

HARRISON COUNTY UTILITY AUTHORITY
BOARD MEETING
March 20, 2025

Be it remembered that a meeting of the Harrison County Utility Authority Board of Directors was held on March 20, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Harrison County Utility Authority Board Room, at 10271 Express Drive in Gulfport, Mississippi. In attendance were:

BOARD AND STAFF:

Mayor Billy Hewes, City of Gulfport, Director
Mayor Jimmy Rafferty, City of Pass Christian, Director
Mayor Andrew "Fofu" Gilich, City of Biloxi, Director
Mayor George Bass, City of Long Beach, Director
Mr. Al Gombos, representing the City of D'Iberville
Supervisor Marlin Ladner, Harrison County (1), Director
Supervisor Dan Cuevas, Harrison County (2), Director
Mr. James Simpson, Wise Carter, Attorneys and Esquire
Mr. John Wilson, Executive Director, HCUA
Ms. Cindy Breau, Chief Financial Officer, HCUA
Mr. Alan Lane, Solid Waste Manager, HCUA
Mr. Sam Broom, Staff Engineer, HCUA
Ms. Marie Ostrander, Office Manager, HCUA

VIA TELECOM:

None

ABSENT:

None

AUDIENCE:

Tori Martinez, The Focus Group
Charles Head, H2O Innovation
Jaclyn Turner, Harrison County
Shea McGee, Waste Management

Letters of Designations are attached hereto as exhibit "A".

There being a quorum sufficient to transact business of the Authority, Mayor George Bass, representing The City of Long Beach, called the meeting to order. The following proceedings were had and done.

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A. Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

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B. Public Hearing – Lorrane Road Water Main – Shriners Blvd. to City of Biloxi

Mayor Billy Hewes made a motion to open Public Hearing – Lorraine Road Water Main – Shriners Blvd. to City of Biloxi, seconded by Mayor Andrew “Fofo” Gilich. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D’Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

Mayor George Bass opened the floor for public comments. No public comments were made.

Mr. Al Gombos made a motion to close Public Hearing – Lorraine Road Water Main – Shriners Blvd. to City of Biloxi, seconded by Mayor Andrew “Fofo” Gilich. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D’Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

The Public Hearing was closed.

A copy of the Public Hearing – Lorraine Road Water Main – Shriners Blvd. to City of Biloxi is attached hereto as exhibit “B”.

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C. Public Comments

Mayor George Bass opened the floor for public comments.

There were no public comments.

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D. Approval of the Claims Docket dated March 20, 2025

Mr. Al Gombos made a motion to approve the Claims Docket dated March 20, 2025, seconded by Mayor Andrew “Fofo” Gilich. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

The motion passed. A copy of the Claims Docket is attached hereto as exhibit "B".

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E. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes dated March 6, 2025

Mr. Al Gombos made a motion to approve the Board Meeting Minutes dated March 6, 2025, seconded by Mayor Andrew "Fofu" Gilich. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

The motion passed. A copy of Board Meeting Minutes dated March 6, 2025, is attached hereto as exhibit "C".

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F. Technical Committee Meeting Minutes dated February 26, 2025 - Acceptance

Mr. Al Gombos made a motion to accept the Technical Committee Meeting Minutes dated February 26, 2025, seconded by Mayor Andrew "Fofu" Gilich. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

The motion passed. A copy of Technical Committee Meeting Minutes dated February 26, 2025, is attached hereto as exhibit "C".

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G. Financial Report

Ms. Cindy Breaux reported that there would be a draft audit presented at the next Board Meeting.

Supervisor Marlin Ladner asked why it seemed that we were already at 50% or more of our budgeted expenditure. Mr. John Wilson answered that it is because there are generally a lot of projects and spending that happens right in the beginning of the budget year, but then that starts leveling out.

Mr. Al Gombos asked if the Personnel Budget was satisfactory, to which Mr. John Wilson answered that yes it was.

No action required. The Board accepted the February 2025 Financial Report

A copy of the Financial Report for February 2025 is attached hereto as exhibit "E".

