

Adams out as sewer plant manager

BY CHARLOTTE TWINE
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KEY LARGO — Charles Adams, operations manager for the Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District, was fired Monday, May 9, according to General Manager Paul Christian.

"I've talked to many of you about this," Christian told the district's board during its May 10 meeting. "The decision was made to terminate Chuck Adams this week."

He asked that they ratify his decision under the terms of his contract as general manager. Then the five commissioners on the board made a motion to ratify, and it passed unani-

mously.

According to Christian, Adams did not make changes he asked for in April, one of which was implementing a structured computerized maintenance program. Also, Christian was concerned about Adams' "lackadaisical" attitude.

"I heard about this last week," Commissioner Andy Tobin said. "I am pleased with the way the manager handled the situation."

Adams had been running the district's treatment plant just shy of eight months. His hiring was approved by the board in September, with a salary of \$89,000. He came with almost 30 years of experience in the public works and utilities field

under his belt. He had been the replacement for operations manager Dan Saus, who quit last summer to become Marathon's utilities director.

The commissioners did not seem surprised by Adams' dismissal, and Christian said in the meeting that he had been informing them of the situation all along.

He explained that he had asked Adams a month ago for either a resignation or to try to meet stipulations for a better job performance. Adams at the time chose to stay, but it didn't work out.

Christian told the Free Press that he fired Adams the day before last week's board meeting, and that

Adams "said thank you and left." He will get two weeks' pay and accumulated vacation time.

As for who is running the plant right now, Christian said at the meeting that Mike Dempsey and Jered Primicerio will continue in their positions, with Weiler Engineering consultant Ed Castle providing technical oversight. Dempsey handles wastewater collection and maintenance while Primicerio is the plant supervisor.

Christian told the Free Press after the meeting that he will present to the board the idea of not replacing Adams and continuing the current arrangement of Castle overseeing

Dempsey and Primicerio. He expressed confidence in Castle's technical ability, and he wants to make Weiler Engineering the equivalent of consulting accountant Peter Rosasco running the district's financials. Also, this current structure would save the district money, he said.

If the board approves that arrangement, Christian said he doesn't know yet if Dempsey and Primicerio would get raises.

"We need to see what additional duties they'll take on, and we'll evaluate it from there," he said.

Also, the termination of Adams does not cause any concerns about state compliance regarding

licensed staffing. Under Florida Department of Environmental Protection rules, the plant has to have an A license operator, which is a position filled by Primicerio, as well as a C license staff member at the plant five days a week and a C licensee that visits on the weekends. The district fills the C license requirements with staffers Danny Watson and Paul Hunter, according to Christian.

"Chuck did not have any license or certification," Christian noted. "He was working on that. Ed [Castle] has a class A license. Per FDEP permit requirements, we're in full compliance."

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