

**VERO BEACH UTILITIES COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2023 - 9:30 A.M.**  
**CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Jane Burton; Vice Chairman, Taylor Dingle; Members: Bill Eggers, James Maxwell, Indian River Shores Representative, Bob Auwaerter and Alternate Member, Mark Mucher **Also Present:** Director of Public Works, Matt Mitts and Deputy City Clerk, Sherri Philo

**Excused Absence:** Peter Dold

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called today's meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Mr. John Turner, City Attorney, excused himself from today's meeting stating that he has another meeting at the County.

Mrs. Burton asked Mr. Turner if he could give an update on the District Court of Appeals.

Mr. Turner said that he does not have anything to discuss at this time.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) May 9, 2023**

**Mr. Auwaerter made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2023 Utilities Commission meeting. Mr. Dingle seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Utilities Commission Meeting Day Change**

Ms. Sherri Philo, Deputy City Clerk, reported that the City Council has changed their meeting schedule and therefore they were looking at changing the Utilities Commission meeting days from the second Tuesday of the month to the first Tuesday of the month.

Mr. Burton said the Commission would move their meetings to the first Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. with the exception of July 4<sup>th</sup>. Their next Utilities Commission meeting would be held in August.

**4. OLD BUSINESS**

**A) Report on the STEP System – Mr. Rob Bolton, Water and Sewer Director (Resolution Attached)**

This item was not discussed.

**B) Update on the Stormwater Utility – Mr. Matt Mitts, Director of Public Works**

Mr. Matt Mitts, Director of Public Works, reported that at the March 2, 2023 City Council meeting they discussed three (3) options and challenges they were facing with the Stormwater Utility. The first was for the current fiscal year, which the fee was set at \$7.00 per ERU, which brings in about \$100,000 for the Stormwater Utility. Based on the Stormwater Utility Study the goal was to bring in \$1 million per year, which the ERU required would be set at \$75.17. This fiscal year and fiscal year 23/24 they were using American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to bridge the \$900,000 gap. After fiscal year 23/24 ARP funds would no longer be available. He reported that they were breaking the work down into two (2) components. They have an immediate goal to update the assessment roll that is used to levy the non-ad valorem assessment on property owners. The cost for this year would be approximately \$29,500, which the consultants would look at new construction in the City to see if those properties would be required to be added to the assessment roll. Those property owners would be sent notices and would be assessed a fee for the upcoming fiscal year. The second component would be to reevaluate mitigation credits. He reported that during the budget meetings this summer, the consultant would discuss with the City Council what goals they were looking for. He reported that the issue with mitigation credits was that if they levy a lower assessment for property owners that have mitigation measures in place and if the goal is to raise \$1 million in revenue that would mean that they would have to raise the fee for other property owners.

Mr. Auwaerter said if he understood it correctly it was going to cost \$29,300 to update the assessment rolls.

Mr. Mitts said that is correct.

Mr. Auwaerter asked would that be an annual cost.

Mr. Mitts answered yes. He said the average fee was \$25,000 to maintain the assessment roll year to year. They were adding a little more money in order for the consultant to have discussions with the City Council. He noted that there would be a separate fee and study to reevaluate the mitigation credits.

Mr. Auwaerter said conceivably they would be spending half of the initial year's collection on administrative costs. He said that didn't seem to be a great way to go. There was a lot of administrative costs for collecting almost nothing.

Mr. Mitts reported the other key component was the Stormwater Master Plan, which would be completed this month. He reported that the \$1 million was to maintain stormwater pipes, water quality, the street sweepers, etc. The Master Plan would give the City a template to secure grants, as well as to schedule expenses in the Stormwater Utility budget to do engineering designs for projects.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**6. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS**

None

**7. MEMBER'S MATTERS**

Mr. Dingle said that he was disappointed in that this is the second meeting that they had an item on the agenda (item 4-A) to get an update on the STEP System and Mr. Bolton was not present. He felt like they were prolonging this item and now they are not meeting in July. He requested that Mr. Bolton at least have someone from his Department give the Commission members this update.

Mrs. Burton said that she was also concerned about this and she was going to discuss it with the City Manager to find out what they could do. She said if possible they may have to call a Special Call meeting in July.

**8. CITY ATTORNEY'S MATTERS**

**A) Discussion of District Court of Appeals Ruling**

Not discussed.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Today's meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

/sp