



# STAFFORD COUNTY UTILITIES COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at 7:00 pm  
ABC Conference Room of the George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center

A. Call to Order

B. Roll Call

Members Present: Michael Makee (Chairman), William Tignor (Vice-Chair), Alan Glazman, Joyce Arndt, Kenton Carson, Mickey Kwiatkowski, Moses Boulden, Sr.

Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present: Jason Towery, Bryon Counsell, Paul Santay, Jason Pauley, Trent Funkhouser, Julie Elliott, Sylvia Dyson

C. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Glazman made a motion to approve the minutes as written, which was seconded by Mr. Tignor. With no further discussion, the motion passed 7-0.

D. Presentations by the Public

None

E. Public Hearing

None

F. Reports by Commission Members

Mr. Tignor stated that he encountered Mr. Marshall, who voiced his discontentment regarding the Board of Supervisor's (BOS) decision not to move forward with the Truslow Road Water and Sewer Line Extension project at the last Utilities Commission (UC) meeting. He informed Mr. Tignor that he was still very displeased. Mr. Tignor recommended he approach his District Supervisor. Mr. Marshall claimed that he had done so to no avail.

G. Director's Report

Smith Lake Filtration

Mr. Towery stated that for the past year staff had been working on the replacement of the filtration system at Smith Lake Water Treatment Facility and was happy to report that a contract had finally

been established and the rehabilitation of both filters should commence shortly. Mr. Towery explained that Smith Lake plant had been struggling, especially within the past year, to maintain permanganate levels. He stated that staff was very hopeful that the rehab of the filters would resolve these issues. Mr. Towery added that plant staff had just finished all the preparatory work and was expecting that the rehab efforts would begin very shortly.

#### Water Sewer Extension Policy

Mr. Towery informed the Commission that the Water and Sewer Extension Process had moved to the next stage with the BOS. He stated that after this matter had been brought before the UC, staff took their recommendations back to the Board's Infrastructure Committee (IC) in October. Mr. Towery explained that the next step would be to advertise a Public Hearing with the UC in January for the implementation of a \$15,000 extension fee. With no further questions from the UC, Mr. Towery moved on to the operations update.

#### Customer Service Update

Mr. Towery stated that there was a 2.5% increase in accounts, however the consumption had dropped by 0.1%, likely due to the heavy rains Stafford had experienced. Further he informed the Commission that the number of delinquencies had dropped significantly after a brief spike.

Ms. Kwiatkowski was very pleased with the drop and acknowledged that staff was moving in the right direction.

Mr. Tignor was curious whether the delinquencies had dropped due to collections or write offs. Ms. Elliott explained that staff had been taking a more aggressive approach. She stated that state code allowed for collection efforts for accounts with at least \$25 in delinquencies, however staff set the minimum at \$100 since it didn't seem feasible to pursue smaller amounts due to the administrative burden. She added that the billing department had processed over 100 lien letters within the past month. Ms. Elliott further stated that liens were a great tool and results were promising.

#### 472 Flushing

Mr. Towery continued with the operations update, stating that Utilities Field staff had completed the next phase of flushing the 472 Pressure Zone (Vista Woods area). He believed that staff was able to flush another 60+ miles over the month of November.

#### Staffordboro Force Main

Mr. Towery mentioned that staff was preparing to start the lining project in an effort to rehab the force main underneath the Staffordboro Commuter Lot. He added that lining the main was a very cost effective approach.

#### Ferry Farm Water Line Replacement

Mr. Towery stated that staff had been working on the best approach for this project for the past year. He added that staff was still discussing the final details, but had already begun pulling VDOT permits. Mr. Towery explained that the project consisted of replacing about 5 miles of very old water line which had been long overdue.

#### Courthouse Water Tank

Mr. Towery stated that the water tank had been sitting at 99% completion for some time. He explained that the tank had not been brought online yet due to the issues Smith Lake plant was experiencing. According to Mr. Towery the tank would be brought online once the work at Smith

Lake was completed. He added that the tank would improve the water pressure in the surrounding areas and would raise it by about 20 psi.

#### I-95 Sewer Interceptor

Mr. Towery reiterated that the County had run into some issues with the contractor, causing significant delays. He further stated that the contract had finally been dissolved and that the County would be rebidding the work shortly.

