

PRESS STATEMENT

For in excess of two years, the hard working dedicated workers of the Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority have had to endure relentless negative criticism. Facts have been distorted in an effort to cast a negative image of the Authority, and vilify certain of its employees. The naysayers have refused to recognize that most of the men and women of the Authority live in the great City of Plainfield, own homes, pay taxes, and yes, pay their PMUA bills. They perform extraordinary services on a daily basis that most others are unwilling to do. They have pride in both their City and in their jobs. These facts have been ignored and unpublished.

Despite the unprecedented negative criticism, employees of the Authority have never lost sight of those whom they seek to serve and have continued to move forward with innovative ways to improve the quality of life for the City's residents. As a part of its continuing strategy for improvement, the Authority has several new initiatives ready to be launched, some of which include:

1. Pilot program to provide for the collection of waste on an earlier morning schedule. This program will evaluate and determine the effectiveness of such early collections. Earlier collections will make operations more cost effective and efficient, thus creating a potential to reduce costs.
2. Pilot program to provide for collection service based on a once per week schedule instead of twice a week pick-up. This program will evaluate whether savings can be achieved by such reduced service while also maintaining and not compromising the obligation to keep the City clean and avoid any accumulation of waste and debris.
3. Pilot program to provide smaller 65 gallon waste containers for senior citizens who tend to generate smaller waste volumes. Several seniors have requested a smaller container and this program will evaluate its effectiveness.
4. Program to provide a "credit" to those residents at the end of the year who do not utilize the Authority's "On-Call" bulky waste program.
5. Pursuit of and enactment of State legislation to provide a utility charge reduction for City taxpayers with respect to the Authority's utility charges.
6. Pursuit of a shared services agreement with the Union County Health Department and the City to enhance the enforcement powers of the Authority in the area of solid waste and illegal dumping.
7. Increase recycling collection service. Collection of commingled recyclables and paper every Wednesday.
8. Website up and running with regular posting of agendas and minutes by April 1, 2011.

The Authority is very excited about these and other initiatives it will be pursuing in the next few months, including pursuit of shared service opportunities with the County and other municipalities.

While the Authority looks forward to its activities this year, it is bitter sweet. James Perry, the Authority's Chief Financial Officer who has served the public through the Authority since 1996, has made a decision to retire, effective September 2011. David Ervin, the Authority's Deputy Executive Director has also served the public with great aplomb through the Authority since February 1996. Mr. Ervin, a Vietnam era veteran, brought with him to the PMUA a wealth of experience, including a strong engineering background. From 1984-1995 he served the City of Plainfield in several positions including Principal Engineer and Assistant Director of the Engineering Division, Department Director of Public Works and Urban Development. Prior to his public service work, Mr. Ervin was an engineer with AT&T's Bell Laboratories and Exxon Research and Engineering Co. With a continued commitment to the citizens of Plainfield and upon mutual agreement, Mr. Ervin will phase out his employment with the PMUA, allowing for a smooth transition for whomever may replace him.

Last, but certainly not least, Mr. Eric Watson has served the Authority as its consummate Executive Director since its inception in October 1995. Mr. Watson brought to the Authority creativity and administrative skills that are unsurpassed. Mr. Watson worked for the City from 1994 until his appointment as Executive Director of the Authority as Deputy City Administrator and Urban Development. Prior to his public service he worked in the private sector for John Hancock Insurance Co. and the Joint Underwriters Association and the NJ Department of Insurance, among several other business ventures. To better serve the public, Mr. Watson completed Executive Leadership Training at the Harvard School of Management. Like Mr. Ervin, Mr. Watson, upon mutual agreement will phase out his employment with the PMUA, allowing for a smooth transition and minimal disruption in the operations of the PMUA. Both Mr. Ervin and Mr. Watson have had long distinguished careers in the public sector, particularly serving the City of Plainfield and its residents in many capacities and both are to be commended for their service.

During the tenure of Mr. Watson, Mr. Ervin and Mr. Perry, unlike they have been depicted, the Authority developed from a mere vision of then Mayor Mark Fury and the City Council members at that time, who voted unanimously to create the Authority, to a thriving successful business that employs primarily Plainfield residents. No one who lived in the City prior to the creation of the Authority can dispute that the City is now cleaner today because of the Authority. The Authority provides sanitary sewer and comprehensive solid waste and recycling services for over 50,000 residents. Because of the Authority, wholesale, illegal dumping is a thing of the past and all of us are better off as a result.

Mr. Watson, Mr. Ervin and Mr. Perry will leave the City in a better place. They, along with the dedicated and well trained employees, created the Authority with a solid foundation and mission that is prepared and ready to continue its growth well into the future.

This dynamic trio will be sorely missed. The Authority truly appreciates their hard work, dedication and their love for the Authority and the City.

The Authority will immediately commence a search for highly qualified candidates with significant experience in the areas of solid waste systems and wastewater systems, and the management of a large diversified workforce to fill the positions of Executive Director and Deputy Director.