

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Parkersburg Utility Board

January 23, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Pursuant to the call of its Chairman Tom Joyce, the Parkersburg Utility Board met in the Parkersburg Utility Board Administration Building, at 125 19th Street on the 23rd day of January, 2019. Chairman Tom Joyce called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Present:

Tom Joyce, Chairman
John Lutz, Vice Chairman
Gregory Herrick, Board Member
Paul Hoblitzell, Board Member
Robert Wright, Board Member
Jeff Reed, Counsel
Christopher Pauley, Assistant Comptroller
Erin Hall, Comptroller
Eric Bennett, Manager

Others in Attendance:

Jeff Baughan, Parkersburg News & Sentinel

Consideration of Minutes

Chairman Joyce requested the Board consider the minutes of the January 9, 2019 regular Board meeting for acceptance into the record.

Motion and Vote

Robert Wright moved to approve the minutes of the January 9th meeting as submitted to the Board. Paul Hoblitzell seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board members.

Update on Recent Boil Water Advisory

Chairman Joyce stated Bennett provided Board members with a written update of the recent boil water advisory to insure they had a thorough knowledge of the event. The written update is inserted as part of the record.

The Parkersburg Utility Board regrets any inconvenience the recent Boil Water Advisory may have caused our customers. Our staff issued this advisory with the knowledge that there had been a reduction of pressure at some higher elevations, along with a report of discolored water that could be possibly heavy and sporadic throughout the distribution system. Our staff used an overabundance of caution; in accordance with state and federal regulations the advisory was issued.

The Parkersburg Utility Board would also like to dispel the myriad statements distributed through social media by individuals regarding the reasons surrounding the advisory, as well as the testing timeline and results. *We encourage anyone with questions surrounding the advisory to contact us directly.*

Sequence of Events

Thursday, January 10th, 2019

On the morning of Thursday January 10, 2019, PUB personnel were scheduled to replace one of the two surge relief valves on the high service pumps at the water treatment plant. In order for this work to be performed, the plant has to be taken offline and the valves on the transmission mains feeding the distribution system must be closed, isolating the plant from the distribution system. Following the completion of the shut down and isolation process the valve was promptly and successfully replaced.

Personnel then began reversing the isolation process by reopening valves to the distribution system in preparation to place the treatment plant back into operation. The hydrant on the transmission header at the plant was opened and had very discolored water. The Chief Operator was informed by one of the mechanics that after placing the surge valve back into operation it had opened momentarily to discharge air and then closed. A plant mechanic then noted that the Quincy Hill booster had low suction pressure.

Upon checking the basement, it was found that the surge valve had opened, allowing the backflow of water from the distribution system back to the treatment plant. The Chief Operator isolated the surge valve to stop the backwards flow of water in the system.

The backflow of water to the treatment plant due to the unexpected opening of a surge relief valve allowed for the reversal of water flow to occur. When the direction of flow changes in a distribution system, it will suspend mineral deposits that occur in the system and create discolored water. Mineral deposits in Parkersburg's system are primarily manganese that was prevalent in the system until recently. The new plant was put on line with filters that are very effective in removing the manganese and the utilization of a treatment chemical to coat the deposits in the line to reduce their ability to be suspended in the distribution system.

Personnel then assessed the impact of the event and determined the discharge side of the clearwell raised from 13.3 feet to 14 feet of water, noting the water to be extremely discolored. At that time personnel isolated the clearwell and began pumping water to the distribution system. Personnel then gathered equipment and began pumping the discolored water from the clearwell in an attempt to resolve the matter without the need to put the water into the distribution system.

Since receiving a very limited number of dirty water calls, the decision was made to proceed with collecting 10 samples for bacteriological testing. The Chief operator selected sites throughout the system north of the Little Kanawha River to have the samples collected and sent to a third-party state-certified laboratory to be analyzed. All 10 samples were collected between 6:30 pm and 9:30 pm on Thursday January 10th.

A Boil Water Advisory was issued for all Parkersburg Utility Board customers north of the Little Kanawha River. Notifications were made through the media and a limited number of commercial customers were notified utilizing the Code Red notification system.

Friday, January 11, 2019

The morning of Friday January 11th the clearwell had been pumped out to a very low level and a decision was made to discontinue pumping water to the distribution system in an effort to allow the clearwell to refill. This was done with the professional assumption that it would be placed back in service to pump water to the system. The clearwell was brought to acceptable levels by 4:00 pm. The water was observed to be still severely discolored, and storage levels in the distribution system were critically low.

At 4:15 pm on Friday January 11th, results were received from the lab for the samples taken on the previous day; all samples were negative for the presence of bacteria.

A decision was made to isolate the 24-inch transmission main and attempt to flush the clearwell, again without impacting the distribution system. By approximately 6:30 pm on Friday January 11th it was determined that with storage levels in the distribution system at a critically low level, this method would not correct the problem before customers began losing both water service and fire protection for the system. This possible situation was deemed unacceptable to PUB staff.

Therefore, the decision was made to place the plant back into operation pumping the discolored water to the system and expanding the Boil Water Advisory to include the entire system. By approximately 7:00 pm Friday January 11th, customers south of the Little Kanawha River were notified by utilizing the Code Red notification system and local media, and by 7:20 the plant was pumping water to the system at a rate of 5.3 MGD.

Saturday, January 12, 2019

By 8:00 am on Saturday January 12th, storage levels had been brought back to near acceptable levels with very few customers reporting dirty water. PUB continued to pump to the system with the intent to flush the system as soon as it reached storage levels that were conducive to heavy flushing.

By midday on Saturday, only 19 calls reporting dirty water had been received and it was decided to proceed with sampling between 2:30 pm and 7:00 pm on Saturday January 12th. Sixteen samples were collected throughout the distribution system and taken to a third-party state-certified laboratory for analysis.