#### Claiborne Run Interceptor

Mr. Towery stated that construction was ongoing after many delays due to CSX. He stated that the project consisted of a 36" to 42" sewer interceptor main which was long overdue to for replacement.

#### Wayside Interceptor Sewer

Mr. Towery stated that the project was ongoing and was located on Route 1, just north of the Courthouse.

#### Stafford Oaks Pump Station

Mr. Towery stated that there were a couple of pump stations in progress.

#### Claiborne Run Parallel Force Main

Mr. Towery stated that the project was located along Route 3, causing a few lane closures. He explained that the County was working on installing a force main reaching from the Little Falls Wastewater Treatment Facility up to the intersection of Route 3 and Cools Springs.

#### Lower Accokeek Force Main/Gravity

Mr. Towery explained that this project was a rather large project around the Courthouse area which would upgrade the capacity and allow for removal of some of the pump stations.

Mr. Tignor inquired whether the water tank at Paradise Estates was still in use. Mr. Towery stated that it was, but would be decommissioned once the Courthouse tank was online.

Mr. Tignor inquired about the status of community drainfield regulations. Mr. Towery explained that the Planning Commission, as well as the BOS had considered and accepted the suggested changes, resulting in code revisions. He further stated that the Subdivision Ordinance now stated that drainfields needed to be on the lot they served, therefor disqualifying the use of community drainfields for housing developments. He did however clarify that community drainfields were still an option for some commercial operations, wineries, etc. outside of the urban services area. Mr. Towery reiterated that the UC had made recommendation to modify the gallons per day requirement to reflect state code more closely. He stated that after discussions with the County Attorney and the BOS, it was decided to remove this statement altogether and defaulting to State Code.

Before moving on to the next item of business, Mr. Towery took the opportunity to introduce two new staff members, Paul Santay and Trent Funkhouser. He stated that as part of the reorganization efforts between Public Works and Utilities Division, four divisions had been created, to include Field Operations (Jason Pauley), Capital Construction (Bryon Counsell), Customer Service and Community Development (Paul Santay) and Code Compliance and Review (Trent Funkhouser).

#### H. New Business

Mr. Towery stated that staff gave a presentation to the BOS regarding the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), which was a new practice the new County Administrator had implemented. He explained that the plan was a 5 year look ahead to give an idea where things were and where they were going.

#### 5 Year Goals

Mr. Towery stated that the goals set within the LTFP were the same goals staff set the previous year, which were 1. Master Plan Changes, 2. Water & Sewer Pipe Replacement Program, 3. Implement a Fats, Oils & Grease (FOG) prevention program, 4. Create a pump station rehab program, 5. Fund an Inflow & Infiltration (I&I) reduction program and 6. Begin a 5-year unidirectional flushing program.

#### Master Plan

Mr. Towery explained that staff had been working on changing the master plan and that the UC had been instrumental in the process. He added that as a result of the changes, there were some adjustments that had to be made to the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) as well.

Mr. Counsell stated that the last Master Plan update was done in 2007. He added that one of the conclusion staff came to was that the water demand did not increase nearly at the rate that was anticipated in 2007, allowing for a lot of the planned CIP projects to be pushed out. Mr. Counsell explained that the master plan in general mainly focused on expansion requirements due to growth; need for Repair/Rehab/Replacement (3R); upcoming regulatory requirements, especially for the treatment plants; distribution zones and how to move water around more effectively and targeting of operational efficiencies.

Mr. Counsell stated that the treatment capacity numbers for Stafford now and in the near term where good, however looking ahead to 2060, with all of the urban services area having been developed, some significant upgrades to the capacity of the plants would become necessary. Mr. Counsell added that staff was planning for capacity upgrades starting in the 2030s.

Mr. Counsell explained that the CIP incorporated projects such as growth related system expansion, 3R projects for piping networks, and 3R for pump stations and tanks. He added that staff was projecting about 48 million dollars for expansion about 17 million dollars for 3R projects over the next 5 years.

Mr. Counsell stated that over the next 4-8 years there were some significant projects planned for the treatment plants and that some facility assessments were already incorporated in the previous year's CIP and would help identify work needed. For FY20, Mr. Counsell stated, the CIP was focusing on regulatory requirements and that staff was expecting about 27 million dollars between the two wastewater plants.

