

Final

THIRD TAXING DISTRICT
of the City of Norwalk
Special Meeting
November 12, 2012

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners: Paul Kokias, Chair; David Brown, Charles Yost.

STAFF: James Smith, General Manager; Ron Scofield, Assist. General Mgr.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kokias called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated that the Commissioners as listed above were in attendance and that there was a quorum present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Ms. Diane Cece, Olmstead Place stated that she had comments relative to the post storm evaluation. She prefaced her comments with acknowledging the TTD as always providing exemplary service in the past in comparison to other Norwalk resident experiences with CL&P. She stated that her comments come from the frustration with a lack of communication and feeling “left in the dark” and she provided the following suggestions for future storm-related outages:
 - Provide appropriate notice in advance of major storm events by emailing or calling ratepayers — provide us with handy reference to number to call for outages, how to report special residence needs, what to expect after reporting an outage and how to get updates.
 - Provide smart phones and or computer tablets to linemen so they can communicate via text or phone to dispatch with progress reports or problems.
 - Whoever prioritizes the crews should ensure that the dispatch and emergency phone teams have the exact same route list, and updates should be simultaneous.
 - Arrange for mutual aid sooner and through whatever channels are used by CL&P and major utilities, but at least one week in advance.
 - Utilize the city Code Red reverse call system to communicate to us during emergencies, such as streets closed, outage updates, and what TTD facilities are operating (office, library, firehouse, etc).
 - Consider adding pre-trained volunteers with scripts and basic info to relieve the office staff for emergency and routine calls.
 - Continue mutual aid work between TTD and SNEW.
 - Prioritize dead end and cul-de-sac road first if tree or line blockage since we don't have an alternative way off the street. (neighbors cleared down tree/limbs on Olmstead).

There was an exchange of questions/answers and comments from the Commissioners and General Manager. Mr. Smith stated that he had prepared a list of his recommendations that he would be addressing later on the agenda. He further explained that he and the TTD crews worked 18-hour days during the storm recovery and he had spent extensive time at the City's Emergency Operations Center.

He reported that he had created a red-alert (reverse 911) message and worked with the Mayor on the recording of a TTD specific message to district residents informing them that power would be restored to the majority of residents within 48 hours.

Ms. Cece summarized that there needs to be greater internal communications and improved website postings similar to that on the City's website. She added that the telephone operators needed to identify themselves when answering the phones and that every time she called she had to continually ask who she was speaking with.

Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Cece for her comments and stated that her input is appreciated.

MINUTES OF MEETING: October 1, 2012

- ** MR. BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 1, 2012 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** MR. YOST SECONDED THE MOTION.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

General Manager's Report

Mr. Smith stated that the first item on his report was a discussion of the October 1, 2012 minutes, but other than grammatical changes, he had no issues with the minutes.

APPA ECO Calendar: Mr. Smith presented a sample of a calendar that could be done as an affordable giveaway for the district that would provide energy saving ideas to customers. A discussion ensued on the concept and it was agreed that although it was an affordable option, it was not really useful as it was not able to be posted as a refrigerator a magnet or a calendar with photographs. Mr. Yost asked how this would be distributed to customers, and Mr. Smith mentioned that it would have to be distributed at the office as mailing costs would be prohibitive. It was agreed to look at other more cost-effective options such as inclusion in the newsletter of a feature of energy-saving tips or on the website.

Report on Hurricane Sandy: Mr. Smith presented several photographs of damage to the district and a list of pros and cons, summarizing the following points: Power on with excellent response time, the majority back by Wednesday-Thursday p.m.--all on by Friday p.m. with exception of Canfield Island. He stated that the positive outcomes are based upon the knowledge and experience of Staff; Field Personnel were informative and polite with customers, and there was good overall feedback from customers. The areas that needed improved upon included the mapping of circuits, office/field communication, external communication including Website, Paperwork as Lists - were duplicated and there needed to be "One" list to work from.

