

Utilities Commission
Approved Minutes
April 13, 2021
7:00 p.m. Board of Supervisors Chambers
1300 Courthouse Road Stafford, VA 22554

- I. Call to Order: Chairman, Mr. Kent Carson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. Roll Call: Mr. Kent Carson, Mr. Alan Glazman, Ms. Mickey Kwiatkowski, Mr. Bill Tignor and (via phone) Ms. Nancy Sullivan. Mr. Greg Cox was absent from the meeting. Staff present included Mr. Christopher Edwards, Mr. Jason Towery, Mr. George Brant, and Ms. Marcia Hollenberger.
- III. Approval of the Minutes: Mr. Tignor motioned, seconded by Ms. Kwiatkowski, and approved by a vote of 5 – 0 to adopt the minutes of the March 9, 2021 Utilities Commission meeting.
- IV. Presentations by the Public: No members of the public spoke at the meeting.
- V. Reports by Commission Members:
Ms. Kwiatkowski congratulated Mr. Edwards and staff on the video presentation and receipt of a proclamation recognizing Little Falls Run in an educational You Tube video prepared for students during the COVID-19 pandemic and for embracing current technology.

Mr. Tignor showed a notice received in his water bill regarding odor in the water supply. Mr. Edwards explained about uni-directional flushing and a pre-chlorine burn, which killed bacteria in the water lines. This is done every three years and should be complete by the end of April at which time the odor should dissipate. He said the flushing also helped with discoloration.

Mr. Tignor asked about the County's Pump and Haul program. Mr. Edwards replied that the County's subsidized Pump and Haul program was being phased out after seven years, of which residents participating in the program were notified. There are 17 customers currently on subsidized Pump and Haul and while the services will still be available to them, it will be necessary for them to pay the full costs of the program, which is \$200-\$300 for each pump out and depending on the family size at the residence, could be necessary two or three times monthly.

Mr. Carson asked if the CARES ACT program funds could be used to aid the subsidized Pump and Haul customers. Mr. Edwards said that he did not believe that would be a permitted use.

Currently, 95% of those funds have been used; applications have slowed down and with the possibility of new money coming in (a second round is expected in May), the program would be brought back to the citizen's attention. He noted that Stafford County's 95% rate was excellent compared to Spotsylvania who had a less than 50% participation rate.

VI. Director's Report:

Mr. Edwards reported that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) held a public hearing on the proposed 3% water/sewer user fee rate increase. A decision was deferred to the BOS' meeting on April 20th where they will vote on it as well as tax rates and other County budgets. Mr. Carson asked about the number of people who spoke at the BOS' public hearing. Mr. Edwards said there were no speakers who talked on the subject of the proposed rate increase.

The BOS also voted to approved an application for a \$4.9 Million grant with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which would be used at the Little Falls Run Wastewater Treatment Plant for a nutrient removal upgrade. He said that while staff did not expect to receive the entire amount, it was hopeful that the County would being granted a portion of it for use on the Little Falls Run upgrades.

There will be future quarterly updates to the Utilities Commission on Capital Construction and 3R projects with the next update scheduled for the Commission's meeting on May 11th. A public hearing on the proposed FOG presentation is also tentatively scheduled for the May 11th meeting.

Mr. Edwards gave a brief overview of ongoing capital and 3R projects. Ms. Kwiatkowski asked for the definition of WRA, noted in the Capital Construction report. Mr. Edwards said it stood for the firm of Wittman, Requardt and Associates, one of the County's on-call contractors.

Mr. Edwards introduced Mr. George Brant, newly hired Assistant Director of Utilities, Field Operations. Mr. Brant came to Stafford County from Colorado and has several years' experience working in Charleston, SC and Charlotte, NC. He holds a Master's Degree from UNC Charlotte and a Bachelor's Degree from Clemson University.

VII. Unfinished Business:

Regarding the extension of water/sewer near to the Brooke Road Train Station, Mr. Edwards said that he met with Planning and Zoning staff; that the logical place to start was with the Planning Commission so Utilities staff was providing details including the number of customers it could support, the number of customers it would need a commitment from in order to begin the

project, and approximate costs involved in the project. The Planning Commission will be asked to work it into the County's next Comprehensive Plan update. Ms. Kwiatkowski asked if Planning and Zoning staff were amenable to the idea; Mr. Edwards said they were and Ms. Kwiatkowski said it would be a good thing.

VIII. New Business: There were no items of New Business.

IX. Public Hearing: Evaporation Credits

Mr. Carson opened the public hearing. There was one speaker in favor of Evaporation Credits, Mr. David Struminger, President of Capital Textiles. Mr. Carson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Tignor inquired as to how the program would work. Mr. Edwards replied that there would be an amendment to Stafford County Code Sec. 25-98, "Water and Sewer Disposal." The program would apply to evaporation only, and only to commercial properties not for irrigation or other uses. Users would have two separate meters; one for water only and one for water/sewer. For example, if 10,000 gallons water were used but only 7,000 gallons of sewage, the company would be billed for 3,000 gallons less sewage than water. Mr. Edwards said this was viewed as a good opportunity for economic development in the County. Ms. Kwiatkowski asked if there would only be one water/sewer account. Mr. Edwards said it would remain one account with two meters that would be set up with the County's billing system.

Mr. Tignor asked about the rate schedule for filling swimming pools. Mr. Edwards replied that most people use bulk haulers to fill swimming pools or they pay residential rates. Ms. Kwiatkowski asked about one-time adjustments. Mr. Edwards said that did not apply to filling swimming pools. He said that bulk haulers put a master meter on hydrants to obtain their water.

Mr. Carson asked about irrigation on golf courses. Mr. Edwards said the Evaporation Credits could not be used for irrigation. He added that they were only for commercial entities, not residential. Mr. Carson noted that water used to irrigate golf courses was not going into the sewer system. Mr. Edwards replied that they may use an irrigation meter and non-potable water.

Mr. Towery spoke about sod irrigation credits since sod was a requirement with new construction. He said irrigation was billed on a tiered approach to encourage conservation and was cyclical based on the seasons whereas the hospital and other commercial businesses were year-round users.

Mr. Carson said others were going to ask why it did not apply to them and wondered what could go wrong with the program. Mr. Edwards said that schools, the hospital, and other large users would benefit and make use of this.

Ms. Kwiatkowski asked if Stafford was one of the first localities to do this. Mr. Edwards replied that Stafford was one of the later localities to consider enacting this program but would be one of the first to use sewer subtraction meters.

Mr. Tignor asked about revenue. Mr. Edwards said for the Schools, it was \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month or overall for the County, about \$150,000 to \$200,000 annually.

Ms. Kwiatkowski motioned, seconded by Mr. Glazman to recommend Evaporation Credits to the BOS. The motion passed 5 – 0.

- X. Adjournment: Ms. Kwiatkowski motioned, seconded by Mr. Tignor and passed 5 – 0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.