

**Stafford County Utilities Commission  
Meeting Minutes**

February 14, 2017

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Towery called to order the regular meeting of the Utilities Commission (UC) at the George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the ABC Conference Room and asked Ms. Dyson to call the role.

B. ROLL CALL

Members present: Joyce Arndt, Bill Tignor, Mickey Kwiatkowski, Alan Glazman, and Mike Makee.

Members absent: DaBora Lovitt, Hartwood seat is still vacant

Staff present: Jason Towery, Bryon Counsell, and Sylvia Dyson

Guests: Gary Snellings, Ruth Carlone

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 17, 2017

Ms. Kwiatkowski made a motion to approve the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes as written. Mr. Tignor seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

D. PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

A group of boy scouts (Venturing Crew 1940) attended the meeting as part of achieving the Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge, which required the scouts to attend a public meeting.

E. REPORTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

There were no reports by Commission Members.

F. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Towery stated that there were currently four items before the Board of Supervisors, to include lease agreements on two County water tanks (Ferry Road and Moncure) for cellular communications facilities through T-Mobile, vacating utilities easements on tax map parcel no. 21-8C, as well as Code amendments regarding on-site sewage disposal systems.

Mr. Towery updated the Commission on neighborhood projects. He reiterated that Truslow Road was a 2,800 foot gravity sewer project which affected 37 parcels with 15 current participants. He added that the plans had been approved the previous month and the Board of Supervisors had approved the condemnation of the final piece of easement which was required. Mr. Towery stated that the bidding process would now begin and staff was hoping to have it out to bid within the next month.

Regarding the Pump and Haul program, Mr. Towery reiterated that the Board of Supervisors had requested the Utilities Department hire a consultant to look at current customers and make determinations as to whether or not any of the current customers could potentially be taken off the program. He further stated that the consultant believed that there were at least five customers out of 21 that may have the potential for an alternative system.

Mr. Towery added that he was currently receiving the reports and was hoping that he would have the final reports by the end of February.

Regarding the Master Plan update, Mr. Towery announced that the consultant, O'Brien and Gere, was currently preparing the draft report and staff was expecting to receive draft documents within the next three months.

January Operations and Customer Service Update:

- Number of Active Accounts is up about 2.2% since last year
- Field Crews inspected 13,813 LF of Sewer Mains this past month and cleaned another 33,228 LF
- 2016 In Numbers:
  - Lake Mooney and Smith Lake treated 4.857 billion gallons of water
  - Little Falls and Aquia Waste Water Treatment Plants treated 4.403 billion gallons of water
  - 9 miles of new waterline was installed bringing our total waterline to 652 miles
  - 4 miles of new sewer line was installed bringing our total sewer line to 526 miles
  - 112 new manholes were installed bringing our total number of manholes to 12,301
  - 270 new valves were installed bringing our total number of valves to 14,827
  - 92 new hydrants were installed bringing our total number of hydrants to 5,517
  - Staff currently maintains 16 water tanks (Berea slated to be removed), 14 water pump stations and 92 sewer pump stations

Construction Project Update:

- Celebrate Virginia Water Tank – online since January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017, final site work continues
- Route 1 North night work has begun
- Butler Road Force Main and Falls Run I-95 Crossing are now underway
- Courthouse Water Tank, Ebenezer Church Pump Station and Centreport Sewer Extension are expected to begin this month
- Currently awaiting bids on the Claiborne Run Sewer Interceptor Replacement

Mr. Towery updated the Commission on personnel changes. He stated that the Assistant Director of Construction and Engineering was now retired and that his position had been filled by Bryon Counsell. He further stated Mr. Aref Etemadi has joined the team to take on some of the senior engineer tasks.

Mr. Makee inquired how the lake levels were doing since it had been very dry. Mr. Towery stated that Lake Mooney was a little low at 223.6 (full level 226) and Smith Lake was at 90.2 (.2 over normal level).

**G. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Mount Olive Road Water Large Scale Project**

Mr. Towery stated that 37 applications had been received in December of 2016.

Mr. Counsell explained that there was a County policy in place for the approval of extension projects. He added that this particular project would fall under the large scale category based on the number of applications, as well as the magnitude of the amount of pipeline required to try to serve the entire area.

Mr. Counsell added that in order to qualify for large scale projects the following would have to be met:

- Total cost over 500,000 dollars
- Maximum expenditure per year 2,500,000 dollars
- Purpose is to serve existing, occupied properties

Mr. Counsell explained that applications were due by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. He added that the project would first have to be presented to the Utilities Commission to go over the general information as well as rough estimates. Following the initial review, the project would come back to the Utilities Commission in order to get designated, or not. Upon designation as a large scale project, the project would move forward to the Planning Commission for Comprehensive Plan Compliance review. A public hearing before the Utilities Commission would then be held in October with a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors made before November 31<sup>st</sup>. The Board would then potentially approve funding to be appropriated into the CIP.

Mr. Glazman inquired whether there was a margin contained in the CIP for potential projects. Mr. Counsell affirmed and stated that there were usually about 150,000 -170,000 dollars designated for neighborhood projects and short extension projects per fiscal year.

Mr. Snellings inquired what would happen if the Utilities Commission didn't support the project. Mr. Counsell stated that the current policy, as it was written, would void any further movement on the project. Mr. Towery added that residents could re-apply the following year.

Mr. Tignor asked for clarification on the 50% participation requirement. Mr. Counsell explained that in order to make the water lines efficiently work with chlorine residual as well as flow demand, at least half the properties in that area would have to connect. Mr. Tignor further inquired whether half of the lots were even occupied. Mr. Counsell stated that staff had not made that distinction as of yet, but he felt that most lots were occupied.

