

POSTED AT PARISH COMPLEX BY APRIL 9, 2021

AGENDA

UTILITES WORKGROUP MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2021 AT 5:30 P.M.

ST. TAMMANY GOVERNMENT COMPLEX

21490 KOOP DRIVE, MANDEVILLE, LA.

Call to Order by Honorable Michael R. Lorino, Jr., Chairman

Roll Call: Marty Dean  
Michael R. Lorino, Jr.  
James "Jimmie" Davis, III  
Christopher Canulette  
Michael "Mike" Maxwell Smith  
Jerry Binder

**PUBLIC COMMENT: a three (3) minute time limit is established for each member of the public wishing to speak (for or against) an item on the Agenda.**

1. Discussion of Tammany Utilities Operations

Present:

Members of the Committee: Mr. Lorino, Mr. Davis, Mr. Canulette, Mr. M. Smith, Mr. Binder (late and not on Committee – Toledano)

Staff: Riles, Gonzales, Hayes, Brown, St. Claire, Torreganno, Cindy Samuels, President Cooper

- Tim Brown, Director of Environmental Services and Tammany Utilities present power point presentation explaining projects and improvements for TU East and TU West, including decommissioning projects and projects towards regionalization goals.
- Questions from Councilmembers regarding vacancies, projects and repairs, financial position of TU.
- Councilman Binder reads email sent by CAO Gina Hayes. Discussion of email by Councilmembers and staff.
- Councilman Canulette asks for more detailed budget information.
- Discussion of Cross Gates area:
  - Speakers
    - Neil Waguespack: Allowed 7 minutes speaking time. Lives in affected area. Discussed history of issues in Cross Gates. Claims high chlorine levels have given him, his family, and his pets diarrhea and skin rashes. Only drinks Kentwood water. Claims that in the past no one at TU had correct licensures. Has purchased his own equipment to test water.
    - David Binder: 7 minutes speaking time. Lives in affected area. Son of Councilman Jerry Berry. Began having sewer back ups in 2014. In 2017 had water well crisis that causes losses in pressure and high chlorine

levels. Numerous issues during Holy Week this year. People are spending money on equipment and bottled water. Wants to know why boil water advisories aren't being issued.

- Adam Johnson: Uses bottled water to brush his teeth, give to his cat, and bathe his infant. Discussed sewage leak under Gause and past problems with TU.
  - Dennis Barry: Concerns with lack of notice when problems arise. Cat having vomiting and pooping problems. He only drinks bottled water.
  - Gene Bellisario: Doesn't trust the water. Only uses bottled water. TU has had problems for years. Wants to know when rates are going to be raised.
  - Allison Fronistas: She and daughter both have immune deficiencies. Have had to spend money on bottled water and filtration systems because her family can get very sick from pathogens that don't bother most people.
  - Grant Waguespack: Claims he develops rashes from the water. Claims friends and family have been sick from the water.
  - Brian Guttuso: Says this situation is unacceptable.
- End of Speaker cards
    - Gina Hayes: Discussed sewer break and updates related to that and described standard operating procedures for TU. Discussed standards for calling boil water advisory. Discussed chlorination procedures and regulations.
    - Tim Brown: Discussed force main and sewer leak issue. Explained that no boil water advisory was called because there was never a loss in pressure and state did not require one.
    - Mike Cooper: Discussed concerns of citizens and concerns of Council members and assured everyone that those issues will be addressed and that improvements are planned.
    - Mike Smith: Discussed and asked questions to Tim Brown re: leak in Turtle Creek. Asked about standard operating procedures, chlorination levels, testing procedures, differences between testing equipment and why one is used over another. Discussion between Mike Smith and Tim Brown.
    - LDH Employees called to mic.
      - John Williams, Deputy Chief of Field Operations and Jacob Haffner he works under him.
        - Did a sanitary test, all results look good but there is some room for improvement. Water is safe to drink. These surveys happen at least once every three years. Rotate through sites and test on a regular basis. No coliform was present in tests performed. Did extra tests because of leak. Well is probably over 1500 feet below surface and designed not to have surface water contamination, and there is no evidence of a breach in the well. Three barriers to contamination – well, pressure, and disinfection. Highly unlikely that sewage is

reason for low chlorination levels. One reason could be well isn't run frequently enough. More investigation needs to be done.

Discussed different testing equipment.

- Mike Lorino: Asks John Williams if he would drink the water. He says yes, he lives there and uses it every day.
- Jerry Binder: Questions John Williams. Believes that humans and animals are suffering from intestinal distress, male UTIs which he believes to be uncommon, and skin problems. Questions reasons for low chlorine levels.
- John Williams: Can be many reasons. Looking at chlorination logs would help them problem solve.
- Jerry Binder: Calls David Binder to mic. States that many in the Binder family have been sick. Asks that test results be posted to the website. Both Jerry and David Binder state that they believe people are lying about results.
- Chris Canulette: Asks about sewer leak, amount of spill, if soil was removed or cleaned. Would like to do a ride along with TU. Believes that nothing is getting in water when there is no loss in pressure.
- Tim Brown: In answering Chris Canulette's question, states that report is provided to DEQ monthly, this one was reported when it happened. They do not know the amount of sewage that was leaked. Did not clean soil. Advised that they received notice of low chlorine levels from Mike Smith, and asked residents to share that information with him in the future.
- Jimmie Davis: Wants to know more about the diarrhea and the circumstances surrounding it. Neil Waguespack said they have had diarrhea before.
- Mike Smith: Asks that TU be audited and daily results be placed on website. Asks TU to complete the installation of the auto dialers and consider SCADA. Need to work on re-establishing confidence in TU. Need to separate TU and Environmental Services.
- Mike Lorino: There is a major problem here. The parish should have never purchased TU but now we have it and have to deal with it. It is an embarrassment that people feel they have to buy bottled water. We are going to begin having monthly meetings, the time and date of which will be announced at a later date.

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Mike Lorino, Chair of Utilities Workgroup

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Karlin Riles, Acting Clerk of 4.12.21  
Workgroup meeting