

**Friendsville Utility Board
Regular Meeting
April 3, 2025
Friendsville Community Center
Minutes**

Present:

Mayor Steven Cardwell	City Engineer Bob Colvin
Vice Mayor Sandra Bell	Building Official Barry Ottinger
Commissioner Margaret Maze	Caitlyn Good
Commissioner Shane Rogers	Bruce Richey
City Recorder Janet Ledbetter	Steve Palmer
City Administrator Kim Rogers	Woodrow Bell
City Attorney Rob Goddard	Janet Walton

Absent: Commissioner Jonathan Newberry

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:26 p.m.
2. Motion to approve minutes from the previous meeting by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed.
3. Non-agenda items from the public: none
4. Other business not on the agenda: none

5. Discussion:

Maintenance of Sewer Station at Dunlap Hollow: Wascon offered a quote to repair the Dollar General pump station and the one at the school for \$13,955. Kim Rogers told the board that she would like to wait until the next budget year to do the repairs. Motion to accept quote but not begin the repairs until July by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed.

Bruce Richey, 3758 Windstream Drive, spoke about his water bill. He said he had been overcharged 13,617 in excess gallons and handed out a spreadsheet detailing his billing since September 2024. He claimed it was due to a faulty meter. He said he understood the meter read zero in September

and he had calculated that they had used approximately 2400 gallons, so he was willing to deduct \$11.25 from the amount of his requested refund. The total amount he asked for was \$158.49. Motion to credit Mr. Richey's account the amount he requested by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed.

Kim Rogers recently met with TASS about their wholesale water rates. They currently have 3 tiers. The first 1,500,000 gallons cost \$3.08 per thousand gallons and the next 1,500,000 gallons cost \$2.54 per thousand. Tier 3 has been eliminated so anything over 3,000,000 gallons will also cost \$2.54 per thousand gallons. This rate increase will cost the city approximately an extra \$3,000 per month. TASS is also interested in moving the master meter to the county line so that they can take over the city's sewer customers that are on TASS water. These customers cause billing issues for the city since the sewer is charged based on water usage, and the city can't turn off their water if they don't pay their sewer bill. They asked the city to pay for moving the meter, which would be costly. Mr. Richey asked why the city had so many rate increases in such a short time. Kim explained to him that there were previously two different rates, inside and outside the city. The city went up on the lower rates starting in 2015 for two years to match the higher ones so there would be only one rate across the board. Then they raised the rates based on advice from an MTAS rate study, and then, under advisement from TAUD, the city lowered the minimum usage from 2000 to 1000 gallons, which increased revenues.

6. Staff Reports:

Grants update: Mayor Cardwell mentioned that the award bid for the ARPA grant was finally signed. Kim said that the county had cancelled the grinder pump installation for customers on the first phase of the sewer project. She and Bob Colvin had found out that there is a possibility that there would be funds available from the state to be able to pay for the pumps. The plans must be in to the state and approved by the end of May and under construction by the end of August. Bob said that the rules that Blount County were stating were only the county's rules, not the state's. Kim also mentioned that Servline is discontinuing line protection for customers. The leak protection will still be in place. Bob Colvin mentioned that there are other

companies who provide the same insurance, and Mayor Cardwell said he would be willing to check into it.

For the HUD sewer grant, new customers can get their grinder pumps paid for, but only the customers served by the HUD grant extension are eligible. Customers on the first phase of the project are not eligible since that line was paid for by the EDA grant. There were three options for the grant: 1- Extending the line out Miser Station to city limits and down all the side roads, along Cedar Crest and Collie Cove and to the marina; 2- Extending it down Miser Station to second entrance of Cedar Crest all the way to the marina and putting in grinder pumps for as many as they can pay for; or 3- Extending the line as far as the funds will go in order to pay for the grinder pumps at each home that is passed by the line, even if it means the line will not go as far as expected. Bob Colvin mentioned that any commissioner living along the line would not be eligible for the free pumps. Motion to go with option 3 to put in grinder pumps and extend the line as far as possible by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed.

Kim mentioned that Blount County was supposed to send letters to all the homeowners along the North & South Farnum sewer line stating that they would no longer be getting free grinder pumps, but they haven't sent them yet. Mayor Cardwell told her to stay on top of the issue, because it was Blount County's fault.

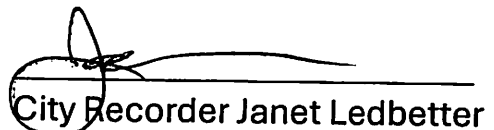
Upcoming Projects: The sewer line has been started on West Hill Ave. The water rehab was scheduled to start the next week. The city is waiting for the signed contract from Blount County for the meters paid by the ARPA grant.

Financial report: The board looked over the financial report, and there were no questions.

7. Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Rogers, second by Commissioner Maze. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.



Mayor Steven Cardwell



City Recorder Janet Ledbetter