

**THE ANSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS** convened for a recessed meeting on Monday, April 15, 2013 at 6:00 P.M. in the board room, Suite 209 of the Anson County Government Center.

Commissioners present: Anna H. Baucom, Chair  
Ross Streater, Vice Chair  
Bobby Sikes  
Vancine Sturdivant  
Jarvis Woodburn

Staff members present: Lawrence R. Gatewood, County Manager  
Bonnie M. Huntley, CMC, NCCCC, Clerk to the Board  
Rita James, Data Processing  
Robert Thomas, Finance Officer  
Mike Sessions, Utilities Director

Chairman Baucom called the recessed meeting to Order. Chairman Baucom noted the purpose of tonight's meeting was to approve the agenda and adopt the recommended budgets for water distribution, filtration and wastewater treatment.

**Approval of the Agenda by Commissioners:** Motion by Vice Chair Streater, seconded by Commissioner Sikes, to approve the Agenda as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Administrative Matters**

**Recommended Budgets for Water Distribution, Filtration and Wastewater Treatment for FY 2013/2014:** Mr. Sessions shared that he received a bill from Progress Energy last week and when he first started three and one-half years ago they were charging six thousand dollars a year to draw water from Blewett Falls and the bill he received last week was twelve thousand dollars. Mr. Sessions shared that he has tried to talk to someone in billing but they have yet to return his call. Chairman Baucom asked if we had to pay them to take water out of our river with Mr. Sessions answering that technically it is their water. Ms. James noted this was a once a year charge. Vice Chair Streater asked how it was their water with Mr. Sessions explaining that they control most of the Pee Dee River. Mr. Sessions shared that if you buy land on the river you can't put a dock on it without their permission. Vice Chair Streater felt like the water should be free with Ms. James stating we were paying for access to the water. Commissioner Woodburn reminded board members of the FERK discussions. Chairman Baucom commented that she did not recall that coming up with Mr. Sessions stating that they say we are renting the water. Vice Chair Streater asked if we owned the property where the pump sits that pumps it out of the river with Mr. Sessions answering yes. Commissioner Sikes noted that our pick up line was out in the river that they own.

Mr. Sessions shared that the timber at wastewater treatment had been cut and the land was being leveled, grassed and fertilized and they hope in a couple of years to have permits to land apply sludge on our own land. Mr. Sessions stated that they have had two sewer breaks this year and both were reported and repaired the same day and as of today we have not been fined. Mr. Sessions stated that a goal for next year is to purchase a sewer truck and a spreader truck. Mr. Sessions stated that they will try to find used equipment when possible and any old equipment will be sold on GovDeals.

Mr. Sessions reported that filtration had zero days of not meeting water quality standards. Mr. Sessions shared that their average finished water in a month was two hundred fourteen million eight hundred seventy seven gallons which equals out to 2.5 billion gallons they pumped in the last year. Mr. Sessions shared that McGill was in the process of securing a grant or low interest loan for the lagoons and the electrical work being done was sixty percent complete. Mr. Sessions reported that if Progress Energy comes through they may be finished in two weeks. Mr. Sessions noted a major goal for next year is to continue to replace valves and rehab the filters.