He added that the crew was delayed from direct response due to the winds that made it unsafe and resulted in starting on Tuesday morning, which represented a loss of 6-8 hours.

He added that equipment deficiencies included the bucket truck, etc. and presented a list of Emergency Plan Recommendations as follows:

- Provide a script for those people answering the telephone telling them what to tell the callers.
- Somehow have one outage/Problem list rather than 3 or 4 lists with duplicates.
- Make arrangements through Custom Phone so that we can put a message on the phone documenting outages as soon as possible (keep list updated constantly).
- Make it part of our Emergency Procedure to try to get out of state crews from Georgia, etc. as soon as we are aware of a probable storm for our area.
- Purchase GPS's to be used for out of town crews to use and also for tree crews.
- Have a list of additional tree crews that we can contact and put on alert.
- Just prior to the storm hitting, have 1 or 2 tree crews actually on site so that they can be used immediately when we begin restoration.
- Set up a storm emergency list of our customer service staff indicating who would perform the various jobs like keeping master list of calls, who talks to customers, etc.

Ms. Smith summarized that that approximately 1900 customers were out of power in total and that approximately 125 were still off by Wednesday @ 6:00 PM. He stated that the number of utility poles replaced was 18, and the number of trees down was 35-40 (that they are aware of) He further explained the use of mutual aid with out of state crews and the agreement of double time wages.

A discussion ensued regarding underground wiring and Mr. Kokias explained that the cost estimates range from \$1 million for every mile of underground placement. Mr. Smith suggested that a policy be created to require any new construction be placed underground, particularly in the areas of Pequot where so much time and resources are required to clear trees and downed lines. Ms. Cece added that zoning variances pose logistic challenges and such underground wiring requirement is very complicated with city zoning regulations. Mr. Smith stated that he would research this item and provide a recommendation to the Commissioners.

Other discussion items included the use of custom recorded messages delivered to customers via a reverse 911 system and phone system modifications that could accommodate this objective.

Analysis of Financials

Mr. Smith referred to the summary report and reviewed the financial highlights for the month of September. He referred to the detail report provided to track expenses year to date with comparisons versus prior year, the Profit & Loss Statement, he reviewed the footnote explanations of major variances and fielded questions and comments.

A discussion ensued on the Norden Project Income and Mr. Smith explained the process of capacity payment as unit usage is down. He stated that on-going analysis is in progress and he will come back with a recommendation as how to handle this item.

Discussion of 215 East Avenue Home Repairs

Mr. Smith stated that as a follow up to the discussions of prior meetings, a complete report was included in the agenda packet. He referred to the comprehensive interior and exterior inspection of the property, and the results and stated that the tenant has given notice to terminate the current rental arrangement. He explained that Commissioners need to make a decision on future use of the property and how to proceed.

A discussion ensued on the possibility of selling or keeping the property and potential uses. Mr. Kokias stated that he feels the building is not in that bad of shape and only about \$5,000 is needed for improvement expenses to make it livable. He added that he has no strong feeling on fixing it to keep or to sell. Mr. Yost stated that he prefers to keep the property as a real estate investment and suggested that there needs to be prioritization of improvements needed and a maintenance plan.

Mr. Brown suggested that the area of state grants be explored with the potential of selling the property to the City to be used as parking area for the and having the Library funding come from the state rather than a district operating expense. He explained that ADA accessibility would be satisfied and that the City would be able to acquire much needed parking space in exchange for Library funding from the state.

It was agreed to table the item until Mr. Brown is able to go to Hartford to look into state grant funding.

Substation Development – Verbal Update on Fitch Street Substation Development

Mr. Smith presented a summary of the financing plan of payments scheduled for Fitch Street. Mr. Brown asked about if this was in line with cash flow projections and available cash resources, and Mr. Scofield explained that this is within the approved plan. Mr. Smith explained that this was established as draw downs from Capital Improvements along with proposed funding within the threshold of funds available from the Operations Account.

