

**Official Minutes of  
MARION COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

April 9, 2024

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) met in a workshop session in Commission Chambers at 1:33 p.m. on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

**INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN MICHELLE STONE**

Vice-Chairman Bryant advised that the workshop was scheduled this afternoon to present Utilities Capital Improvement Projects.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call the following members were present: Vice-Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Carl Zalak, III, District 4. Chairman Michelle Stone, District 5, was absent due to a prior commitment. Also present were County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Angel Roussel, and Executive Director of Internal Services Mike McCain.

It was noted for the record that the Deputy Clerk was in receipt of a 13 page Agenda packet to follow along with the PowerPoint presentation.

**WORKSHOP PRESENTATION**

1. Present Utilities Capital Improvement Projects - April 9, 2024 at 1:30 PM  
Utilities Director Jody Kirkman presented the following recommendation:  
Description/Background: This is the annual workshop that provides an update to the Board about the Capital Improvement Projects. The discussion will provide a status update for projects, including recently added projects from updated master plans, projects added due to changing conditions and regulations and project prioritization adjustments.  
Budget/Impact: None.  
Recommended Action: For discussion.

Utilities Director Jody Kirkman presented a 44 page binder entitled, "Capital Improvement Program and Current Project Map". He advised that the purpose of the workshop is to provide an update to the 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Utilities Department. This will include completed projects, projects currently under construction, and future projects in the CIP. He provided an overview of Utilities assets, noting many of the planned projects include maintenance and rehabilitation of these facilities. Other projects provide for the expansion of existing water and wastewater systems that provide services to areas previously not served. Mr. Kirkman stated Utilities provides over 15,392,000 gallons per day (gpd) of potable water to residents. The Department treats 2,889,000 gpd of wastewater and delivers 1,236,000 gpd of reclaimed water.

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Mr. Kirkman referred to a slide, as shown on the overhead screens, providing information relating to existing wastewater treatment plants (WWTP), noting it shows both the treatment capacity and treatment volumes going through the facilities. He advised that the Oak Run WWTP is running at approximately 67 percent (%) of its capacity, which results in the need to develop preliminary design reviews (PDR) as required by the State. Mr. Kirkman stated there is a completed PDR for this facility, noting the Department plans to expand the facility to 3.5 million gallons per day (mgd). Staff is working with the engineer to develop the scope and fee and hope to bring the project back before the Board in the coming months. He advised that the expansion would extend the life of the facility roughly 15 to 20 years with that volume. The Board recently approved an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Ocala for bulk water and wastewater service for the Golden Holiday facility. Staff are currently negotiating the scope and fee for that project to install a lift station and take that plant offline.

Mr. Kirkman stated the CIP is a living document that ebbs and flows to meet the annual conditions associated with the needs of Utilities. He advised that the focus for this workshop is to update projects completed this fiscal year (FY) and discuss projects for the next FY. The Utilities CIP can be broken down into 2 main categories, construction projects and non-construction projects. The focus of today's presentation is on construction projects.

Mr. Kirkman referred to a table that identifies the completed and in-progress projects. He provided an update from last year, noting the completed CIP projects came in at a total cost of \$7,491,738.00.

Mr. Kirkman provided an overview of the 5-Year CIP Summary, which is what will be in the budget moving forward for the FY 24/25 through FY 28/29. He advised that in FY 24/25 and FY 25/26 the figures are higher due to the Oak Run facility (\$9,000,000.00 each year).

Chairman Bryant questioned if there will be measures put in place with the expansion of the Oak Run facility to mitigate issues relating to smell, noting it has been an issue in the past. Mr. Kirkman stated the design will include improvements up front and the odor control systems will be reviewed, as well as issues relating to noise.

Mr. Kirkman referred to a slide providing a breakdown of lift station and sewer main rehabilitation projects. He advised that the largest project is the Silver Springs Shores (SSS) offsite equalization (EQ) decommissioning project that consists of modifying the wastewater collection system infrastructure surrounding the SSS offsite EQ basin to allow for decommissioning an aging storage tank and appurtenances.

Mr. Kirkman provided an overview of sub-projects identified within the water line extension and hydrant FY 24/25 projects.

Mr. Kirkman commented on the sub-projects identified within the water treatment plant (WTP) additions/improvement FY 24/25 projects. Sub-projects included within the WWTP improvements for FY 24/25 projects include the southwest WWTP (Oak Run facility) expansion.