Mr. Counsell explained that redundancy between the two water plants was vital and that staff was working on a plan to better move water from one side of the county to the other, making it possible for the plants to support each other when needed.

Mr. Counsell stated that I&I analysis and prevention was also included in the CIP and that this type of program had unfortunately been neglected in the last several years.

Mr. Counsell further stated that there was a placeholder in the CIP for a long proposed water connection between Spotsylvania County and Stafford County, but final details or a final agreement were not in place yet.

Mr. Towery added that with a lot of the older staff retiring and the associated loss of knowledge, as well as the aging system, it was even more important to make the system more redundant and reliable.

#### Water & Sewer Pipe Replacement Program

Mr. Towery reiterated that a lot of the infrastructure was reaching the end of its life cycle and was in need of repairs and maintenance.

#### FOG

Mr. Towery stated that FOG was still an issue. He further stated that some new personnel were coming on board to help with the implementation of the FOG program.

#### Pump Stations

Mr. Towery stated that there were over 90 pump stations throughout the county with a life expectancy of about 30 years each, resulting in the need for replacement of about 3 pump stations a year. Mr. Towery explained that the County was unfortunately not equipped to do so, which was why staff found ways to extend the life of the pumps through rehab projects.

#### I&I Reduction

Mr. Towery explained that porous pipes throughout the County allow for I&I, especially during rain events. He added that staff had been working on some possible solutions to improve the overall situation.

#### System Maintenance

Mr. Pauley stated that the Field Operations Team had put systems in place to help prevent issues within the system which had proven to be effective several times. He explained that the current system consisted of 703 miles of water pipe and 573 miles of sewer pipe, which were supported by 93 sewer pump stations, 14 water pump stations, 15 water tanks and 5,812 hydrants.

Mr. Glazman inquired how much of the existing infrastructure had been replaced within the past 5 years. Mr. Towery stated that there was very little replacement but that the County was working to get closer towards the goal of 25 miles of replacement per year. Mr. Pauley added that the County had started with some lining projects, which was much more cost effective than pipe replacement but still extended the life expectancy significantly.

Mr. Pauley stated that field crews were also working on maintaining the water quality by exercising systems burns and with the help of unidirectional flushing which was ongoing.

According to Mr. Pauley, staff was also continuously exercising pump outs since FOG was still a major issue. He further stated that a Pretreatment Coordinator had been approved for FY19 as well as a Pretreatment Inspector for FY24.

Ms. Kwiatkowski questioned why the County would wait to hire a Pretreatment Inspector if FOG was such a big problem. Mr. Towery responded that the County did have the ability within the County Code to put the requirements for the inspections on the businesses and the Pretreatment Inspector was being considered in case the business community did not comply.

Mr. Pauley added that field crews were paying special attention to problem areas to prevent any major issues due to FOG.

Mr. Makee asked how the County disposed of the FOG. Mr. Pauley stated that the solids, which were left after the filtering process at the plants, were being disposed of at the landfill.

Mr. Pauley stated that I&I was also a major issue, causing big surges in flow within the system and DEQ violations. In an attempt to be proactive, Mr. Pauley stated, field crews had done some smoke

testing and were able to locate several problems within the system. As a result of the testing, 15,000 gallons of infiltration per day had been eliminated, according to Mr. Pauley.

Another maintenance measure to ensure water quality, said Mr. Pauley, was the unidirectional flushing. By flushing over 100 miles of pipes, Mr. Pauley stated, staff had seen a 25% drop in water quality complaints.

Regarding the pump station rehab program, Mr. Pauley reiterated that the life expectancy of a pump station was about 30 years and that there were about 90 pump stations throughout the county to date. He added that the average cost for a replacement was \$75,000 and that the CIP planned for \$500,000 annually for pump station rehab projects.

Mr. Counsell stated that 8 million dollars for targeted rehab and replacement projects had been appropriated for the next 3 years.

Mr. Towery presented a graph illustrating the customer service gap as well as the maintenance gap and the need for additional personnel. While staff was proposing 9 additional positions, realistically there was a need for even more personnel, said Mr. Towery. Mr. Towery stated that a couple of the proposed positions were actually shared positions with the General Fund, such as the Public Information Officer (PIO). Mr. Towery explained that the PIO would help drive people to the right information to make sure that the public was made aware of any potential issues, as well as any ongoing efforts.