Mr. Sessions stated that distribution was now at full staff. Mr. Sessions reported that Chris Harrington was promoted to water superintendent. Mr. Sessions shared that he has already been to one school and passed and he's headed in the right direction. Mr. Sessions stated that since July 1, 2011 they have added 10.9 miles of waterline. Mr. Sessions shared a copy of the latest water line priority list with those present. Mr. Sessions noted that they just completed Teal Hall Road and Old Prison Camp Road was next followed by Wall-Atkinson, McFarlan tie-in and Lindsey Ct. Mr. Sessions referred to a question from Commissioner Sikes regarding the Burnsville water situation last year when the state pulled our waterline out of the creek. Mr. Sessions stated that they had no way to get water to some people in the area. Mr. Sessions stated that he along with County Manager Gatewood, Chris Harrington and Steve Natoli looked at all options and on 742 where the line stopped they are going to make a connection so if this happens again we will still have water going to the farmers in Burnsville. Commissioner Sikes asked if this would alleviate the problem the chicken farmers had before the break with Mr. Sessions answering they won't know until they put the line in. Mr. Sessions did say that a few homes and farms in the area are built in about the highest point in the county and occasionally they have pressure problems. Commissioner Sikes stated that the chicken farmers say last year was the worst it has been with Mr. Sessions saying they hope this connection will help. Vice Chair Streater asked what was causing the breaks in Polkton. Mr. Sessions stated that they have installed sixty-nine new services since March 2012 and their active services are four thousand six hundred ninety four and they have four hundred sixty six inactive services. Mr. Sessions reported that they just implemented a fire hydrant program where one person is painting, testing and cutting around all hydrants. Mr. Sessions was pleased to report that they are now cross training in their department and his goal is to have everybody know how to run all the equipment. Mr. Sessions stated that he doesn't want the department to be dependent on one or two men that run everything. Mr. Sessions reported their goal for next year

is to implement a back flow plan for farms and businesses and they already have someone trained that will work a couple of days a week on this project. Mr. Sessions reported that the Union County meter needs replacing. Mr. Sessions reported that we used the meter that Union County engineers recommended when the new pump station was put in and we've had nothing but problems. Mr. Sessions shared that they were upgrading and tying in the Hornwood waterline and meter. Mr. Sessions referred back to the question from Vice Chair Streater regarding breaks in the Polkton area explaining that they know there is a problem on Horn Town Road. Mr. Sessions shared that they are working with an engineer who is studying the issue. Mr. Sessions shared that they've had several breaks in this area in the last year. Mr. Sessions stated that from the best they can tell they think someone is stealing water in this part of the county and slamming the hydrants down causing a water hammer. Mr. Sessions stated that he doesn't like having to cut water off to anyone especially a nursery full of children. Vice Chair Streater stated that they have to call parents to come get their children and the parents didn't plan for this. Mr. Sessions stated that they have to find the answer and it could well be that the engineer recommends a new line for this road and if so he felt it should be placed ahead of the projects on the priority list. County Manager Gatewood stated that we could either put them ahead of the projects or hire a contractor to complete the work. Commissioner Woodburn asked about putting deer cameras to see what is going on with Mr. Sessions saying they thought about this. Mr. Sessions thought it odd to keep getting breaks in the same area. Chairman Baucom asked if a water hammer was when you turn the hydrant on real hard and then turn it off real hard with Mr. Sessions answering that shutting it off so fast causes it to hammer and burst the pipe. Vice Chair Streater asked if someone was stealing water would we not think it would be a farmer or a contractor with Mr. Sessions answering yes. Mr. Sessions shared that they were using contractors do to the 742 line as they feel it is important to the famers. Chairman Baucom voiced that anytime a business like a poultry farm and old farms are without water we need to jump on that. Chairman Baucom stated that until someone makes money no one here is going to make money. Mr. Sessions voiced appreciation to the board for backing them on water issues.

Mr. Sessions referred to the budget stating that water rates have not increased since 2008. Mr. Sessions proposed going up one dollar on the minimum rate which equates to fifty cents a thousand. Mr. Sessions stated that this means a minimum bill will go from eleven dollars to twelve dollars for two thousand gallons. Mr. Sessions stated that last year Richmond County was around seventeen dollars. Mr. Sessions proposed the same increase on sewer rates and have the minimum the same on both. Mr. Sessions noted that with the increase they are only talking approximately fifty-five to sixty thousand dollars extra a year. Vice Chair Streater felt this was good considering we've not had a rate increase in several years. Commissioner Sikes commented that people without water would love to give this for it. Mr. Sessions asked the board to consider increasing these fees one dollar a year for the next four or five years. Mr. Sessions stated that they will soon begin a five million dollar project with the lagoons and if people want up-to-date safe and reliable services they are going to have

