



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Customer and Community Service
Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 8, 2005
10:00 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Board Members in Attendance

**Alexander McPhail
David J. Bardin
Brenda Richardson
Stephanie Nash**

WASA Staff in Attendance

**Jerry N. Johnson, General Manager
Avis M. Russell, General Counsel
Charles Kiely, Customer Service Director
Michele Quander-Collins, Public Affairs Director
Johnnie Hemphill, Ass't to General Manager
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary**

Mr. McPhail called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m.

CUSTOMER SURVEY

Michele Quander-Collins reported that the customer survey is underway and that management has met with the Gallup Organization (the firm that will conduct the surveys). She also noted that the Gallup Organization was the sole bidder. She reported that some revisions were made to the original proposal that eliminated a customer group and that management spent some time negotiating a price less than the original price.

Ms. Richardson asked which customer group was eliminated? Ms. Quander-Collins indicated that wholesale and pretreatment customers were eliminated because WASA did not see the value in pursuing this small group. Ms. Quander-Collins stated that the groups being targeted by WASA are retail customers, and retail commercial customers including multi-family.

Ms. Quander-Collins reported that WASA is in the process of developing a survey instrument and that the Gallup Organization wants to ensure they get feedback from as many stakeholders in the timeframe they have been given. She also referred to a revised change to the original timeline that appeared in the RFP. The difference is that the consultant would report their findings to the Customer and Community Services Committee in December rather than November. The consultant would then need additional time to prepare a full report for the Board in January.

Ms. Quander-Collins stated that the contractor is developing approximately 20 or 30 survey questions that would take about ten minutes to complete. She also indicated that the contractor is scheduled to meet with Mr. Johnson on September 10, 2005 to get his perspective on the survey. Of the 1,750 customers to be surveyed, at least 250 will have had contact with the Authority within the last sixty days. Both Mr. Kiely and Ms. Quander-Collins spent time with the contractor collecting information needed to build their database. As a result, various files were provided to the contractor.

Mr. McPhail inquired about the cost of this project. Ms. Quander-Collins replied that the cost of this project is one hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (\$185,000). Mr. Bardin asked how the contact is made with the customer? The contact is made by telephone survey.

Ms. Quander-Collins indicated that the draft questionnaire should be ready for review no later than Monday, September 12, 2005. Mr. McPhail asked that a copy be emailed to the Committee.

Mr. Bardin asked if the survey would ask the single-family residential group if they drink WASA water or bottled water. Mr. Bardin stated that he is also curious, if it is not too difficult to find out, whether patterns of drinking WASA water versus bottled water differ by neighborhoods or sections of the City, for example, comparing East Capitol Street, NE with Western Avenue, NW.

Mr. Bardin noted that most customers who live in the District of Columbia do not live in a single-family home; they live in multi-story houses, rent apartments, condos, or co-ops. Mr. Bardin asked if these individuals were being contacted or just the owner who pays the bill? Mr. Kiely replied that WASA's billing system is not set-up to contact tenants. Mr. Johnson added that management would look into trying to contact the tenants versus the owners.

COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

A. Summary of Accomplishments for FY05 (for presentation at October Board meeting)

- Mr. McPhail suggested that the Committee prepare a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes everything that the Committee has accomplished in FY05
- Mr. McPhail also suggested that the staff review the Committee Workplan to update the information that pertains to each goal.

B. Identify Goals for FY 06

- Mr. McPhail suggested that the members of the Customer & Community Services Committee work on the FY06 goals at the Board retreat and that one of goals should be "Meet the Customers Needs"

LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT

Mr. Kiely distributed a report to the committee on lead service line replacements. Mr. Kiely reported that 26% of the 5,179 contracts sent to customers agreed to have the private side replacement. He also reported that about 20% of the customers actually replaced the service line on private property.

Mr. Kiely reported that 82,592 feet of lead service lines was replaced in public space so far in 2005. An additional 9,244 feet was replaced on private property. The footage replaced on private property represents about 28% of the total footage that could have been replaced

Mr. McPhail asked, if there was any correlation between the length of pipe and the likelihood of customers replacing their side. Mr. Kiely stated that more analysis is needed before we can draw any conclusions. Mr. Bardin observed that WASA had replaced 79% of the total public and

private space footage combined for the houses addressed, noting that on the average each house has considerable more public space footage than private space footage of service line.

AMR UPDATE

Mr. McPhail asked when the AMR project would be completed? Mr. Kiely replied that there are approximately 4,500 meters remaining to be installed with about 450 of these classified as large meters. Mr. Kiely stated that we currently have a request for a proposal to purchase the meters and meter transmitting units needed to complete the AMR project. We will also be putting out a second procurement within two weeks for installation contractors.

Mr. Kiely noted that the AMR project completion target date is around April or May of next year in terms of the large meters. Mr. Johnson stated that once we get a contractor on board then we can give a definite schedule of when the project will be complete, but until we get the details March or the spring of next year would be our best estimated date.

Mr. Bardin stated that management needs a plan for getting data to the Committee so that they can review the various profiles of the customers (large, small) etc. Mr. Bardin also suggested management use the system for providing data information to the Board so that they can decide what policy issues and proposals are going to be adopted.

There was a discussion on delayed responses to specific Committee data requests. Mr. Johnson explained that the billing system is still being updating and upgraded. He also indicated that the new system would allow WASA to collect additional data that was not captured with the past system. In time WASA will have the capability of extracting data from the new billing system that we never captured before. However, the primary focus is to bill because we were not billing our customers accurately in the past.

Mr. Bardin replied that he would like to see the 450 meters ranked 1 to 450 on an annual or monthly basis showing how much they received. He would also like to know how much water WASA delivers to each of these 450 meters over a set period of time so that he can get some sense of what the cumulative amount is from the largest to the smallest.

SPLASH UPDATE

A. Commercial customer effort

Mr. Kiely said that staff is working on ways to inform commercial customers about the SPLASH program with the objective of increasing the number participating in the program. As a start in this direction, he reported that we now have a message targeted for the bills sent to commercial customers.

EMERGING ISSUE

Mr. Johnson reported that Mirant closed down its Potomac River Power Plant in Alexandria, Virginia, which may potentially impact Blue Plains Power needs.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 noon.