



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
*Human Resources and Labor Relations
Committee*

September 22, 2010

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Anthony H. Griffin, Chair
Kathleen Boucher
Howard Croft

Board Members

David J. Bardin
Howard C. Gibbs
Paivi E. Spoon

Union Presidents Present

Shawn Henson, AFGE 2553
Michelle Hunter, NAGE
James Ivey, AFSCME 2091
Barbara Milton, AFGE 631
Jonathan Shanks, AFGE 872

DC Water Staff Present

George S. Hawkins, General Manager (via
telephone)
Christopher J. Carew, Chief of Staff
Avis Marie Russell, General Counsel
Katrina Wiggins, AGM, Support Services
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary

Anthony H. Griffin, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m.

Mr. Griffin began with the only agenda item: Presentation by the Union Presidents.

Safety

Barbara Milton, President AFGE 631 began by expressing concern regarding her perception that the General Manager and Chief of Staff only meet with one union, AFSCME. One of the reasons for drawing this conclusion was that AFSCME 2091 was the only union that met with the DC Water management team (Blue Stat) to discuss the reorganization of the Safety Committee. Ms. Milton did admit that a meeting invitation through Outlook was sent which she and another Union President, Shawn Henson AFGE 2553 did not acknowledge. Mr. Shanks, President, AFGE 872 did not have email at the time and Michelle Hunter, President NAGE was inadvertently omitted from the email. Robert Thorne, Director, Process Improvement and Performance Management met with the Union Presidents to bring them up-to-date on the outcome of the meeting. AFGE 631 and AFSCME 2091 have both submitted proposals. No decisions have been made; both proposals are under review.

Ms. Milton complained that Local 631 and the other Unions felt excluded because AFSCME 2091 is offering to provide \$300,000 in grant funding for safety training and the Authority appears to be interested in accepting their offer. Furthermore, she said that she was refused meetings with the General Manager after the Methanol spill. She raised concerns about the online store and union classification process.

Michelle Hunter, President, NAGE noted her concern about the emergency response plan and felt that the issues could be resolved by the Safety Committee. Jonathan Shanks, President, AFGE 872 acknowledged a safety walk-through which he was unable to attend. He noted that he has been trying to get the Authority to install jersey barriers in front of Bryant Street for the past four to five years. Mr. Shanks added that the Blue Stat executive team met with the unions after the walk-through to provide the results.

Chris Carew, Chief of Staff, explained that the Blue Stat is a gathering of management decision-makers, identifies issues and discusses them with the Unions at the beginning of the process.

Mr. Griffin requested that staff provide the Committee with a presentation regarding the status of the DC Water Safety Program including training.

Mr. Carew noted that he is unable to discuss matters subject to an unfair labor practice (ULP) charge filed by AFGE 631.

There was discussion about the new safety committee. Mr. Carew noted that at the next meeting staff will provide a more thorough briefing on how safety issues are addressed, who is involved, and the Authority's current training offerings.

Mr. Gibbs, Board Member requested that the Committee be given more information regarding safety, specifically how the Authority responds to emergency situations. The Board needs to have basic information regarding safety and employees need to know what the plan is and how safety is handled in the field.

Mr. Griffin inquired about the methanol spill. Mr. Carew reported that no employee was in danger as a result of the spill. Employees received notification and the spill involved about two gallons of methanol. The system is designed to be safe even if there is a spill because there is no ignition source near the area. The standard procedure when dealing with such a spill is to wash the area down with water and that is what was done.

Mr. Griffin reiterated that staff needs to provide an update regarding the safety training at the next meeting and that he hoped the inter-union disputes would be resolved by that time.

Security Barriers at Bryant Street

Mr. Griffin noted that Mr. Shanks has been on record for several years wanting jersey barriers at Bryant Street and at the last meeting with the Unions, management was asked to engage a third party to review DC Water security. Mr. Carew noted nothing has changed factually with regard to this subject. Gary Owens, Director, Safety & Security (Acting) noted that the area is secure since the outer perimeter has a fence with gates and a chain link fence and that there is 24/7 security. Ms. Russell noted when she was interim General Manager, a walkthrough with homeland security was completed and an oral report was received which in effect stated that personnel from homeland security did not think that jersey barriers were effective. She was not aware of a written report.

Mr. Griffin said that Fairfax County operates a large water system and does not use jersey barriers. However, it is not a core facility in DC. More discussion followed, and Mr. Bardin requested a copy of the written report. Mr. Griffin agreed and stated they need a copy of the written report and if there is no written report, and it is not possible to get one, the process must be repeated. The scope of the review must be shared with the unions before the review takes place and management must meet with unions before the report is issued.

Mr. Gibbs stated that the question that must be answered is, are DCWater facilities safe? If they are not safe, are there other options besides the barriers to make them safe. Mr. Carew responded that staff will address this issue in the next meeting. Mr.

Griffin added while the focus should be on Bryant Street, the security of the other facilities should be done as well.

Online Store

Mr. Griffin then addressed the issue of a virtual store. Ms. Milton raised a concern in a letter to the Board requesting a review. Mr. Carew stated that the goal was to seek a union friendly vendor and that our public affairs director Allen Heymann found this vendor.

Mr. Griffin asked if the vendor was chosen by competitive bid. Mr. Hawkins, General Manager, responded that no competitive bid was required as no Authority funds were to be used. Purchases are made voluntarily by employees and the only goal was finding a union friendly company to ensure that no workers were being exploited. Howard Croft, Committee Member added that management should be applauded for this action, not criticized; it's not often that management spends the time looking for a union friendly vendor.

Mr. Shanks added that safety is the most important issue and it needs to be reviewed. Last week, an alarm went off while at Blue Plains. The fire department never responded. Mr. Gibbs noted it sounds like there may be a significant delay between the time the alarm goes off and the fire department is called. Mr. Bardin asked how long it takes to make this decision. Gary Owens, Acting Safety & Security Director, responded it could take up to five to ten minutes. More discussion followed and Mr. Griffin noted that this needs to be resolved by the next meeting.

In closing, Mr. Ivey noted the primary concern from AFSCME is safety.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 pm