Ms. Kwiatkowski asked if the 37 applications made up the 50%. Mr. Counsell stated they did not, but explained that once the project was designated, staff would start soliciting the project to residents in the area. Mr. Towery added that it was not required for a project to have 50% participation to be nominated.

Ms. Kwiatkowski inquired that if the project was approved if the funds would be guaranteed. Mr. Towery stated that the Board would have to appropriate the funds since they were currently not in the CIP.

Mr. Glazman inquired whether the applicants were committed to the project.

Mr. Towery explained that once the project was designated by the Utilities Commission, participants would have to put down a 500 dollar deposit, which served as a reasonable certainty of their continued participation.

Ms. Kwiatkowski asked if the project would become a neighborhood project. Mr. Towery affirmed. He further stated that residents had a year to hook up to the water and would also be required to pay availability and connection fees totaling around 8,400 dollars. Ms. Kwiatkowski inquired whether the deposit would be applied to the total amount. Mr. Towery affirmed.

Mr. Snellings asked if the scope of the project could change, once staff started soliciting. Mr. Towery affirmed. Mr. Makee inquired whether there were any further developments in the process in that area. Mr. Towery stated that staff had not yet looked into that since the project had not been designated yet.

Mr. Tignor inquired whether this project was inside of the Urban Service Area (USA). Mr. Towery stated that it was not. Mr. Tignor was under the impression that water was only to be provided inside the USA. Mr. Towery explained that lots within the USA were in most situations required to hook up to public water. He did however point out that water lines outside the USA were not unheard of and that there were already some in parts of the County.

Mr. Counsell explained that the project would have to be completed in several phases (2-3) and provided the Commission with the following data:

- Phase 1 (modification as necessary to meet policy monetary limits)

- Northern area of applicants/interest
- 21,000 linear feet of 12” and 8” pipe (approx. 4 miles)
- \$3.2M Estimate
- Phase 2 (modification as necessary to meet policy monetary limits)
  - Southern area of applicants/interest
  - 19,000 linear feet of 12” and 8” pipe (approx. 3.5 miles)
  - \$3.1M Estimate
- Schedule (assumes approvals and typical timeline)
  - Phase 1 designed and approved late 2019
  - Phase 1 construction start Spring 2020 and complete late 2020
  - Phase 2 construction start Spring 2021
  - Depending on phasing, phase 3 construction to begin Spring 2022

Mr. Counsell stated that 12” lines would be used for the main lines and 8” for the extension lines. He added that the cost staff came up with was very preliminary and was subject to change. He pointed out that the current estimates were above what policy allowed for which is why staff would refine the areas in order to meet the guidelines. Mr. Towery added that \$2.5M maximum was per fiscal year which is why the phases would likely have to be split between fiscal years.

Mr. Tignor was curious how much potential revenue the County was looking at if all lots were connected to water. Mr. Towery stated it would be about \$1.6M, assuming all availability and connection fees were paid. Mr. Tignor asked who paid the deficit. Mr. Towery explained that the project is funded by availability fees.

Mr. Snellings inquired whether the policy considered mitigating circumstances, such as insufficient water availability. Mr. Towery stated that the policy did not speak to that type of issue, but it was at the Board’s discretion to overwrite.

Mr. Makee asked what the driving force was behind this request. Mr. Towery explained that the complaints were about the adequacy of the wells as well as the quality of the water. Mr. Snellings added that in the piedmont it was more difficult to get to the water and the more homes were being built, the worse the situation would get.

Mr. Makee inquired whether the phases could be modified and whether the outlines of the project could potentially be moved as well. Mr. Towery affirmed.

Mr. Glazman was curious, since there were other CIP projects, whether additional funds would be added to the CIP to pay for the project, or whether current projects would be re-prioritized. Mr. Towery stated it was likely that other projects might get pushed further out.

Ms. Kwiatkowski inquired whether there was enough debt capacity to be able to borrow the money to pay for the project if the lack of water was deemed an emergency and whether funds could be transferred from the general fund. Mr. Snellings explained that there were three CIPs; Utilities, Schools, and General Funds. He proceeded to explain that a CIP was simply a planning guide. He stated that it was technically possible, but he didn’t think the bond counsel would allow shifting money from the general fund to the utilities fund.

Ms. Carlone inquired whether the currently planned development with 58 homes were included in the current project outline, since the developer of those homes had no intentions on connecting to public water. Mr. Towery stated that staff did not specifically look to include or exclude those lots, but it appeared that the lots (currently one parcel) were inside the potential project area. He did however add that it would be hard to impose public water on the developer if the development had already been approved.

Mr. Glazman inquired whether the development was approved by the Planning Commission. Ms. Carlone stated that it was a by-right development and did therefor not have to go before the Commission for approval.

Mr. Tignor asked what would be asked of the Commission the following month. Mr. Towery explained that the Commission would have to decide whether they wanted to designate the project as a large scale project. He reiterated that two things would have to be considered, which were whether or not 50% participation was likely and whether adequate water flows could be established.

Mr. Glazman asked if the planned development would be included. Mr. Towery stated that staff would have to see whether the development was already approved.

Mr. Snellings wanted to make sure that the Commission understood that they would not be approving the project in March, but rather giving staff the ability to move forward. The project would then move forward to the Planning Commission for Comprehensive Plan Compliance review between March and August. Mr. Towery added that the matter would come back to the Utilities Commission in September regardless of the Planning Commission's decision. Following the September discussion there would be a public hearing in October before the Utilities Commission which would result in a recommendation to the Board.

#### H. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Tignor made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Makee. The motion passed 5-0.

There being no further business, Mr. Glazman adjourned the meeting at 8:04 PM.

Minutes submitted by,



Michael Makee,  
Recording Secretary