He added that there was also a need for a property acquisition specialist, as the County would have to acquire multiple right-of-ways and easements due to ongoing and upcoming projects. Mr. Towery explained that the County was currently paying outside companies to handle the acquisitions.

Mr. Makee inquired whether salaries were paid from Enterprise or General Fund. Mr. Towery explained that the majority of the new positions were exclusively Utilities position, except for the PIO and the Acquisitions Specialist, but details would still have to be worked out.

Mr. Makee followed up with the question if the BOS had to authorize the Enterprise funded positions. Mr. Towery affirmed.

Mr. Glazman stated that it appeared as if the number of employees stayed constant over time. Mr. Towery explained that there was no industry standard for employees per mile of pipe, but staff had been looking at other jurisdictions and found that the ratio in the other localities was significantly higher than Stafford's, which was concerning. Mr. Towery added that the County would have to make sure that there was not going to be a downwards trend, especially on the maintenance side.

#### Fiscal Policy

Mr. Towery explained that the Utilities fund was divided into two categories; Capacity Expansion Fund, which was used for projects necessary due to growth; and the Operating Fund which was used towards every day operations, capital projects and 3R programs.

#### 5 Year Operating Plan

Mr. Towery stated that staff was anticipating a yearly rate increase of 1.5% for customers, which would cause the average water bill to go up by about \$1 per month.

Ms. Kwiatkowski asked why there appeared to be a large increase in interest and property rental when looking at the provided chart. Ms. Elliott stated that interest had been coming in very high

and that for FY19 the numbers were coming in at around \$200,000 in interest to date. Ms. Kwiatkowski felt that the projections were still a bit high. Ms. Elliott explained that the current projection equaled the FY18 actuals.

#### Capital Plan

Mr. Towery explained that Capital revenues were being used to cover basic operation expenses and the remainder was transferred to be put towards the capital expenditures which were being used for 3R activities and such. He further pointed out that staff was assuming a bond draw for FY19, FY21 and FY23. He added that in the previous year, projections were suggesting a bond draw every year and that staff was able to reduce the number of bonds by making adjustments to some of the previously proposed projects and even eliminate some.

#### Utilities Fund Balance

Mr. Towery stated that the fund balance was currently a little over 66 million dollars and that of that approximately 50 million dollars were already committed for projects and another 7 million were reserve.

Mr. Tignor asked what the Board's response was to the presentation. Mr. Towery stated that the BOS seemed supportive of staff's suggestions and did understand the need for additional employees.

Mr. Makee informed staff that he had had a conversation with Supervisor Bohmke, who stated that she had been very impressed with staff's presentations and the information provided therein. Ms. Kwiatkowski stated that she got the same impression when watching the BOS meeting.

#### I. Unfinished Business

Mr. Towery stated that staff took the UC's recommendations regarding the water and sewer extension policy back to the BOS in October, suggesting a \$500,000 limit for neighborhood projects and short extension projects up to \$100,000. He added that the IC had some concerns regarding the \$500,000 threshold and recommended lowering it to \$100,000. Mr. Towery explained that staff took the matter to the full Board in November with a recommendation of a \$250,000 threshold. The BOS was still considering, said Mr. Towery. He added that in order to impose such fee, there would have to be hold a public hearing, first with the UC and then with the BOS. Mr. Towery stated that ideally, the UC should hold their public hearing in January.

According to Mr. Towery, after speaking with the County Attorney, IC and BOS, staff made the decision to recommend simplifying the extension policy by combining neighborhood and short extension projects into one however maintaining dollar thresholds for administrative ability to approve projects under \$50,000, UC authority to approve extensions up to \$100,000 and anything beyond that would require BOS authority. Mr. Towery pointed out that with those changes, the \$15,000 water and sewer extension fee would be applied for all extensions.

Mr. Towery further added that as per Ms. Maurer's request, the policy would state that for projects over \$100,000 applicants would be able to take advantage of a service district.

J. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, Ms. Kwiatkowski made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Glazman. The motion passed 7-0.

Minutes submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Towery', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jason D. Towery, P.E.  
Director of Public Works