



**Bayou Macon Water System, Inc.**  
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## **BMWS Board Meeting** **February 27, 2024**

### ***Board Members in Attendance:***

Darren Green, President  
Paula Skipper, VP  
Shelly Crawford  
Casandra Ritter  
Shevon Harris

### ***Members in Attendance:***

Claude Williams - Operator  
Kim Buckingham – Office Manager  
Greg Cook - Member

### **Water Sector Program Update**

Heath McGuffee, Meyer, Meyer, Lacroix & Hixson (MMLH)

The total project cost is estimated to be \$467,000. We are fortunate to have been awarded a grant from the Water Sector Program in the amount of \$370,000 for system improvements. The remaining \$97,000 will have to be paid for by the water system.

Current work to date was discussed. Water has been tested by CENLA to allow for flush valve timing to be set. The three flush valve locations were discussed, and Claude is going to collaborate with Heath to validate installation locations (solar vs electric).

Heath is also going to be posting, in The Madison Journal, (required) the bid for installing valves and meters. Bids should be finalized around second week of April. Materials will be ordered after the bid is awarded and could take several months to arrive.

**LEAD Requirements** –EPA Proposed Lead and Copper Rule Improvement rule (LCRI). As you are aware, under the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR), all community water systems (CWSs) and non-transient non-community (NTNC) water systems must prepare and submit an initial service line inventory that includes the system-owned and customer-owned portions of all service lines in the system's distribution system to the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) **by October 16, 2024**. We are going to have this project done simultaneously with our new meter installs. MMLH has a third party that would complete the information for us however, the cost would be around \$5,000. Office Manager has indicated that she can complete this information from the weekly spreadsheets. We can send in updates as long as we have sent initial reports to LDH by the deadline.

**Minutes** from last meeting were reviewed. Shelly made a motion to approve, Darren 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Budget Review** – We are currently losing approximately \$500 per month. Numerous leaks and general cost of business has increased. The last rate increase was in 2017.

**Rate Increase** – The Board has determined that in a rate increase is much needed. Customers will be notified with the February/March billing cycle and the increase will go into effect with the April billing cycle.

- The residential flat fee will change from \$20.00 +\$1.00 DHH Fee to \$22.00 +\$1.00 DHH Fee.
- The commercial flat fee will change from \$30.00 +\$1.00 DHH Fee to \$32.00 +\$1.00 DHH Fee.
- The price per gallon will go up \$1.00 / 1,000 gallons for both Residential & Commercial.
- **There will no longer be 2,000 free gallons when calculating usage.**

**Late accounts** – On an average, we have 40 to 50 late accounts. The increased late charges have not had enough impact. New **Lock-out Policy**, starting in April, any account that becomes 60 days past due will be subject to

having their meter locked with a \$100 re-connect fee added to their account. Your monthly bill will reflect past due. If you have not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month, you will be cut off. Darren made a motion to approve the budget, Casandra 2<sup>nd</sup> and Shevon made a motion to approve the increase, Shelly 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Renters** – discussion started with the intent to raise the deposit. As a result of the discussion, a new policy of requiring the homeowner to be responsible for the water bill. How they want to charge their customer is their decision. Often, a renter will vacate the property and the system is left with charges due above the \$75.00 deposit. It is a hardship for the system to keep most renters accountable and current. Effective immediately and potentially grandfathered in for problem customers, homeowners will become responsible for the water bill. Letters will be sent out ASAP. Paula made a motion to accept, Shevon 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Bridge at Hwy 80 & Delhi** – rebuild or repair project forecasted for 2027 – We purchase most of our water from The Town of Delhi. The eight-inch line that comes from them is attached to the bridge and will need to be bored under Bayou Macon. The DOT will pay for this project, but it will be in the form of a reimbursement. BMWS will have to front the money.

**CWEF** (Community Water Enrichment Fund) – After being awarded \$34,000 for meter replacement, BMWS had reapplied to use some of the funding for our part of the WSP match. Office Manager was not aware that she was supposed to submit this directly to CWEF for approval as opposed to the normal procedure of going through Madison Parish Police Jury. Her plan is to follow up with this ASAP and submit directly to CWEF.

**Website** – Information is updated, as necessary. More customers have signed up for alerts. Claude is reporting, when he can, any repairs where customers need notification.

**Office building** cleaning and new sign installation will be done when we can. Weather will be a factor as the elevator constantly stirs up dust. Also, at some point the ramp will need to be reinforced (replaced). Darren may have materials that we can use for this purpose.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 with Shelly making the motion and Paula 2<sup>nd</sup>.