to increase fees. Mr. Sessions reported that the electrical and chemicals have increased and just for filtration the electrical will be close to seven hundred thousand dollars next year. Chairman Baucom voiced that if we get an industry that uses a lot of water we need to have the money to put in the infrastructure needed to support this. Chairman Baucom felt we needed to get ahead of our expenses so we will have the resources to match or parlay into big money. Mr. Sessions stated that Union County was averaging about sixty million gallons a month and Richmond County was averaging about twenty-two million gallons a month. Commissioner Woodburn asked if Union County was within the contract of what they said they would take with Mr. Sessions stating that their average is sixty million seven hundred fifty thousand gallons. Mr. Sessions stated that they wanted to get to four million but because of the inter basin issue this was never signed. Commissioner Woodburn stated that in the discussions when we were doing the negotiations there was a contract in place that had been there for some years and if he is correct they were not taking what they were obligated to take. Chairman Baucom stated that they were not taking it but we also could not deliver as much as the contract calls for. Mr. Sessions stated that this was why they added a new line on their side of the county. County Manager Gatewood added that this is why we are investing in the electrical work at filtration and making other modifications so we can become a reliable supplier and deliver the amounts they want on a continuous ongoing basis. Commissioner Woodburn stated that based on the rationale for going up one dollar a year and recognizing the situation most Ansonians are in he would like some type projection showing our expected cost to justify the one dollar a year increase. County Manager Gatewood felt the board did not need to be concerned about the five year plan as we are looking at next year's budget which begins July 2013 and his recommendation is to go up one dollar on the monthly bill. County Manager Gatewood felt water in Anson County was an extremely good deal and labor cost alone over the last five years have increased. County Manager Gatewood stated that we've been experiencing anywhere from a one and one-half to a two and one-half salary increase and we're getting a break on health insurance this year but it has been double digit for the last three years. Vice Chair Streater wondered what a pump and well would cost adding that if the power goes off you don't have water. Commissioner Woodburn stated that if a citizen were to ask he wants to be able to say something. Chairman Baucom stated that she sees the justification as being a part of keeping the system pristine. Commissioner Woodburn voiced agreement but felt the average person would not see this. Chairman Baucom asked the cost to deliver one gallon of water with Mr. Sessions saying it cost them about two dollars and eighty cents per thousand to produce. Ms. James stated that five dollars and sixty cents equated to the minimum of twelve dollars means the difference is our profit to pay for infrastructure and the cost of doing business. Chairman Baucom asked the profit per thousand with Mr. Sessions answering on two thousand gallons it would be five dollars and some change. County Manager Gatewood noted this was the gross profit. Chairman Baucom felt this would be good information to have when you get it down to that level. Chairman Baucom asked if we have determined the impact of the read meters and if it has improved accuracy. Mr. Sessions stated that he was not here before the read meters but he has

been told that they have saved a lot of time and man hours. Chairman Baucom asked if we were still paying for the meters with Mr. Thomas thinking the payment goes through 2022. Mr. Sessions stated that they have one person reading the majority of meters now and from what he understands that before he came they had four crews of two people reading meters. Mr. Sessions mentioned that one day down the road there is such a thing where you can sit at the office and read meters. County Manager Gatewood felt it may not be that far down the road as McBee South Carolina currently uses that system. Ms. James mentioned one reason for putting the large tower at the new Emergency Services Center is to be able to do this. Chairman Baucom called for a motion to approve the rates. Motion by Vice Chair Streater, seconded by Commissioner Sturdivant, to approve the rates and budgets as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Chairman Baucom voiced appreciation for the work done by Mr. Sessions and all of his employees.

Motion by Vice Chair Streater, seconded by Commissioner Woodburn to recess until Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at 6:00 P.M. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Bonnie M. Huntley, NCCCC  
Clerk to the Board

Meeting time: 35 minutes

