

# Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water And Sewer Authority Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Palmetto- City Hall  
509 Toombs St., Palmetto, GA 30268

- I. Chairman J. Clark Boddie called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
- II. Roll Call was taken by Secretary Jessica Davis with the following board members present:

The Honorable Chairman Mayor J. Clark Boddie  
The Honorable Vice-Chair Sonja Fillingame      The Honorable Councilwoman Tara Miller  
The Honorable Mayor Vince Williams      The Honorable Councilman Brian Jones  
The Honorable Mayor Mario Avery

The following board members were absent:  
The Honorable City Manager Tony Phillips (Arrived at 7:05 pm)  
The attendance of the board constituted a quorum and the meeting proceeded.

III. **Approval of Water Authority Minutes:**

The motion to approve the February 14<sup>th</sup> 2023 MCRW&SA Meeting Minutes was made by Mayor Avery and seconded by Mayor Williams. **Vote: 6-0; Motion Carried**

IV. **New Business:**

V. **Discussion and Approval:**

VI. **Reports:**

A. **Water Authority Attorney-**

Attorney Dennis Davenport did not have a report from the attorney's office.

B. **Financial Report-**

Attorney Davenport presented requisition #244 for \$21,262.47.

Motion to approve Req #244 in the amount of \$21,262.47 was made by Mayor Avery and seconded by Vice-Chair Fillingame. **Vote: 6-0; Motion Carried**

C. **Project Managers-**

Project Manager Laura Benz informed the board that the district has an audit checklist for the authority. It will aid in ensuring they're ready with the new plan. The checklist can be viewed in the memo.

**GEFA-** Project Manager Andrea Gray stated that the application was filed in August 2021. It's outstanding for 19 months. GEFA has been generous with pushing the application along as it's waiting for additional information, such as audits from the cities for the past 4-year, current financial statements, and proposals from the cities to cover the revenue shortfall in future leads, including a commitment to increase rates. At this point, the requested information is unavailable to give to GEFA from all three cities. The project managers weren't able to submit it by March 10 for consideration at the May meeting. The project managers recommend that the authority withdraws the GEFA application until all documents are received and refile once everything is received.

Chairman Boddie stated each year the city of Palmetto increases its water rate by 5%. He asked, "If GEFA will cover that, or will they cover other items than water rates?" Project Manager Benz stated that Ms. Selena (GEFA) held independent conversations with each city because she's underwriting them independently. She requested information in an untimely manner, not incorporating how the authority operates as a city council. She has looked at the financials and has not provided the project managers with any information because she's working directly with the cities. Chairman Boddie stated that Palmetto adopts it every three years and does it without a water resolution. Project Manager Benz stated that there is a specific amount that she's looking for. However, she's not communicating with project managers due to her direct contact with the cities.

Chairman Boddie stated that the City of Palmetto pledged its mileage rate and asked Mr. David if the authority had ever done anything regarding it. Mr. David stated that the debt/bonds that are outstanding have a pledge that's full faith in credit.

Chairman Boddie informed the board that the city of Palmetto's 2022 audit is outstanding.

City Manager Phillips stated that Ms. Selena Holly's projections were on an \$80 million project cost.

Project Manager Benz stated that they requested an additional \$25 million each calendar year to make up the deficit and the bonds.

Councilman Jones asked, if the authority pulls the application, is there a first-come, first-serve type of deal? The Project Managers informed Councilman Jones that there is not a first come, first serve deal.

Vice-Chair Fillingame stated that she is in favor of pulling the application since GEFA has other funding opportunities. She understands that it takes staff time to conduct analysis, and if the authority is not ready, we don't want it to come back and bite us by asking for funds from other sources.

Motion to withdraw the GEFA application until the authority receives all the requested items was made by Mayor Avery and seconded by Mayor Williams. **Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried**

**EPA-** The meeting with the EPA was very productive and helpful. EPA provided a spreadsheet with a multitude of agencies. The project managers contacted the companies. The Funders Forum provides funding for water and sewer projects. They provided contacts and included opportunities. The project managers Identified ten that could be beneficial.

1. **Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA):** This is a standalone financial mechanism. It will consider the funds that the authority has already applied for, but the authority can't ask for more than 49 percent of their project. It does not include the state revolving funds. It requests several items like audits, operating documents, and more of the same items needed for other applications. It requires a pre-application letter, and EPA reviews and looking for what they feel would likely succeed that will work for underwriting and finance. Afterward, they invite the applicant to apply. There's an application fee: if you have a population less than 25, 000 the fee is \$25,000.00, and if the population is over 25,000 it's a \$100,000 fee.
2. **USDA-** The City of Palmetto is eligible to apply for USDA. It could help fund whatever portion of the project serves Palmetto. USDA only does loans until you can't afford them. Once a recipient is no longer able to make payments, USDA will provide grants.

3. **Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA)** – GEFA point of contact. This program is designed for those who have potential threats of disaster or cyber security. If water systems are having those problems the authority can receive funding.
4. **World Community Assistance Partnership**-Provides loans up to \$250,000.00. That wasn't necessarily applicable.
5. **Department of Natural Resources (DNR)**-This is a non-point source for individuals who are doing water planting seed grants.

Project Manager Benz stated that there are several grants for cities as an individual and not as an authority.

Project Manager Gray researched the following 5 sources:

6. **Economic Development Administration US Dept. of Commerce**- Federal grant program. Two programs can apply to water infrastructure, but both are closed. They're based on economic distress criteria such as unemployment and giving up to 3 million dollars. It's a two-phase application.
7. **National Rural Water Association**: Serves populations of 10,000 or less. The City of Palmetto is eligible to apply to this loan program. It requires all documents as in previous programs.
8. **Co-Bank**- A private lender out of Colorado who specializes in funding water & sewer projects for rural communities. They'll have to underwrite whatever the loan.
9. **Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)**- Community block grants that cap to \$ 2 million. Applicants are allowed to apply every other year.
10. **OneGeorgia Authority**-Issues grants based on creating employment opportunities, but Fulton County is not eligible due to not meeting the rural criteria.

Project Manager Benz stated that the Congressman's office asked if the authority wanted to apply for appropriations with a limit of about 5 million dollars only if the authority is on or eligible for the state's intended use plan. It opens in January 2024.


The authority met with the City of Atlanta to discuss a partnership with the city. The three items that were proposed were:

1. The Authority goes on its own and does its direct withdrawal.
2. The authority no longer purchases water from Atlanta.
3. The authority doesn't do its project but just buys water from Atlanta.

The city of Atlanta requested maps and asked questions about population projections. The Project Managers will work with the engineers to gather the information. One of the caveats that they addressed is that it could behoove Atlanta if they're selling water to the authorities as opposed to selling it to each city. Chairman Boddie and Mayor Avery provided their take on the meeting.

City Manager Philips asked how the meeting ended. Project Manager Benz informed him that the City of Atlanta asked for documents so they can review them, and they will gather them. The commissioner will have an internal discussion and follow up with the authority.

VII. The motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm was made by Vice-Chair Fillingame and seconded by Councilman Jones. **Vote: 7-0; Motion Carried**



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Mayor J. Clark Boddie, Chair



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Jessica Davis, Secretary