

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, COUNTY OF UPSHUR, CITY OF BUCKHANNON, TO WIT:

A special meeting of the Buckhannon Water Board was held on Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of City Hall. The following in attendance:

David McCauley	Mayor	Present
Colin Reger	City Recorder	Absent
Robbie Skinner	Board Member	Present
David Thomas	Board Member	Present
Don Nestor	Board Member	Present
Erasmio Rizo	Board Member	Present
Kelly Arnold	Water Superintendent	Present
Jay Hollen	City Engineer	Present
Jerry Arnold	Director of Public Works	Present
Amberle Jenkins	Director of Finance/Assistant Recorder	Present

Meeting Agenda Posted 01/18/19

City of Buckhannon Water Board - 3:00pm at City Hall in Council Chambers Special Meeting Agenda for Thursday, January 24, 2019

- A. **Call to Order**
 - A.1 **Moment of Silence**
 - A.2 **Pledge to the Flag of the United States of America**
- B. **Strategic Issues for discussion and vote**
 - B.1 **Discussion/Possible Action on Water Plant Operators' Wages**
- C. **Board Members Comments and Announcements**
- D. **Mayor's Comments and Announcements**
- E. **Adjournment**

POSTED 01/18/19

Call to Order: Mayor McCauley called the meeting to order led by a moment of silence and pledge to the US flag.

Strategic Issues for discussion and vote:

B.1 Discussion/Possible Action on Water Plant Operators' Wages -Mayor McCauley explained that Plant Operator-Jerry Myers had indicated about a week ago that he would be going to an interview as a Class IV plant operator at another facility. Chances are he would be offered the job. The job paid quite a bit more per hour.

In past two years the Water Department has lost two operators to local plants which offer much more per hour in pay. If Mr. Myers leaves there would be two Class IV operators remaining, Superintendent Arnold and Mike McCauley. Mr. McCauley has put in his 30 day standing notice and has indicated he may leave if he is offered more pay elsewhere.

Director Arnold asked Mr. Myers to submit a memo on what it would take to retain the remaining plant operators. It has been made clear that these other plants are trying to recruit our plant Class IV operators. This is putting the Plant in a difficult position. Superintendent Kelly Arnold obtained his Class IV operator license however, he hopes to retire in the near future. If the Plant does not have a Class IV operator the Plant would have to go into a boil water mode until a Class IV operator is replaced.

The following memo was submitted:

Proposal to Retain Operators

Within the last year, the Buckhannon Water Treatment Plant has lost two operators to other plants and on the verge of losing another. I am preparing this as a recommendation to correct the issues that are causing operators to be lured to other employment.

Owners of public water systems, which in this instance is the Buckhannon Water Board, are required to maintain an adequate number of certified operators to maintain the operations of the system which is to provide water that meets the Health Departments and Environmental Protection Agency's requirements for safe, potable water.

In order for an individual to obtain his/her operator certification criteria's must be met regarding experience and education. The individual must begin as an Operator-in-Training and must progress by meeting hours of experience, a set number of hours of classroom education and making a passing grade on each levels examination. Since the Buckhannon Treatment Plant is a Class IV plant, I will only discuss the requirements to be a Class III and IV.

- **Class III: Educational Requirements**-must successfully complete 90 Continuing Educational Units (900 classroom hours) and pass the Class III exam. **Experience Requirements**- 8,000 hours (4 years) operating hours.
- **Class IV: Educational Requirements**-must successfully complete 180 CEU's (1,800 classroom hours) and pass the Class IV exam. **Experience Requirements**- 10,000 hours (5years) operating hours.

Title 64 Series 4 Public Water Systems Operators are being attached for your reviewing of the complete regulations.

The role of the water plant operator should and must be viewed as a professional position not simply as a laborer. We are required to be certified and can be held legally accountable by the Health Department.

Since I have become an operator and most recently the chief operator, it has been my goal to change the culture from where we were formally known as *pumpers* to being operators. Operators should be able to be analytical, technical and have a desire to know every detail about water treatment and the operation of the plant. The results that we are seeing with the performance and water quality coming from this plant is a confirmation that the culture has changed and the operators employed at the Buckhannon plant are among the best in the state. This has become the problem with operator retention.

The reputations of the operators at Buckhannon are causing other plants to recruit us. Because our pay scale is so far behind competing plants, Buckhannon is losing operators. In order to stop the loose I am recommending this pay scale be considered immediately.

Class I: \$17.00/hr (\$18.00 with a degree)*

Class II: \$19.00/hr (\$20.00 with a degree)*

Class III: \$22.00/hr (\$23.00 with a degree)*

Class IV: \$24.00/hr (\$25.00 with a degree)*

Chief Operator: \$27.00/hr (\$28 with a degree)*

Water Dept Supervisor: \$30.00/hr

All positions are hourly except the Department Supervisor.

A college degree in the scientific field such as Biology, Chemistry or Mathematics

Operators are faced with decisions every day that may affect the health of over 20,000 people. We deserve to be viewed on a professional level. I am urging immediate action on this recommendation before more operators are lost to higher pay.

Thank you,

Jerry Myers

Chief Plant Operator

Mayor McCauley commented that persons with a college degree would receive \$1 more per hour.

The Mayor, Kelly Arnold and Jerry Arnold met with Jerry Myers late last week and offered him \$28.00 per hour if he would remain with the Buckhannon Water Plant. Mr. Myers agreed to stay.

The Water Board Members discussed at length, the challenges in competing with other plants. They also talked about the predicament that the state regulation has place them in due to the extensive regulations that are required for Class IV operators.

Board Member Rizo commented that vocational schools should offer water and waste water certification classes. He remarked that this was once explored but never implemented.

Motion Skinner/Rizo to adopt the pay scale model that has been presented to them, with pay increases to take effect on February 1, 2019. Motion carried.

Board Members Comments and Announcements:

- Board Members would like to see solutions like vocational training and talking with legislatures regarding regulations in plant classifications and regulations.
- They would also like to invite Upshur County Commission to the next regular Water Board meeting to talk about the issues with the Public Service Districts.

There being no further business to be transacted, Motion Thomas/Skinner to adjourned at 3:40pm.

Mayor David McCauley _____

Assistant Recorder Amberle Jenkins _____