

Stafford County Utilities Commission
Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2018

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Makee called to order the regular meeting of the Utilities Commission (UC) at the George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center on February 13th, 2018 at 7:00 pm in the ABC Conference Room and asked Ms. Bush to call the role.

B. ROLL CALL

Members present: Joyce Arndt, Kent Carson, Mike Makee, Alan Glazman, William Tignor, Moses Boulden and Mickey Kwiatkowski

Staff present: Jason Towery, Jason Pauley, Julie Elliott, Cindy Bush, Jeanine Denno

Guests: Paul Waldowski, Jenny Lowe

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Makee made a motion to approve the January 16th meeting minutes as written. Mr. Tignor seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

D. PRESENTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

1. Jenny Lowe expressed her concern about the way the County is approving Residential Rezoning Applications. Ms. Lowe is a resident of Amy Clay subdivision. There is currently a rezoning for Cardinal Meadows, a new subdivision bordering Amy Clay, before the Planning Commission. A retention pond is proposed on the south eastern corner of the land, which backs up to a free-flowing stream. In order to construct the pond, all trees would have to be removed. The water flow could potentially impact Rodney Thompson Middle School and the Commercial area on Walpole Road. Ms. Lowe believes that during heavy rain this water could flood the existing school property and possibly also Courthouse Road. She is concerned about the stress this would place on the community's power grid. She asked if staff knew if Amy Clay was at their capacity, close to it and what steps the County is taking to ensure that there will not be an issue with the infrastructure. Mr. Tignor inquired if this issue was currently before the Planning Commission. Ms. Lowe responded that it was. She added that the issue was heard last summer, the PC decided, based on the concerns raised by the community as well as County staff, to defer the item until February 28, 2018. Ms. Kwiatkowski inquired if Ms. Lowe was speaking for herself or if she was representing other residents as well. She responded that she was appointed by the HOA for Amy Clay and the residents of the community. Ms. Kwiatkowski indicated that this issue is discussed and voted on by the Planning Commission and from there ultimately by the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Towery responded that there may be answers to some of Ms. Lowe's questions later in the meeting when the Water & Sewer Master Plan will be discussed.
2. Paul Waldowski addressed the UC, because he does not receive a water bill for the properties he owns in Stafford Meadows subdivision. The community is 30yrs old and has its own distribution system. The residents are billed by their HOA based on consumption from master meters. The charges are divided by units and are not based on individual consumption. Mr. Waldowski had previously contacted Mr. Critzer, the former director of utilities, who had performed an evaluation for the 143 townhouses and 66 apartments in Stafford Meadows. Mr. Waldowski pointed out that he recently made a visit to Kensington Crossing Apartments in the

Hardwood District. These residents all have individual meters and receive water and sewer bills. He is asking for fairness and not asking for any favors. He feels that he is actually fighting for the other 65 apartment owners. Mr. Tignor recalled that when the property came into existence they had their own water system. He remembered that Mr. Critzer's report indicated that upgrades were needed so the Department of Utilities could accept their distribution system into the County's infrastructure. Mr. Towery stated that he had reviewed the report and in discussion with Mike Smith he did indicate that the County would be willing to accept the infrastructure into the system if it was upgraded to meet the required standards. Mr. Towery is willing to revisit the issue. Ms. Kwiatkowski inquired if the other owners were on board with this plan. Mr. Waldowski replied that he has a Marine on active duty who is acting on his behalf. He is paying the lawyer's fees, since I am not allowed to put my name on the court case.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

F. REPORTS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. Tignor inquired about the reports in Spotsylvania County pertaining to fluoride in the water. He is asking for a report at the next meeting about treating the water, and if these issues have been reported here in Stafford. Mr. Towery replied that we do get request from time to time, and we do add fluoride and follow recommendations of the Virginia Department of Health.

G. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Item on the Board Agenda, February 20th: Authorize the County Administrator to Execute a Contract for Construction of Claiborne Run Sewer - Proposed Resolution R18-44.

2. Neighborhood Projects Update

Truslow Road Neighborhood Sewer Project is on hold pending Extension Policy Revisions.
Snellings Lane Neighborhood Sewer Project on hold pending Extension Policy Revisions.
Rockdale Short Water Extension is complete.

3. Pump and Haul Update

One property owner has requested an extension, the Board approved the request.
16 subsidized properties, down from 20.

4. Master Plan

O'Brian and Gere are finalizing the Draft Master Plan Revisions.
Utilities and Planning Commission to hold Public Hearings and recommendations to the Board.
Significant changes to the CIP and Pro-Rata.

5. Operations and Customer Service Update

We are preparing for the System Burn and Flush to begin Mid-March through Mid-May.
Account delinquencies are up because of the requirement to extend disconnections.
Promotions in the Department are Smith Lake Plant Manager and Facilities Maintenance Manager and Assistant Coordinator of Field Operations.

6. Construction Project Update

Courthouse Tank is mostly primed and painting to resume in March, the tank bowl is almost ready.
Falls Run I-95 Crossing is progressing.
Claiborne Run Sewer Interceptor Replacement bids received.
Wayside and Aquia Force Main is nearing advertisement for Construction.
Lower Accokeek Force Main/Gravity we are having some property acquisition delays.

H. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Pro Rata Fees

Mr. Towery explained that we will continue working with OBG to redistribute the costs within the pressure and sewer sheds as necessary. We would expect there to be a Public Hearing at the March 14th meeting to bring this formally to you for your concerns, questions or recommendations you might have. Hopefully, we can take a recommendation to the Board concurrent with the Master Plan recommendations.

2. Discussion of Tiered Rate Conservation Rates

Ms. Elliott explained in January 2006 the County set up the tiered rate system. This was done to encourage conservation of water and avoid unnecessary capacity improvements at the treatment facilities. The tiered rates were effective to reduce Peak Day demands by roughly 3 MGD and allowing Utility funds to be focused towards needed Capital, Operational and Economic Development projects. Utilities at times receive complaints about high water bills during the summer months particularly for new residential homeowners who are seeking to establish lawns with Sod. The board has asked that the Utilities Commission consider the tiered rates and make recommendations. Ms. Elliott provided some FY17 data. Staff knows that July is typically the highest peak month for the year. We currently have 35,957 accounts. Only 2% of these accounts hit the highest tier, which is the 26,000 gallons and over. Mr. Towery explained that as consumption moves through the tiers the cost per thousand gallons increases and this encourages conservation. The majority of the customers consume less than 9,000 gallons per month. Compared to our peer localities, based on 6,000 gallons usage, Stafford is ranked 4th. Ms. Kwiatkowski inquired why we are comparing ourselves to Charles County MD. Mr. Towery responded that this issue came last fall by the Channel 7 News crew. It was implied that our rates were higher than Charles County MD. The Board has asked the Utility Commission to consider reviewing the tiered rates and make a recommendation for changes if any. Staff has proposed a Sod Credit as an option. Ms. Kwiatkowski inquired how much staff time is this is going to require. Mr. Glazman agreed. The County requires that all lots 30,000 square foot or less have Sod for their final OP. Ms. Kwiatkowski responded that makes it key, because the sod is required and more than likely the new home owner will be left paying the bill. Mr. Glazman asked when this regulation was adopted. Ms. Elliott responded that she started working for the County in 07 and it was a requirement then. Mr. Makee commented that when we raised the rates last year, one of the main complaints was water conservation. We now have low flow toilets and modern appliances which are using less water, which caused UT to raise the rates. He pointed out that only 11% of people are tier 5 and tier 6. The question is, is it beneficial for us to have to encourage water conservation? Mr. Towery gave the example of Liberty Knolls. Last summer a typical home of 3 or 4 people who might normally use use 5,6,7000 gallons a month were using 60,000 gallons in a month, because they were watering their lawns due to new Sod. Mr. Tignor asked if sod requirement for new homes only. Ms. Elliott responded the sod requirement is set up before you can get a OP for the stabilization of the yard. Staff is proposing that the homeowner would get a a one-time credit. Ms. Kwiatkowski asked who pays for the sod. Ms. Elliott replied that the builder pays for the sod to be installed. Ms. Kwiatkowski implied we are going to give the credit to the builder. Ms. Elliott reiterated the credit is only for

the homeowner. Ms. Kwiatkowski asked how did UT handle the accounts in Liberty Knolls did they get an adjustment? Mr. Towery responded there were no adjustments given. Mr. Makee asked if it has ever been considered to sell a block of Water. Mr. Towery responded this would be considered a budget plan and certainly we could explore the billing software that would be needed. We would need to prepare for the time the water could be used so that it does not affect our peak demand.

Mr. Makee made a motion to approve the Sod Credit Proposal 2. Ms. Kwiatkowski seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-3.

I. OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on 2018 Master Plan

On March 14th we will have a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission to consider the amendments to the Master Plan. Mr. Towery reviewed the Master Plan changes.

2. Discussion of Advance Payment Fees

Mr. Towery reiterated the issue of the Advance Payments that was before the UC last fall. The new state code requires 60 days past due for disconnection of service. The Board has asked the UC to consider whether or not the current Advance Payments are sufficient to cover the new changes to delinquencies mandated by the State. Mr. Towery stated that the proposed residential Advance Payments would increase by \$106.00 for the 5/8" meters and \$68.00 for the 3/4" meters. Staff feels that this increase is sufficient due to the change from 45 days to 60 days. Mr. Tignor suggested having the Advance Payment broken up into several increments to avoid a hardship for the citizens.

J. AJOURNMENT

Mr. Glazman made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ms. Kwiatkowski. The motion was passed 7-0.

There being no further business, Mr. Makee adjourned the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Minutes submitted by,



Mickey Kwiatkowski,
Recording Secretary