



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Human Resources and Labor Relations Committee

September 23, 2009

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Anthony H. Griffin, Chair
Kathleen Boucher
Howard Gibbs

Senior Staff Present

Avis Marie Russell, Interim General
Manager
Meena Gowda, Acting General Counsel
Katrina Wiggins, Human Resources
Director
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary

Board Member

David J. Bardin
David Byrd

Union Presidents Present

Jonathan Shanks, AFGE 872
Shawn Henson, AFGE 2553
Michelle Hunter, NAGE
Delores Stevens representing James Ivey, AFSCME 2091
Leroy Staten representing Barbara Milton, AFGE 631

Anthony H. Griffin, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. The Committee immediately moved to executive session at 11:06 am. The General Session reconvened at 11:14 am.

Immediately upon reconvening, Mr. Griffin, proposed that the employment contract for Mr. George S. Hawkins, the new General Manager, be forwarded to the Board for action at the October 1, 2009 meeting. The Committee members concurred.

Mr. Griffin continued the meeting with agenda item 2, union presidents. He noted that the union presidents had submitted five issues for discussion. Delores Stevens, recording secretary, AFCME 2091, noted that the Unions had presented a proposal to the Authority regarding a *Voluntary Leave Donation Program* and asked when the Unions might receive the Authority's response. Avis Marie Russell, Interim General

Manager, responded that the Unions had presented the proposal at the last quarterly Joint Labor-Management and would provide a response at the next scheduled meeting in October. Ms Russell asked if she should meet with the Unions or reschedule the meeting for Mr. Hawkins, the new General Manager. Mr. Griffin suggested that for the sake of continuity, Ms. Russell meet with the Unions as scheduled and allow Mr. Hawkins to meet with the Union when his schedule permits.

The next issues raised by the Unions centered on information on the incoming general manager's proposed changes, and his availability to meet with the Union leadership. In response to the Unions question, Mr. Griffin said that Mr. Hawkins has not shared any immediate changes with him. He expects Mr. Hawkins will want to meet with the Unions, however, he is unable to provide an exact date. Mr. Staten, local 631 representative, requested that the Union meeting be placed on the General Manager's agenda. Mr. Griffin indicated that he would inform Mr. Hawkins of the Unions' request.

Jonathan Shanks, president, AFGE 872, raised the issue that the Authority has inadequate security around the Bryant Street facility. He requested that the Board get directly involved to ensure the barricades are put in place as soon as possible. Ms. Russell indicated that this was a topic at the last Joint Labor Management meeting. She noted that Mr. Shanks met with Mr. Johnson, Mr. Kiely and Mr. Lallis regarding the matter. She further stated that it was her understanding that EPA would have recommended structural changes to the facility, if it had been necessary. Ms. Russell indicated that she did tell Mr. Shanks that the Authority would investigate the feasibility of some changes in the front of the building and that she would report back at the next Joint Labor Management meeting.

Mr. Griffin indicated that there clearly is a difference in opinion regarding this matter between the Authority and Mr. Shanks and staff clearly thought the issue was resolved at the last meeting. He suggested that the Authority contact the Metropolitan Police Department and have someone with expertise in these matters review the current security measures and make any recommendations. David Bardin, Board member, also suggested that the Authority contact Homeland Security and get their guidance as well. Howard Gibbs, Committee member, agreed that such expertise would be helpful and also suggested that the Authority ask the experts to review security at the McMillan Reservoir.

Mr. Griffin addressed the Unions' request to meet with the full Board of Directors by advising them that it has been the preference of past Board Chairmen to have the Human Resources and Labor Relations Committee meet with the Unions instead of the

full Board. Mr. Griffin indicated that he would forward the Unions most recent request to Mr. Walker, Board Chairman.

The last issue raised by the Unions concerned alleged racism at the Authority. Mr. Griffin explained that this issue involves a manager who forwarded an e-mail using Authority computers and that the Authority was administratively reviewing the matter. He reminded the Unions that personnel matters such as investigations were not appropriate topics for this meeting. Shawn Henson, president local 2553, indicated that the Unions had raised the issue because it was causing great concern to his members. Mr. Shanks passed out copies of the e-mail and a memorandum to Ms. Wiggins, dated September 22, 2009 to the Committee. Ms. Russell noted that neither she nor Ms. Wiggins had received a copy of the letter prior to the meeting and confirmed that it was improper to discuss the issue due to on-going investigation.