Mr. Kirkman advised of grant funding received, including \$3,000,000.00 each for Phase I and Phase II of the SSS septic-to-sewer project. That funding comes from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). He stated the Department has submitted applications for and is still being considered for funding for SSS septic-to-sewer Phases III and IV. There is an additional funding request to support the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) projects relating to 2 independent FDEP grants, 1 for \$25,000,000.00 under the District DEP Program and 1 for \$22,200,000.00 under the Springs Grant

Program. Mr. Kirkman advised that an application was submitted through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for generators at the WTPs to purchase standby generators for 5 of the WTPs facilities that currently do not have emergency backup generators or sites with one but have existing units are out of service or beyond repair. The Department has also submitted an application relating to the SW Regional WTP (Utopia site) through a Congressional Representative Office for an appropriation under the Water Resource Development Act. He stated this would support the actual treatment facility which will be designed and permitted once the water quality is determined following completion of the lower Floridan, noting construction is about to begin on that well. Mr. Kirkman noted the Department did apply for a \$3,000,000.00 appropriation through the State relating to the Lowell water system, which is being evaluated by the Governor.

Chairman Bryant stated the Lowell water system is the State's issue to clean up.

Mr. Kirkman provided an update relating to the progress for all 4 phases of the SSS septic-to-sewer project.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Kirkman stated the construction costs have not escalated as much as earlier numbers but are much higher than the estimated \$15,000,000.00 per phase. He advised that he anticipates the current phase will end up costing between \$23,000,000.00 and \$25,000,000.00. Mr. Kirkman stated the Department was able to draw down a \$20,000,000.00 appropriation some time ago by leveraging ARPA funding. He advised that the ARPA dollars must be committed to a project by the end of this fiscal year and spent by the end of 2026.

Mr. Kirkman stated the Unit 16 project that utilized ARPA and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars is constructed, certified for use and work is currently taking place to get the projects hooked up and moving forward. He advised that the Ordinance (22-14) includes 3 letters advising residents it is coming, noting the last letter should go out in the next days or weeks and will advise impacted owners that the 365 day clock is starting. In the meantime, individuals that signed up for service are getting connected.

Mr. Kirkman stated the next ARPA project is the Marion Oaks water main extensions which will close all loops and extend water mains in the existing streets north and east of County Road (CR) 484, providing approximately 19 miles of new water mains. The construction task order was approved on March 19, 2024, and construction is expected to be completed in late 2025.

Mr. Kirkman advised that the next ARPA project is the Centers water main and force main, which will extend water main and force main to the Centers' property, decommissioning their existing WWTP and WTP. The construction task order was approved on January 10, 2024, and completion is expected in late summer 2024.

Commissioner Curry questioned if there has been any push back in SSS relating to septic-to-sewer. Mr. Kirkman stated there have been public meetings relating to Phase I and Phase II, noting staff have had people come forward to initiate service agreements. He advised that developed lots will get capacity fees paid for by the grant, unlike undeveloped lots. Mr. Kirkman stated there will be a shortfall of funding relating to Phases III and IV due to the increase in cost; however, he is confident there will be funding to complete Phases I and II. The designs will be completed, and the project phases will be shovel ready while the Department continues to seek grant dollars to complete Phases III and IV.

In response to Commissioner Zalac, Mr. Kirkman advised that according to the current rules relating to ARPA funds the dollars must be spent and the project must be completed.

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He stated there should be ample time to complete the projects the Department is moving forward with if they can be awarded within the next 60 days.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION AND CLOSING COMMENTS**

Chairman Bryant expressed appreciation towards Mr. Kirkman for the work performed by the Department to ensure Marion County residents have the services they need relating to utilities.

Commissioner Zalak commented on complaints the Board has received relating to the Oak Run facility. He requested Mr. Kirkman bring back plans and assurances to keep the Board updated throughout the expansion process. Commissioner Zalak opined that there should be public outreach to inform residents of the steps that will occur as the project moves forward.

Chairman Bryant commented on the quick response from staff to address a noise issue the same day a complaint was received. She noted she will share the plan Mr. Kirkman provides with the communities in the area.

Mr. Kirkman stated the automatic air release valves (ARVs) can get stuck resulting in odor, noting the Department has been proactive and put carbon filters on them in addition to other mitigation steps. He advised that once the Department is informed of an issue, they can quickly fix it, preventing the continuing problem experienced in the past.

Chairman Bryant commented on J.B. Ranch and the issue they have with the community that backs up to them. She questioned if they could be experiencing some of the same issues. It is a private system and does not fall under the purview of the County.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Kirkman stated the Department has sent correspondence; however, individuals have built very close to the plant and there are a lot of mechanical noises. He advised that the DEP has looked into the situation, and everything is in order.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

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Michelle Stone, Chairman

Attest:

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Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk