

UTILITIES COMMISSION

September 8, 2009

7:00 p.m.

The Stafford County Utilities Commission met for its regular meeting on September 8, 2009, in the A, B, C Conference Room in the Stafford County Administration Center. Commission members present were Rick Carroll, Lloyd Chittum, Bob Hunt, Patricia Kurpiel, Wendy Surman, Bill Tignor and Clarence Young. Harry Critzer, Susan Fitzgibbon and Cheryl Giles were present for the Utilities Department.

2. Approval of Minutes – Minutes for the June 9, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

3. Communication Between the Board of Supervisors and the Utilities Commission – Bill Tignor expressed a sense of frustration by the lack of communication between the Board and the Commission. Mr. Tignor is concerned the Board overlooks the advice presented on Utilities issues by the Commission and welcomed suggestions on how to remedy the lack of communication.

After some discussion, Commission members concurred that staying in contact with the supervisor that appointed them and keeping them informed about information discussed at the Utilities Commission meetings might help with the communication issue.

4. Update on Proposed Rate Increase – Susan Fitzgibbon asked if it would be helpful to simplify the message and focus on the chart that shows the average residential bill comparison to benchmark localities and a chart that shows where the reserve levels need to be. Susan explained that based upon current numbers, without the rate increase, we could be at risk of breaking our fiscal policy and our bond rating dropping within the next few years. Commission members agreed that simplifying the presentation by using only two or three charts would be helpful.

Bob Hunt inquired about what happens if the proposed rate increase is not implemented. Harry Critzer stated that some capital projects would have to be dropped.

Wendy Surman commented that focus should be placed on the bond rating being at risk if no increase of revenue is generated.

Rick Carroll commented that questions presented by Mr. Brito at the August 18th Board of Supervisors be addressed with regards to the reduction of capacity for Rocky Pen Run Reservoir and explaining why the basin has to be completely filled.

Bob Hunt recommended that additional commission meetings be held for members to discuss a broader range of Utilities issues that may come up at the November Board of Supervisors meeting.

Rick Carroll suggested staff provide data showing the breakout of how many customers are serviced in each district. Mr. Carroll also stated that information be included in the presentation to the Board that shows where our reserves would be had we not had an increase two years ago.

Bob Hunt summarized that the following four items need to be covered at the Board of Supervisors meeting for the proposed rate increase:

- 1) Use two or three charts to simplify the presentation.
- 2) Use a chart that shows the impact of a 6% increase.
- 3) Disclose what cost-cutting measures Utilities has taken.
- 4) Identify the impact of where the reserves would be without a rate increase.

5. Update on Pump Station Failures – Bob Hunt commented he had received several phone calls with regards to the sewage spills in Aquia Creek and Austin Run. Mr. Hunt highlighted excerpts from the letter mailed to Aquia Harbour residents and stated that residents were outraged about the County's choice of wording in the portion of the letter that states, "It is difficult to determine whether the overflows affected bacteria levels in Aquia Creek". He also stated that residents were upset with regards to the casual attitude the County presented.

Harry Critzer explained that Utilities has a sophisticated wastewater telemetry system that monitors all 91 pump stations and has never had a problem with the monitoring system locking up as it did this time. Utilities is installing back-up systems for the monitoring system to alert staff should it fail again. Mr. Critzer also stated that over the past couple of weeks there have been five to six vandalism incidents in Aquia Harbour involving Utilities equipment.

Patricia Kurpiel provided a report about the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) list for impaired waters monitored in Stafford County. Ms. Kurpiel explained that for the Austin Run area, DEQ monitored the site for one and half years and took eight readings. Out of the eight readings, four were slightly over the limit. A DEQ rule states that if 10% of their readings are over the limit, it is considered an impaired stream segment. Due to this rule, Ms. Kurpiel stated she thinks it does not accurately reflect the bacteria levels of waters that are impaired.

Wendy Surman commented that she appreciated receiving a detailed notification from the Utilities staff regarding the pump station failure incident.

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

- The judge ruled in the County's favor with regards to the contract for Aquia WWTF Enhanced Nutrient Removal Upgrades.
- Little Falls Run WWTF Upgrades are proceeding on schedule; staff has met with the design engineers on Phase 2 of the upgrades which would result in an 8 mgd facility capable of meeting the total nitrogen and total phosphorous wasteload allocations which become effective January 1, 2011.
- The Board approved a contract to paint the Stone River Water Tank.
- The National Association of Clean Water Agencies awarded the Gold Peak Performance Award to Aquia WWTF and the Platinum Peak Performance Award to Little Falls Run WWTF.

- Bids for the Rocky Pen Run Dam Excavation and Foundation Preparation were advertised on September 5th. The bids are due on October 5th and are expected to go to the Board on October 20th.
- The Board authorized a contract with URS for the Dam Design. Construction is expected to start near the fourth quarter of 2010.

7. Commission Members Comments – Patricia Kurpiel commented she is concerned about the extension of sewer on Route 610 to Lake Arrowhead. Ms. Kurpiel also expressed concern about the clear cutting of five hundred acres of trees for Rocky Pen Run Reservoir. Ms. Kurpiel stated that one acre of trees provide enough oxygen for 18 people.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William Tignor,
Recording Secretary