Mr. Griffin asked Ms. Russell to keep him posted and asked that she bring closure to this matter as soon as possible. Ms. Russell indicated that she would do so and expected that the matter would be complete by the end of September.

Mr. Griffin asked if the presidents had anything else they wanted to bring to the Committee's attention. Michelle Hunter, president for NAGE, indicated that in the past the union presidents had met with the Board Chairperson, General Manager and his cabinet. Mr. Griffin pointed out that the meeting was with the Board Chair and not the entire Board.

Stephen Cook, Labor Relations Manager reported that the final Working Conditions Agreement with NAGE had been ratified by the members. He noted that negotiations had commenced in May 2007, the interest arbitrator issued the award in May 2009. The Union notified the Authority on August 26, 2009 that its members ratified the agreement. The Committee agreed to recommend the Agreement be approved at the October 1, 2009 Board meeting.

The next agenda item focused on the Authority's succession planning effort. Ms. Russell noted that the succession planning program will have an impact on the Authority's budget and a cost effective process will need to be used when the program is implemented. Ms. Russell indicated that all the required materials would be provided when the budget is presented and her only goal was to have the Committee be sensitive to the cost involved. Ms. Wiggins, provided a detailed overview of the succession planning program structure and approach to executive development. Mr. Griffin noted that staff would have the opportunity to work with the new General Manager on this program and indicated that the staff should investigate the Counsel of

Governments/George Washington University certificate program that Board Member David Lake had just completed.

Mr. Bardin asked how many critical positions had the Authority designated for succession planning. Ms. Russell indicated that the Authority needed to develop current staff's executive management skills and would review all of the managers to see if any could be trained for future Executive Staff positions. Mr. Bardin requested that the new General Manager be briefed on the program.

Terry Gilmore, Training and Development Manager, provided an update on the Authority's Adult Literacy Program, WASA Reads. Ms. Michelle Buckmire, Benefits Manager, provided a presentation on the health benefit plan modifications and the projected cost savings. Ms. Boucher, Committee member, asked whether the staff should look at the Authority's claims experience if the Board was serious about considering joining a coalition. Mr. Griffin suggested that the staff keep the option of joining a coalition in mind for the future. He indicated that he was comfortable with the staff's recommendation and urged a strong education process regarding good health practices etc.

Everett Lallis, Director, Safety and Security, presented the annual safety report. Mr. Gibbs asked if the Authority tracked the total number of preventable incidents as well as the total number of unpreventable incidents. Mr. Lallis indicated that the Authority did not keep those statistics on all incidents – only on vehicle accidents.

Mr. Griffin noted that WASA's trend of incidents is declining and felt that a semi-annual report may be more useful. Ms. Russell responded that the General Manager's report will include a section regarding this matter beginning with the next report. Mr. Lallis then took the opportunity to introduce the Authority's new Security Manager, Gary Owens. Mr. Owens has held similar positions at Fannie Mae, PEPCO, and the National Institutes of Health.

Mr. Bardin indicated that he did not understand why the Authority did not begin recruiting immediately when it became aware of an upcoming vacancy. He pointed to the fact that the current Customer Service Director is leaving on Friday and the Authority has yet to begin recruiting for the position. Ms. Russell indicated that it has been the Authority's practice not to post a position until it had been vacated by the incumbent. She indicated that as Interim General Manager, she did not believe it was appropriate for her to make any major policy changes and that the new General Manager may look to change this practice.

Mr. Bardin asked what would happen while the position was under recruitment. Ms. Russell indicated that an acting director would be appointed. Mr. Bardin also asked if the Authority had an exit interview process. Ms. Wiggins indicated that she routinely met with outgoing senior staff to determine if there were immediate issues that resulted in the decision to leave.

Ms. Russell noted that the Kaiser Permanente contract, a center-based HMO, was a sole source contract and requested that the Committee recommend its approval to the Board of Directors at the October 1st meeting. Ms. Boucher asked for clarification on "center based" provider. Ms. Russell explained and noted that Kaiser Permanente is the only center-based provider in the region.

Having no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:24 pm.