

Water Committee Meeting

September 11th, 2017

JIMMY GUIDRY: Let's make it official. Call to order. Roll call.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Dirk Barrios (absent), Vern Breland (absent), Ben Bridges, Robert Brou, Jeffrey Duplantis (absent), Greg Gordon, Jimmy Guidry, Jimmy Hagan, Randy Hollis, Patrick Kerr, Amanda Laughlin, Rick Nowlin (absent), Rusty Reeves, Chris Richard, Keith Shackelford, Cheryl Slavant (absent), Joe Young, David Constant. We have a quorum and a majority vote.

JIMMY GUIDRY: A motion that we approve the minutes from July 25th.

CHRIS RICHARD: I make a motion.

BEN BRIDGES: Second.

JIMMY GUIDRY: Anyone oppose? All right, the minutes are approved as written. We will go to old business. We're here for the final approval of four years of work. With the intention of having a notice go out on October 20th, a hearing on November 28th, final rule in January and effective July 1, 2018. Do I hear any discussion on the proposal?

RANDY HOLLIS: I make a motion we accept as written.

CHRIS RICHARD: I second.

JIMMY GUIDRY: Well, it's certainly been moved and second. Anybody opposed to accepting the notice of intent? Okay. It

is accepted as written and we will go forward with years of hard work. Any comments from the public at this point?

DAVID MCCAY: Are we going to go and take an actual counted vote.

Each person go by and say aye.

JIMMY GUIDRY: Call the roll and say aye if you accept or no if you don't.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Dirk Barrios (absent), Vern Breland (absent), Ben Bridges.

BEN BRIDGES: Aye.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Robert Brou.

ROBERT BROU: Aye.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Jeffrey Duplantis (absent), Greg Gordon.

GREG GORDON: Aye.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Jimmy Guidry.

JIMMY GUIDRY: Aye.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Jimmy Hagan.

JIMMY HAGAN: Aye.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Randy Hollis.

RANDY HOLLIS: Yes.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Patrick Kerr.

PATRICK KERR: Yep.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Amanda Laughlin.

AMANDA LAUGHLIN: Yes.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Rusty Reeves.

RUSTY REEVES: Yes.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Chris Richard.

CHRIS RICHARD: Yes.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Keith Shackelford.

KEITH SHACKELFORD: Yes.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Joe Young.

JOE YOUNG: Yes.

CARYN BENJAMIN: Dr. Constant.

DAVID CONSTANT: Yes.

CARYN BENJAMIN: All ayes.

JIMMY GUIDRY: It's official David. I know we're at the end of the agenda already. I would like to take a few minutes if everybody is okay to talk about going forward from here. Obviously the work that was laid before us was a challenge and we did a lot of hard work and got a lot done. I will share with you some concerns I have on a lot of infrastructure in the state, water infrastructure in particular, is aging and people are not investing in maintenance. We're seeing numerous systems as a result of things happening in Flint Michigan, and followed by St. Joseph in our state, small community systems that don't have many customers, that don't have much funding, trying to get the state to find the funding to help them replace their systems or refurbish their systems. And of course the state doesn't have that kind of funding. So what I have seen happen in other states and make some sense is that when you don't have enough customers and systems are

too small they usually come together and try to combine systems so they can get more customers and can afford to do what they need to do. But I'm not seeing in rural areas, particularly up in North Louisiana, I'm not seeing a whole lot acceptance of trying to do that. I see a lot of political moves where people want to keep their structure, they want to keep their water districts, they want to keep their small communities on a water system. And so I think it's going to take some legislation to change that kind of behavior and that kind of thinking. And the reason I bring that up is because when it becomes politics and you want to get people on board sometimes you have to start writing new policy at the state level to get the locals to accept. We've had a lot of heat from some legislators that want to change some of the way we deal with water systems. There's been a push to make us accept state regulations for secondary standards and a push for us to address failing systems. And so we have been charged, LDH, with the help of this committee, to come up with legislation for next year's session so that legislators can change some of the requirements in the state to help do what we need to do to get systems to maintain their systems and provide safe drinking water. What I found is a lot of small communities they collect a fee and they don't reinvest in the water. They use it for running the city or their little town and it doesn't go towards water. So it might be legislation that requires

if you collect a fee for water it has to go towards water. Something that simple to get this to work. But I'm going to need your help to figure it out. It's not a simple solution. It's going to take all of us looking at systems around the state and it's going to take probably going back to our monthly meetings and trying to get this done. We're going to have to invite, in particular, legislators that gave us a lot of grief last year to the meeting. And then we're going to have to address the subjects. I'm proposing our next meeting, which could be later this month or early next month, to invite the legislators and start having these conversations. And so I kind of want to get a feel from y'all. I know y'all already agreed to help me with this at a previous meeting. I'm reminding you. I don't want to take too much time today on it. We didn't really come with preparations. We would start by looking at which water systems are in trouble with requirements around the state and our surveys. What are those things that are getting them in trouble. And how could we improve our surveys. Remember the work that we did is about now going out to water systems and being able to survey them to see if they're meeting standards or requirements to provide safe drinking water. Now that we've done the work we need to survey the water systems. Look at the ones that are getting administrative orders, look at what their problems are, and see what might be solutions to help fix those problems. Y'all

being the experts, I would want y'all input and want to move forward with recommendations to the legislators. We have to do a report, the department, with your help, on this subject matter by next session. Before the session so they can come up with legislation. So probably need to have three or four monthly meetings, share information, discuss, and come up with recommendations to the legislators. Any thoughts or questions?

KEITH SHACKELFORD: Y'all mentioned you have been in contact with other states and procedures and policies they instituted. If there are hard copies or written copies of any of that stuff if you could make that available.

AMANDA LAUGHLIN: I can. There's a few states actual regulations on consolidation. Alabama, Kentucky, a couple other ones.

KEITH SHACKELFORD: Whatever you have. Sooner so we can be familiar with it before the meeting.

AMANDA LAUGHLIN: Sure.

JIMMY GUIDRY: With that said, anybody else have any thoughts before we move on? Everybody's happy we didn't get Irma and Harvey, right. Two bullets that we missed. All right, well good. I think we're just about done. We probably wanted to take our picture of our group so we can put this in history. And also hold you accountable. And certainly our leads in engineering who have stepped up to the plate and helped work.

For a year or two I thought we would never agree on anything. It changed for the best. I'm really pleased with the work and I'm really pleased we're now getting to where we're working together. I think we went from disagreeing on how we work together to you supporting us on getting a fee and helping us do what we need to do. To me that was a huge change in history that I'm really proud that we've all worked and made happen. There have been no other fees that have passed. And there's no appetite for fees, much less taxes. We just timed it right and did it right and with your support made it happen. Hopefully that will help us find systems that are getting in trouble early so we can help them not get in trouble. It's too expensive to replace their systems. I think St. Joseph is a good example of what you should not do which was spend millions of dollars to fix a very small water system. And they're going to have good water at the end of the day, but it can't be the model for the rest of the state cause we can't afford it. Hopefully we can avoid those kind of decisions going forward. With that said, do I hear a motion for adjournment? And then we'll get together for a picture.

PATICK KERR: So moved.

RUSTY REEVES: Second.

JIMMY GUIDRY: Anybody opposed? All right. That's got to be a record.