

Utilities Commission

Approved Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, May 11, 2021

- I. Call to Order – Chairman, Mr. Kent Carson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Chambers of the George L. Gordon, Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road Stafford, VA 22554
- II. Roll Call – All six members (Kent Carson, Greg Cox, Alan Glazman, Mickey Kwiatkowski, Nancy Sullivan, Bill Tignor, Vice Chairman) were present with Ms. Sullivan participating via telephone and the Hartwood District seat vacant.
- III. Approval of the 4/13/2021 Meeting Minutes – Ms. Kwiatkowski motioned, seconded by Mr. Tignor, and approved unanimously 6 - 0.
- IV. Reports by Commission Members – Ms. Kwiatkowski brought up the death of former Utilities employee, Ronnie Brinson, who worked for Stafford County for 30 years and who retired three years ago. There was a memorial service for him held at Pratt Park, which Jason Towery and Bryon Counsell attended.

Ms. Kwiatkowski asked if Stafford County's utilities were safe from cyber attacks like happened in Florida and the recent cyber-attack on the gasoline pipeline. Mr. Edwards responded that the County's utility systems were not subject outside influence, there were self-contained and there was no threat to the water system or wastewater system.

Mr. Glazman thanked Mr. Edwards for the recently completed tour saying that it was a great tour of the facilities. He sent a note to his representative on the Board of Supervisors letting Ms. Bohmke know how very informative the tour was. Ms. Kwiatkowski apologized for missing the tour. Mr. Cox said that it was a great tour and showed great professionalism at the Plants and with the staff. Mr. Carson mentioned that it was better than most Army plants. Mr. Tignor said he had been on the Utilities Commission since 2008 and he was continually impressed by the Department's planning and operations; that it was a first-class organization.

- V. Director's Report – Mr. Edwards spoke about the recently declared State of Emergency due to the pipeline cyber attack saying that all vehicles in the fleet had full gas tanks and would not be affected by possible gasoline shortages should they occur. He gave a brief overview of items from the Board of Supervisors meeting agendas held on April 20<sup>th</sup>, May 4<sup>th</sup>, and items on the upcoming May 18<sup>th</sup> agenda. Mr. Edwards noted that the proposed 3% rate increase was approved and would be effective July 1, 2021. Additional positions in Public Works were approved by the Board and a second round of CARES Act funding (\$69,000) was received for payment of past-due water/sewer accounts for a total of nearly \$500,000 to assist customers whose payments were in arrears.

Mr. Scott Powell, Utilities Capital Improvement Program Construction Coordinator, gave a presentation on the FY2021 third quarter capital projects summary that included updates on Claiborne Run Parallel Force Main, Phase 1A; Claiborne Run Parallel Force Main Phase 1B; Falls Run Force Main; Falls Run Gravity Interceptor Sewer, Phase 2; Lower Accokeek Gravity, Force Main, and Pump Station; Little Falls Run Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility and Regulatory Upgrades; 342 Pressure Zone Upgrades (342-05); 342 Pressure Zone Upgrades (342-06); and 342 Pressure Zone Upgrades – Enon Road Elevated Water Storage Tank.

Mr. Nathan Huber, 3R Program Engineer, gave a presentation on the FY2021 third quarter 3R project summary that included updates on Water Distribution/Transmission projects (Ferry Farm Water Main Replacement; Chatham Manor Water Main Project; Thomas Jefferson Place hydrant replacement); Wastewater Collection, I & I, Rehabilitation Projects (sewer lining work in Ferry Farm; Manhole replacement in Ferry Farm); Pump Station projects (Aquia Creek; Argyle Heights; Aquia at the Bridge; Days Inn); and Wastewater/Water Plant Projects (Lake Mooney ammonia feed sampling station; Filter membrane Rack #4; Magnesium Hydroxide tank replacement).

- VI. Unfinished Business – there were no items of unfinished business however, Ms. Kwiatkowski asked that the extension of water/sewer at Brooke Station be included on future meeting agendas.
- VII. New Business – there were no items of new business.