Sunday, January 13, 2019

Sunday January 13th, a flushing plan based upon the location of previous reports of dirty water was developed and executed. During the flushing event, several calls were received concerning discolored water. Flushing continued through parts of the system for most of the day and night.

At approximately 6:35 pm Sunday January 13th, the PUB received notification from the lab that all 16 samples were negative for the presence of bacteria. Customers were notified that the Boil Water Advisory had ended by utilizing the Code Red notification system and local media.

Monday, January 14, 2019

On Monday January 14th, a watermain break in the Beechwood area caused the disturbance of mineral deposits in that part of the system and again required extensive flushing.

Wednesday, January 16, 2019

On Wednesday January 16th, an unknown event caused water in the downtown area to be discolored. A targeted flushing in that area corrected the problem.

PUB personnel collected 10 samples on Thursday evening, January 10th, and 16 samples on Saturday evening, January 13th, for a total of 26 samples. All were analyzed by a third party state certified laboratory, and all of these samples tested negative for the presence of bacteria.

Hoblitzell asked if they had opened a valve prior to opening other valves. Bennett stated the new surge protection valve had been installed and when it was put in service it temporarily opened to allow air to escape, it then closed, and at the same time valves to the distribution system were being opened outside. He further stated the valve unexpectedly opened during this operation and no personnel were in the vicinity to realize it had occurred.

Hoblitzell questioned if it was an instrument operated valve. Bennett replied the valve was preset at the factory to a specific pressure to protect the piping in the WTP and the exterior piping from excessive pressures. Bennett also stated the valve is pilot operated by the water pressure in the system.

Joyce stated 10 samples were collected the evening of the January 10th and all samples were negative for the presence of bacteria. Joyce further stated 16 samples were collected the evening of January 12th and all samples were negative for the presence of bacteria. Joyce stated it was

important for the record and particularly for distribution. Joyce discussed the importance of customers participating in the Code Red mass notification system and a takeaway from the event is PUB as an organization needs to improve participation in the program through customer notification promoting the service and sign up during routine interactions.

Board members and staff agree to work to improve customer participation in the mass notification system as it is more effective than utilizing media outlets and it is a tool PUB already has available.

Joyce reiterated the number of samples collected from the system and that they were all negative for bacteria, and the fact there was no breach of the system. Hoblitzell stated the issue was a turbidity problem. Bennett agreed the issue was almost solely related to turbidity.

Lutz questioned how long after the backflow occurs does it take to isolate the valve. Bennett stated the valve is located on the 1st level underground and it would take a minute or two to reach and have it isolated. Bennett stated in this case it took time to realize what was actually happening. He further stated that through SCADA trending it appears the event lasted 15 to 17 minutes.

Hoblitzell stated it appears that PUB responded fairly well to the event, other than personnel did not remain near the surge protection valve until the plant was back in operation. Bennett agreed and stated the staff did an excellent job through the entire event and he appreciated all of their dedication to get the issue resolved in a timely manner and in determining ways to eliminate a similar occurrence in the future.

Herrick questioned if a significant amount of overtime was incurred. Bennett stated that from Thursday through Sunday approximately 320 hours of overtime was logged and there would be several hours of overtime in the next pay period dealing with the subsequent flushing events.

Motion and Vote

Robert Wright made a motion to receive and file the written update of the boil water advisory provided by management. Paul Hoblitzell seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board members.

Consideration of Financial Statements For period ending November 30, 2018

Hall stated as of November 30, revenues are slightly above budget O&M expenses below budget with a year to date combined debt service ratio of 1.546.

Motion and Vote

Paul Hoblitzell moved to accept the financial statement as submitted. John Lutz seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board members.

Consideration of Backwater Prevention Assistance Program

Bennett stated Board members were provided with a brief correspondence and a final copy of the documents for the program along with a map showing the current structures that would be eligible for the program. Bennett stated the mapping would be revised on an annual basis as other structures are determined to be susceptible to flooding during wet weather events.

Bennett stated as additional areas become eligible those customers will be notified and provided the information and forms packet.

Bennett stated this matter has been discussed previously during the preparation of the program documents. Bennett recommended the Board approve the program to provide assistance for 90% of the purchase and installation cost of a backwater prevention valve for a sum not to exceed \$1,500 for up to 50 participants per year, determined to be eligible due to sewer flooding during wet weather events.

John Lutz questioned how additional structures would be determined to be eligible. Bennett stated if the area was determined to be susceptible to flooding during a wet weather event. Lutz stated that structures or the sewer have to actually experience an event before being eligible. Bennett stated this was correct.

Motion and Vote

Paul Hoblitzell made a motion to approve the Backwater Prevention Assistance Program to provide 90% of the purchase and installation cost of a backflow prevention valve up to a maximum of \$1,500 for 50 eligible participants per year. Robert Wright seconded the motion and it was passed by a unanimous vote of the Board members.

Consideration of Personnel Matter

Bennett stated this was intended for the candidate for the Assistant Manager/Chief Engineer and he currently is not present. Bennett recommended that the Board skip this item as there is currently nothing to consider.

Robert Wright moved the list of invoices over \$750, dated January 23, 2019 in the amount of \$83,366.52 be approved for payment as submitted to the Board. John Lutz seconded the motion and it was approved with a unanimous vote of the Board members.

Other Business

None

Next Meeting Date

Erin Hall stated the next regular meeting would be February 6, 2019.

Board members agreed to meet in regular session, at the Parkersburg Utility Board Administration Building in the conference room, at 9:00 a.m. on February 6, 2019.

Adjournment

Paul Hoblitzell moved the meeting be adjourned. John Lutz seconded the motion and it was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board members present. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Eric Bennett, General Manager