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H. Marketing Report

Ms. Tori Martinez of The Focus Group presented the Facebook and website stats. There was an 874% increase in Engagement on our Facebook page, as well as a 302% increase in Organic Facebook traffic over last year. Our Website engagement is also up over all and the "News" section is the most visited.

No action taken. The Board accepted the February 2025 Marketing Report as submitted by The Focus Group.

A copy of the February 2025 Marketing Report is attached hereto as exhibit "F".

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I. Action Items

1. Old Business

None

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2. New Business

I2a. Monopole Cell Antenna Policy - Approval

Supervisor Marlin Ladner made a motion to discuss Monopole Cell Antenna Policy - Approval, seconded by Supervisor Dan Cuevas. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

Mr. John Wilson explained that there is a plan to build a ground-up antenna at the West Biloxi WWTP, and that before we can move any further ahead with that contract, a policy must be in place to be a framework for not only this specific contract, but any other future monopole antennas. Mr. Wilson also reiterated that any contracts for such antennas would all come before this Board for approval, this policy just lays out a framework.

MAYOR BILLY HEWES: So the term monopole is often used with this new 5G technology, where these folks come in and they want to put up their own antenna. And the concern and problem is proximity. Instead of them sharing, you know, putting multiple transmitters on one antenna, the monopoles, they want their own. And I've seen street corners in some cities where it looks like a pin cushion. So we need to have something in here, if this is relating to anything with the telecommunication industry, requiring them to engineer it where it can accommodate multiple transmitters on there as opposed to everybody putting one every 20 feet.

MAYOR ANDREW "FOFO" GILICH: Yeah I think small cell, it needs to be included too, in some place.

MAYOR BILLY HEWES: Yeah, 5G you know requires closer and more antennas but you know you don't want your city looking like a bunch of antennas all over the place.

MR. JOHN WILSON: This requires that they go get planning approval from the host community. So this doesn't, this isn't like we do it in a vacuum. This is, we do it in conjunction with the host community's regulations and rules for antennas also. So in this case, we're going to be running through that for Biloxi and everything. And we'll be bringing the contract back before the Board for any kind of other consideration. The tech committee had a lot of concerns about basically competition. And that's where there were antennas already, you know, just across the city limits line or something like that. Why do we need another? So, I don't, the only way we can bring that back before the Board with each contract, and that's an up or down vote, yes or no, and have it considered at that time. As a preliminary thing, we have to go through dealing with everybody, just on a preliminary basis to start the process for the contract, the site, and all that stuff. And so that's your time to try to relocate whatever their proposing.

MAYOR BILLY HEWES: Well, the more we can get clear on the front end, the better off we're gonna be. We don't want this policy to put us at odds with whatever the city or county's doing after having gone through them. Because some of them think this is gonna be a one-stop shop here.

MR. JOHN WILSON: No, that's not what we're proposing.

MR. AL GOMBOS: Mayor, that's exactly my concern. I expressed my concern at the technical committee meeting and I think it got captured in the minutes. I don't think that this agency should diversify into anything besides water, sewer, garbage, and like utilities. The property that he's talking about right now is a parcel of land that has been attached to the West Biloxi

Treatment Plant since the mid-70s. And at one time, it was a joint effort with the DMR, the Marine Fisheries Commission, to raise fish, fish farms. Of course that didn't work for a lot of reasons, but the parcel that just sat there it's directly north, excuse me, south of the Atkinson Road Care Center. But anyway, in the past, I don't say that we set a precedent, but Long Beach didn't need the property on which the old treatment plant was located. It became surplus property. This agency gave it to Long Beach. Likewise in D'Iberville. I don't think that this agency needs to have surplus property to go off and dabble in real estate transactions. I think we ought to concentrate on water, sewer, and garbage, instead of, it sounds like a ping pong ball, and John's very considerate that he doesn't want to do anything that steps on anybody's toes from the zoning or planning or whatever, and then you're back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. One of the things that we've done to sort of anticipate that situation, we have policy in D'Iberville now that you can't erect a new antenna within two miles of an existing antenna. Get over there and get with the guy, negotiate, and make it work. We don't want it to look like some of these other places, like a porcupine. But that's not the real concern. Our real concern, my real concern is I don't think this agency has the time, or that they've been charged with developing unused real estate for other than utility needs. I'd like to see us focus on a five-year plan, ten-year plan, twenty-year plan. None of this has ever been included in the facility plan and all of a sudden, it sounds like a good idea. I mean how do you turn down free money? And as soon as you build that antenna, somebody's going to say, well, wait a minute. I never heard about it. The one thing that we do have is a reputation here, we're the nameless, faceless people. God, how many times have we heard that? And then there's The Focus Group that's trying to help us get out there. You're the people that cut ribbons and kiss babies, you know what I mean? I'm the only faceless person here. But my point being is, City of Long Beach, City Council really appreciated that property. Did some good stuff with it, didn't you? Yeah, D'Iberville, we really appreciated that property, 14.7 acres. And put it to good use, had plans for the rest of it. The Utility Authority carved out the part that they needed to keep. And I think that should be our approach. The Utility Authority carved out the part that they needed to keep. And I think that should be our approach. I'm opposed to this policy.

