

## UTILITIES COMMISSION

June 9, 2009

7:00 p.m.

The Stafford County Utilities Commission met for its regular meeting on June 9, 2009, in the Board Chambers in the Stafford County Administration Center. Commission members present were Lloyd Chittum, Bob Hunt, Patricia Kurpiel, Wendy Surman, and Clarence Young. Harry Critzer, Dale Allen, Susan Fitzgibbon and Cheryl Giles were present for the Utilities Department.

Chairman Bob Hunt reported the following addition to the agenda. Discussion regarding an update of the sewage spill at Aquia Creek.

**1. Amend and Readopt Fees for Public Water & Sewer Service Public Hearing** – Susan Fitzgibbon, the Utilities Financial Manager, presented Proposed Ordinance O09-36, which proposes to amend and adopt the fees for providing water and sewer service. The proposal recommends increasing the Water Availability Fee by \$1,300, from \$5,600 to \$6,900 per equivalent dwelling unit. The Sewer Availability Fee remains unchanged. For User Fees, it is proposed that water and sewer rates increase by 8% **per year** over the next 3 years **PLUS** an overlay of \$3.00 (in FY10 only) to the demand fee to cover “Payment in Lieu of Taxes” and the “User Funded portion of new Debt service”. The proposal includes the following exceptions:

- 1) The “Conservation rate” will remain unchanged throughout the 3-year period; however, the proposed conservation rate band will start at 26,000 gallons of usage, instead of 21,000 gallons. It is expected that this change will reduce the number of customers impacted each month by about 50%.
- 2) The Bulk/Irrigation/Construction/Hydrant meter rate will also remain unchanged throughout the 3-year period.
- 3) The potential revenue lost by keeping the Conservation and Bulk/Irrigation meter rates constant will be covered in the Non-Residential water usage rate.

Wendy Surman requested additional figures regarding operating expenditures and revenue growth be provided at a later date.

Patricia Kurpiel suggested including the last date rates were increased in the presentation to the Board.

Lloyd Chittum expressed concern about the impact that increased fees would have on citizens that have fixed incomes during these stressful economic times.

Commission members discussed and agreed the P.I.L.O.T. \$600,000 fee should have been recovered from the General Fund and not only from the utilities customers.

Patricia Kurpiel made a motion to accept the staff’s recommendation of the proposed rate increase and to recommend proposed ordinance O09-36 to the Board of Supervisors to hold a public hearing.

Wendy Surman made an amended motion to accept staff’s recommendation for the rate increase for FY10 but to revisit the issue in FY11 and FY12. The amended motion was not seconded and the motion died.

Patricia Kurpiel’s motion was seconded by Clarence Young and the motion passed with a 3-2 vote. Lloyd Chittum and Wendy Surman were the opposing votes.

**2. Public Presentations** – There were no public presentations.

**3. Approval of Minutes** – Minutes for the May 9, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

**4. Update on Sewage Spill in Aquia Creek** – Bob Hunt briefly highlighted details from the press release regarding the sewage spill. Bob inquired about the statement in the press release that stated that the County's position was there was no increased risk to swimmers in Aquia Creek. Harry Critzer pointed out that, while he was not saying it was OK to discharge sewage into Aquia Creek, it and a number of other creeks in the County are on the Department of Environmental Quality's list of impaired waters. Mr. Hunt also asked staff to research whose responsibility it is to make citizens aware of impaired waters.

**5. Utilities Director's Report** – Harry Critzer reported the following items:

- ❖ The Terminal Reservoir Ordinance and the Reservoir Protection Overlay District Ordinance will go before the Board at the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Due to the Board concerns about adjacent landowner's concerns, two terminal reservoir ordinances would be submitted; one that permits swimming and one that does **not** permit swimming.
- ❖ Another application for the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund will be submitted for Phase 2 of the Little Falls Run Nutrient Reduction Upgrade. The upgrade would result in an 8 MGD facility that could meet the WLAs for nitrogen and phosphorus at that flow rate. The cost is expected to be about 5 million dollars plus the cost to purchase additional land between the current facility and Route 3.
- ❖ Nine proposals have been received for the water telemetry system upgrade. Evaluations would be done to determine which firms to interview.

Commission members discussed and agreed that when presenting the proposed Terminal Reservoir Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors that emphasis is placed on the increase of liability costs if swimming is allowed at the reservoirs.

**6. Commission Members Comments** – Patricia Kurpiel stated that she had walked the proposed waterline easement on the Fredericksburg conservation easement land for the pipe that will carry water from Rocky Pen Run all the way to Belmont and Chatham. She stated that the terrain was very challenging with steep slopes, stream crossings, and in the RPA next to waterfalls on a perennial stream.

Wendy Surman suggested that testing of Aquia Creek be completed after 30 days and 60 days to follow up on the sewage spill and to show a good-faith effort to the Aquia Harbour residents.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Kurpiel,  
Acting Recording Secretary