



**ISLAMORADA, VILLAGE OF ISLANDS
VILLAGE COUNCIL JOINT WORKSHOP**

**WITH THE WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CITIZENS' ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

**Founders Park Community Center
87000 Overseas Hwy
Islamorada, FL 33036**

**February 06, 2013
at 10:00 AM**

I. CALL TO ORDER\ROLL CALL

Mayor Ken Philipson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The following Village Council members were present upon roll call: Mayor Philipson, Vice Mayor Ted Blackburn, Councilman Mike Forster, Councilwoman Deb Gillis and Councilman Dave Purdo. Also in attendance were Village Manager Ed Koconis, Village Attorney Lillian Arango, Village Clerk Ariana Lawson, Wastewater Program Manager Greg Tindle, Finance Director Maria Aguilar, Wade Trim Vice President Tom Brzezinski and Government Services Group (GSG) CEO Robert Sheets.

The following Water Quality Improvement Citizens' Advisory Committee (WQICAC) members were also present: Chairman David Makepeace, Vice Chair Larry Barr, Martin Moe, Fred Feitel, Hank Paurowski, Michael McLoad, Myles Milander and Kathy Ward.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Village Manager Ed Koconis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Presentation by Water Quality Improvement Citizens' Advisory Committee –
Chairperson David Makepeace**

Staff distributed a Memo to Council and the Committee dated October 14, 2009 from Village Attorney Lillian Arango entitled "Special District for Wastewater Collection and Treatment Services."

Chairman David Makepeace introduced the Committee members and narrated a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Rationale for an Islamorada Dependent Wastewater Special District."

Councilman Forster inquired what the Committee vote was with regard to their recommendations. Chairman Makepeace stated that the Committee unanimously decided to recommend formation of a Dependent Wastewater Special District (DWSD) to the Council, with the exception of Kathy Ward, who was not present at the Committee Meeting vote.

Vice Mayor Blackburn inquired whether any Committee members would consider serving on a potential DWSD Board. By a show of hands, six of the eight Committee members indicated their interest in serving on such a Board, with the exception of Martin Moe and Kathy Ward. Martin Moe recommended steps for the Council to take in considering formation of a DWSD. Chairman Makepeace stated that ideal board members would possess considerable professional wastewater, engineering or environmental skills, as well as public communication skills. Councilman Forster spoke in favor of a DWSD but noted as a comparison that the membership composition of the Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District has been quite varied with regard to professional expertise. Myles Milander clarified that the DWSD staff would report to the Village Council rather than staff. Discussion ensued regarding elected versus appointed Board members and the projected timeline for an election in 2014, and potential DWSD responsibilities.

Committee member Larry Barr voiced concerns about the location of Wastewater Matters in the Regular Village Council Meeting agenda, public communications, and land easements. Vice Mayor Blackburn stated that the Village has a mechanism in place to address concerns of the type commonly expressed at Regular Village Council Meetings, and that public comment is not necessarily the appropriate way to resolve those issues. Councilwoman Gillis concurred and noted that all issues on Village Council Meeting agendas are important to the public, not just Wastewater Matters.

Councilman Purdo praised Wade Trim's and Reynolds Water Islamorada's recent public communication efforts and opined that the Village already has in place the necessary structure to successfully carry out the wastewater implementation project, without a DWSD.

Stanley Margulies, Islamorada, urged the Council to place Wastewater Matters during Regular Village Council Meetings to an earlier position in the agenda. Wastewater Program Manager Greg Tindle addressed Mr. Barr's communications concerns. Councilman Forster and Councilman Purdo expressed preference for Wastewater Matters toward the end of the agenda; Councilwoman Gillis disagreed. Council agreed to address the placement of Wastewater Matters at a later date.

Vice Mayor Blackburn inquired whether the Committee had developed a conceptual budget for DWSD administration. Chairman Makepeace stated that the goal would be to maintain revenue neutrality, with the current staff position of Wastewater Program Manager transferring to the DWSD and the DWSD sharing the Village's existing support staff. Committee member Hank Paurowski stated that the DWSD Board would relieve the Village, the engineer, and the construction contractor of the burdens of community relations and customer service. Committee member Martin Moe clarified that Council would control the DWSD's budget. Committee member Michael McLoad cautioned Council to take care to avoid duplicity of services that could result in turf wars should Council approve formation of a DWSD.

At Mayor Philipson's inquiry Committee members Larry Barr and Myles Milander, indicated they would be willing to serve on a DWSD Board uncompensated. Martin Moe opined that remuneration for services would encourage a high level of commitment by Board members. Chairman Makepeace agreed but indicated he may consider serving uncompensated. Vice Mayor Blackburn spoke in favor of compensating DSWD Board members if formed. Chairman Makepeace projected weekly workloads of 20-30 hours for DSWD Board members. Councilwoman Gillis stated that if additional expertise was to be acquired she would prefer to enhance Village staff capabilities with additional paid expertise rather than funding a DWSD. Councilman Forster stated that his support for a DWSD is based on the potential to offer greater checks and balances, expedited resolution of citizens' issues, and reduced time spent on wastewater discussions by Council at Regular Village Council Meetings.

Chairman Makepeace explained how Council, staff and the DWSD would interact, and also discussed staff cost sharing. Councilman Forster and Councilwoman Gillis stated their preference for the Wastewater Program Manager reporting either to the Village Manager or directly to Council rather than to the DWSD. Discussion ensued between Council and the Committee regarding oversight of the Wastewater Program Manager.

Chairman Makepeace requested direction from the Council.

Mayor Philipson invited GSG CEO Robert Sheets to speak to the advantages/disadvantages of a DWSD. Mr. Sheets advised the Council that they should consider whether a hypothetical DWSD would have contract management and dispute resolution authority or whether they would operate solely in an advisory capacity. Mr. Sheets stated that he personally does not promote staff sharing between districts and municipalities, as it confuses employees. He also advised Council that the hiring of additional staff would be inevitable once the DWSD became operational and that the DWSD would need to conduct active public outreach as a utility operator. Mr. Sheets cautioned the Council that once a DWSD is formed; it would be extremely difficult to dismantle.

Councilwoman Gillis inquired what the customer service chain of command would be under the DWSD model. Chairman Makepeace responded that questions would first be directed to Reynolds Water Islamorada, then to Wade Trim, next to the Wastewater Manager, and finally to the DWSD. Councilwoman Gillis stated that as a dependent district, the buck should stop with the Village Council rather than the DWSD.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Philipson opened up public comment; there was none.

V. COUNCIL DISCUSSION

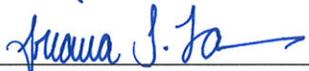
Mayor Philipson inquired as to the will of the Council. Councilman Forster and Vice Mayor Blackburn stated their support for the formation of a DSWD. Councilman Purdo, Councilwoman Gillis, and Mayor Philipson stated that they are against the formation of a DSWD.

Vice Mayor Blackburn noted that without a DWSD, hiring of additional staff is inevitable. Mayor Philipson stated that he would like to see the establishment of an operational wastewater utility department in the next year or so.

Council directed the Committee to propose wastewater utility department recommendations. Mayor Philipson specifically requested the Committee work with staff to develop budget and structure recommendations.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Purdo and seconded by Councilman Forster. The meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.


Ariana S. Lawson
Village Clerk

Approved by the Village Council this 14th day of March, 2013.