SUPERVISOR MARLIN LADNER: Let me ask you a question. Apparently, this is extra property that you're talking about. Do we have any other property similar to that that we're holding on to that's not actually needed for our production of water and sewer?

MR. JOHN WILSON: Well, in this case, that property that Al's talking about is basically the growth part of the plant if we ever need it in the future. Now the plant's big enough for the next 20 years. We have no plans for expansion. But you know, you don't know. So the places where we have determined that we don't need that property, you know, this one, Long Beach one, the D'Iberville one, Biloxi had the old Eagle Point Lagoon, it's become a park now. Where we have no use for that facility anymore, we either turn it back to the cities that gave it to us, or we sell it. We had a piece of parcel on a Shorecrest road that was initially bought under CDBG for a pump station, never was used, we ended up selling it. So we do that all the time. We just bought a parcel of land, Mercy Cross, for the eventual expansion of Keegan Bayou in the future. So we buy, sell, do whatever we need to, and it's all based on planned or future use. Things that if we have no planned or future use, we just, we either give it back to the city or sell it.

MAYOR GEORGE BASS: So Al, you're against this policy and us approving it as it stands right now?

MR. AL GOMBOS: I'm against the policy. I'm not sure there's anything wrong with the policy, not the technical writing of it or anything. But I think John said well a lot of the nuts and bolts was discussed at the technical committee, and I'm sure Jim's going to be looking at it. But I'm

opposed to the philosophy of diversifying our intent. All the parcels of property that John mentioned, and I forgot about the Eagle Point Lagoon that turned into a playground; all good stuff. But that's a city of Biloxi thing. It's a Long Beach thing. It's a D'Iberville thing. Let the city council figure out how to spend their surplus property.

MAYOR ANDREW "FOFO" GILICH: I'm of the opinion if there's some question let's talk about it again. I don't think we can hammer it out in the next five minutes.

MR. AL GOMBOS: I'm not as concerned about that parcel of property. It's the concept that we're going to diversify.

MAYOR GEORGE BASS: I would entertain a substitute motion for us to table this for further discussion. So moved. Do we have a motion? Do we have a second?

MAYOR BILLY HEWES: I'm going to give Jim Simpson some thoughts that I've pinned down for inclusion just to clarify some things. The purpose is to establish these guidelines, which is fine to say, but I'd like to add language to say in no instance should these guidelines supersede rules, regulations, or ordinances of any political subdivision in Harrison County. Something along those lines, Jim. And then on the second page, talk about any proposed antenna, I would say, and infrastructure. And then other regulations and guidelines [...] That's a, verbiage for next time, but that's kind of the main thing to stick out for me as far as just a little further clarification if we're going to adopt something like that.

MAYOR GEORGE BASS: My thoughts, as Al was speaking, was that we should refer from HCUA to municipalities and the counties for any discussion about locations, you know, or where they're wanting to develop these towers or infrastructure.

MAYOR BILLY HEWES: I'm kind of like Al, this could become another layer of bureaucracy. Because I think we're all set where we can handle it on our own without HUA being an intermediary.