### VIII. Public Hearing – Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Program

A presentation was given by Mr. Jon Brindle, Environmental Compliance Manager. Mr. Brindle outlined why Stafford County needed a FOG program and noted the approximate \$1.5 Million spent annually to remove FOG from County collection systems. Implementing the FOG program, Mr. Brindle said, would significantly reduce the amount of FOG entering the system and further protect County infrastructure and the environment. The FOG Program would only be implemented in kitchens that generate large quantities of FOG; there is an anticipated \$100 annual permit fee and three sections of the Program including a grease control device/maintenance; liquid oil recycling; and industry standards best management practices. Annual inspections will be required and handled by the recently Board-approved inspector position, which will be available in FY2022.

In response to recent pictures of FOG build-up dated 4/7/2021 and 4/15/2021 that were included in the presentation, Ms. Kwiatkowski asked about the build-up at the top vs. the bottom of the pipe. Mr. Brindle explained that where there was still flow-through, build-up would be at the bottom. In instances where the pipe was completely clogged, build-up would be pushed to the top. Mr. Edwards said that cleaning out the pipe was not easy as the build-up was the consistency of Crisco and it took a lot of work to remove it.

Mr. Tignor noted that the program focused on commercial and asked if there was a way to focus on residential properties. Mr. Brindle said that commercial properties were the areas of most concern to the County but that through education and outreach, residential customers were being made aware of FOG issues. Outreach included flyers in November utility bills for FOG Awareness Week (in advance of Thanksgiving), hand-outs of lids with instructions to store grease in cans allowing it to harden then being disposed of in the trash rather than down the drain or garbage disposal. Mr. Glazman said his bills are paid automatically and he never sees a bill or the flyer. Mr. Edwards said public outreach also used Facebook, Twitter, etc. Mr. Glazman suggested notifications in the newspaper and making a collaborative effort with other localities. Mr. Carson said he recalled seeing a flyer several months ago. Mr. Edwards said they also set up a booth at County functions.

Staff responds to back-ups at residences but if the back-up is in the house the owners are advised to contact a plumber as the County will work only on County lines. Mr. Tignor said that HOAs were another possible resource. Mr. Edwards said that the City of Fredericksburg was working on a consent order with the State to implement a FOG program.

Mr. Cox asked about liquifying FOG and hauling it away and talked about the possibility of using a heating element and settling tank. Mr. Brindle said he had not seen that sort of mechanism for disposal but said that the grease interceptor on site would have a contract with a haul away vendor; that Valley Proteins was the one used most in this area. Mr. Cox asked about new strip malls. Mr. Edwards said the issue would be not maintaining their grease control devices and having it back up into the parking lots due to it not being pumped out with necessary frequency, which was part of the FOG Program campaign to ensure that commercial entities were keeping up with the Program.

Mr. Cox asked if they did not follow recommended protocol, could they be fined? Mr. Edwards said that fining was not built into the Program as it was being presented but there was a re-inspection fee if the first inspection failed to meet the manufacturer's recommended standards. Ms. Kwiatkowski asked if they failed three times in a row could they be fined. Mr. Brindle said there was no current mechanism for fining; it would require a change to County Code via ordinance. Mr. Edwards said the intent was to begin this Program with baby steps and that a fine could be added at a later date if need be. He added that staff looked at Culpeper, Fairfax, and Prince William counties and took a middle-of-the-road approach. Mr. Tignor said that this was a good beginning that should be coordinated with the Virginia Department of Health since FOG build-up applies to septic tanks as well.

Mr. Carson opened the public hearing. No members of the public were in attendance wishing to speak. Mr. Carson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Tignor motioned, seconded by Ms. Kwiatkowski to recommend the FOG Program as presented to the Board of Supervisors. The motion passed 6 – 0.

Mr. Carson asked if anyone had anything to add before the meeting adjourned.

Mr. Tignor brought up the CARES Act funding saying that the National Debt contributed nearly \$500,000 to Stafford County in helping out those residents with paying water/sewer bills.

Mr. Carson adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.