Mr. Smith referred to the flowchart posted and explained that they are in the process of ordering the pole for the interconnection tower for transmission and that Eaton has submitted orders for equipment needed for the spring construction timing.

Mr. Kokias asked about the transformer and Mr. Smith replied that it has been acquired and will be ready for use in the spring.

Mr. Yost asked about the timing, and Mr. Smith replied that timing is still spring through next summer, and barring unforeseen delays, the timing should remain on target.

Cervalis Data Center – Verbal Update

Mr. Smith gave an update that the process of the attorneys reviewing all the contracts to be linked together has been a very involved learning process that has identified discrepancies with the contracts and the interrelated issues. He stated that a special meeting needs to be held to review the details of these requirements and due to the complicated nature, the areas are very involved.

Mr. Brown stated that he has articles from Stamford that can shed information and shared learning with Stamford and their experiences in this matter that he will e-mail to the Commissioners.

Discussion of Custom Phone Proposal

Mr. Smith referred to his memo and summary of phone issues and a formal pricing proposal from Custom Phone, the current telephone vendor, which was developed in response to a request for a solution to deficiencies in our existing phone system. He explained that one of the major complaints is the inability to get through to department personnel during the business day due to the lack of capacity (open lines) in the system. He summarized that his recommendation would be to accept Custom Phones proposal to upgrade our existing phone system and make the adjustments in our phone lines to reduce our monthly phone bill due to additional competition between commercial local and long distance carriers.

Mr. Brown asked about the capability of features to include reverse 911 calling, and Mr. Smith replied that he would look into this and would communicate that this is an objective of the modification plan.

Ms. Cece suggested that the item go out for bid and that an RFP for a completely new system be done. Mr. Smith stated that this is a time consuming process and explained that the current communication hardware is an Avaya 406 office control unit, which is approximately six years old and difficult to get replacement parts for. As a result, this unit is more expensive to maintain when service is required. A new Avaya IP 500 control unit, which is included as part of the proposal, is priced at \$3575.84 and includes labor for installation and programming. We will continue to utilize our current handsets. Mr. Kokias initially suggested that a phone call be made to look into other vendors and Mr. Smith explained that this proposal results in a return on investment of approximately one and a half to two years when you “net out “ the annual savings in the monthly phone bill. Mr. Yost suggested that in view of the complex nature of other more pressing items such as the substation, this idea of completely revamping the phone system should be tabled until a point in the future.

Ms. Cece called for a point of order that the agenda did not call for action and was only for discussion.

**** MR. KOKIAS MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD POSSIBLE ACTION TO ITEM 8 TO READ DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION OF CUSTOM PHONE PROPOSAL.**

**** MR. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. YOST MOVED TO ACCEPT CUSTOM PHONES PROPOSAL TO UPGRADE THE EXISTING PHONE SYSTEM IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$3,575.84 TO MAKE THE MODIFICATION ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PHONE SYSTEM**

**** MR. BROWN SECONDED THE MOTION.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discussion of TTD Policy Manual

Mr. Smith referred to the current Policy Manual, stating that he has a list of items that represents overall TTD policy guidelines and that most policies may need updating and may not reflect current operations. He suggested that he would e-mail this list to the Commissioners for review and feedback.

2013 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Smith referred to the list of meeting dates proposed as follows:

Monday: January 7, February 4, March 4, April 1, May 5, June 3, July 1, August 5, September 9, October 7; Wednesday, November 6, Monday, December 2.
Annual Meeting: Wednesday March 6, 7:00 p.m.

**** MR. KOKIAS MOVED TO APPROVE THE LIST OF MEETING DATES FOR 2013 AS PRESENTED.**

**** MR. BROWN SECONDED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Adjournment

**** MR. KOKIAS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. BROWN SECONDED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Knox
Telesco Secretarial Services