTEN TO THE MEETING IN ITS ENTIRETY, DIGITAL RECORDINGS ARE AVAILABLE.