MR. JIM SIMPSON: Well, there's some instances where, I mean, we're in that business now. We, you know, rent space on top of water tanks, but that's not the same as renting land to build something on, I get Al's point. I will look at this. I don't know, just because, I've never looked at this before, that we can require somebody who takes their own money and builds their own antenna that we can make them allow a competitor to use that facility. I don't know that we can force them to put other people on.

MAYOR BILLY HEWES: If you would research, I think there are communities that have adopted co-location requirements, so they don't have this garbage, I hate to say it, but all this clutter, I'll use a better term for it, but as you and I used to say, Jack, I think we're going to prey on this one a little bit.

MR. JIM SIMPSON: Well, I mean, if we have a piece of property and we rent a space for one monopole, that doesn't mean that we need to put two or three more on there. We could just say, no, we don't like having more than one. We don't have to do more. But if the guy next door to us 50 feet rent space, now you start to get the pin cushion. I get the point. If you'll send me that information, I'll look at it. I don't think that we, I think maybe the state, I don't think this authority could allow a tenant, we'll call it, to do something that violated the applicable zoning laws. I don't think that this entity gets, you know, sometimes you do, but I don't think we are, but that's a good point to check.

MAYOR BILLY HEWES: Yeah, I would agree on the co-location, look, if we control the property, then if they want it bad enough, then they're going to agree to co-location, or they don't get it at all.

SUPERVISOR MARLIN LADNER: I think the crux of what Al's argument is, and I think what Billy's argument is, is that if we have property, and that property is not, that we don't need the property to actually do water or sewer on it, projects on it, give the property back to the city to let them deal with this. That's the bottom line. Why have an extra level, as you said, Billy, of bureaucracy to deal with that? And I don't have a problem with that. I wasn't going to give up land that we're going to need in the relatively long future to do water and sewer projects. But why hold on to that property if it's not being used for us?

MR. JIM SIMPSON: I think that's what the question comes down to. If you have property that, let's say there's a waste water treatment facility located on it, it's not surplus, you're always going to need that property, yet you have some room to locate a monopole, do we want to be in that business? Do we want to say, okay, let's do that or not? I think Al's point is we don't need to be doing that at all, anywhere. It doesn't matter, unless I'm wrong. So you know I mean you can always say look if we have surplus property let's give it to the jurisdiction and not get into business. But when it's not surplus if somebody wants to locate there, do we want to tell them sorry we're just never going to get that business?

Mayor Andrew "Fofo" Gilich made a motion to table Monopole Cell Antenna Policy - Approval, seconded by Supervisor Dan Cuevas. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

The motion passed. A copy of the Monopole Cell Antenna Policy - Approval, is attached hereto as exhibit "E".

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I2b. Water and Sewer Policy and Rates - Approval

Mayor Andrew "Fofo" Gilich made a motion for discussion and approval of Water and Sewer Policy and Rates – Approval, seconded by Supervisor Dan Cuevas. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye

Pass Christian voted aye

The motion passed. A copy of the Water and Sewer Policy and Rates - Approval is attached hereto as exhibit "G".

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I2c. Water Allocation – FY26 - Approval

Mayor Billy Hewes made a motion to approve Water Allocation – FY26 - Approval, seconded by Supervisor Dan Cuevas. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

The motion passed. A copy of the Water Allocation – FY26 - Approval is attached hereto as exhibit "G".

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J. Solid Waste

1. Solid Waste Report

Mr. Alan Lane reported that our recycling participation rate for last month was 43.19%. On April 5, 2025 the City of D'Iberville is holding their Spring Clean Out event, and on May 10, 2025 the annual Bring-It event will be held by Mississippi Power.

No action taken. A copy of the Solid Waste Report is attached hereto as exhibit "K".

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K. Executive Director's Report

There was nothing to report.

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L. Executive Session

There was no need for Executive Session.

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M. Adjourn – At this time Mayor Billy Hewes made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Andrew “Fofo” Gilich. A vote resulted in the following:

Biloxi	voted	aye
Gulfport	voted	aye
D'Iberville	voted	aye
Long Beach	voted	aye
Harrison County (1)	voted	aye
Harrison County (2)	voted	aye
Pass Christian	voted	aye

The motion to adjourn passed.

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Harrison County Utility Authority


Harrison County Utility Authority