

**WATER COMMITTEE**  
**FEBRUARY 28, 2001**  
**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**           Chuck Watkins, Chairman  
  Dr. George Patton  
  Tony Parrott  
  Chris Venice

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS:**     Bill McNally  
  Jim Mallett

**ABSENT:**                       Chris Cofty

**GUESTS:**                     Mr. Glenn Rickerson  
  Major Edward Cole  
  Dave Hamrick- The Citizen

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Chuck Watkins at 8:00 A.M.

**I.     APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 14, 2001.**

Chris Venice made the motion and Dr. George Patton seconded, to approve the minutes from the meeting on February 14, 2001. There was no opposition.

**II.    ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.**

Dr. Patton made a motion to elect Chuck Watkins as Chairman of the Water Committee. Mr. Parrott seconded and there was no opposition.

Chairman Watkins thanked the committee for their confidence in him. He commented that the committee had worked as a team since the beginning. He thinks they have done a good job the last few years, and hopefully will continue.

**III.   MR. GLENN RICKERSON ABOUT WATER BILL.**

Chairman Watkins welcomed Mr. Rickerson. Mr. Rickerson explained that in the November December bill he had a shock. His bill went from a normal \$33.00 up to \$1038.00. It was for 225,000 gallons of water. There is a two fold problem. One is that he did not have a leak then, he does not have a leak now. The bill immediately went back to \$33.00 this month. He stated he wanted to be fair and explained that Mr. Parrott was gracious enough to give him what he felt was his only resolution to the problem.

**Mr. Parrott stated Mr. Rickerson was given a plumbers leak credit and a water adjustment fund credit. Mr. Rickerson said that Mr. Parrott did that without a great deal of discussion. He went on to say that his problem is, he has a unique situation occurring here. He does not have a leak. He is hoping there is some way we can look at the bill. Look at it over the past three months or the existing bill now, and find some type of averaging that would bring the bill back into perspective. He did not use 225,000 gallons of water. He thinks if you look at that in terms of what would occur, he used the analogy of his house would be thirty three feet under water. Or, his front yard, where the water line goes would be blown out. There would be some indication of something. Of course, it is just not there. Mr. Rickerson expressed the hope that there is power within the Water Authority to simply look at the bill, and adjust it based on previous usage. Rather than this particular figure. He added that he does not have a swimming pool. It is just he and his wife, and they live in a 1900 square foot house. They are both 59 and they both work.**

**Dr. Patton asked, since he says he did not have a leak, where did the water go. Mr. Rickerson replied that he is suggesting there may have been a malfunction of the meter. He knows, typically flow meters are not usually inclined to break. God did not make them, so something does happen from time to time. He referenced the photo of his home where he drew his water line. His yard is sodded with zoysia, which he did four years ago. The water line goes straight into the house at the water heater. Even if he was to have a toilet leak, as he and Mr. McNally spoke earlier, that could have been a \$700.00 bill. He would understand that. That again, is just not the issue. He thinks something must have happened to that meter during that period of time. He has years of records. Nothing happened.**

**Chairman Watkins stated he takes from the address that Mr. Rickerson is on the sewer system. Mr. Rickerson replied yes, Peachtree City. Chairman Watkins asked if he has an irrigation system? Mr. Rickerson said he did not. Chairman Watkins went on to say the policy we have in place has been around quite a while. It has worked well. Typically, people come in and show us that they have had a plumber fix a problem. Then we adjust the bill. Mr. Rickerson is saying the water did not go through the meter, and we are saying it did. We have to figure out, if possible, what really did happen. In Mr. Rickerson's business, once the electricity is used through the meter, you don't know what the consumer did on his end. We are saying the integrity from our meter back to our line is good and the meter is reading correctly. He knows \$100.00 is \$100.00, but they adjusted it from \$1038.00 down to \$100.00.**

**Mr. Rickerson commented he is trying to think of ways to put this into perspective. If he were standing next to a crime scene he would be arrested before now. Even though there is no evidence that he did anything. You probably would not ask me to plead to a lesser crime. He thinks, in this case, the issue is that damage to his home, his foundation, to his yard would be apparent to anybody. None of that occurred. In this case, the meter could**

have malfunctioned. The outcome he is looking for is \$100.00 is not going to make or break him. He thinks he is paying for something he did not do. If we could work out something in the middle, he thinks it would be great for him and appropriate for the County. He is not here to beat you out of anything.

Chairman Watkins said he understands, but we have this policy that is in place. We are trying to make it fit this situation, too. In your opinion, you did not lose any water in your system, in your house. Chairman Watkins went on to say that he does not remember ever having a meter tested that malfunctioned. He is willing to have this one tested.

Mr. Rickerson replied that it is not malfunctioning now. If it were, it would make a lot of sense to him. He has \$33.00, \$1038.00, and \$33.00. Chairman Watkins asked if there was any service outage in the area. Were there any problems? Mr. Parrott replied no.

Mr. Parrott mentioned the Water Adjustment Fund reports for this current year and last year. The reports show how often this situation comes up. The fund is set up that after the plumbers leak credit is given, the fund will pay for everything above \$100.00 and the average bill. Those that have been given \$500.00 did not cover all of the bill. For example, Mr. Jeff Smith at 151 Carrollwood was another \$412.00 after the plumbers leak credit and the Water Adjustment Fund. This gives an idea of how big some of these are.

Mr. Parrott explained that prior to having the Water Adjustment Fund, the customer was required to pay the bill after the plumbers leak credit. Discussion followed about how much other customers who have paid \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00 for their bills.

Chairman Watkins commented it is an unusual situation. How did it fix itself? The committee discussed at length where the water may have gone and what may have happened. Mr. Parrott pointed out that as meters get older, they slow down with age.

Chairman Watkins concluded by saying the committee would give this some more consideration, but, right now he cannot see us adjusting the bill any less than it is. If we can come up with some reason on our side that this could have happened, that is what we will look into.

Mr. Rickerson replied that is all he asks. Just look at it in terms of the reality. He does not know of anyone here who can explain the meter. His home is open for inspection. Chairman Watkins commented that we do not question that he was trying to get around that he had a leak. He does not think he had a leak. He thinks he is an honest person and we are not questioning that. We just don't know where it went either. This meter says it went through it. That is our problem. It would be easy if he did have a break and it was repaired. But, he did not have that.

**Mr. Rickerson commented that when someone rechecked the meter, it was back to normal flow. He does not know. He asked that the committee give some consideration and see if we can work something out. He does not think in this case that he did it.**

**Mr. Rickerson thanked the committee and expressed delight at meeting the members. He works for Georgia Power and whenever they do something in somebody's yard, he is the guy they send out there.**

**Mr. McNally explained that unless we find the Water System did do something wrong, to be able to give Mr. Rickerson more credit, a change in policy would be required. Chairman Watkins commented that we have changed meters out in the past and found they were reading accurately.**

**Chairman Watkins suggested changing out the meter and make absolutely sure the meter is correct. There is no other explanation to his problem. You certainly can't fix a broken pipe without somebody handling it. He said that didn't happen. The meter reading goes back to normal the following month. It does not make sense. Our policy has worked very well. Adjusting it from \$1038.00 to \$100.00 is pretty gracious, he thinks.**

**Mr. Parrott commented that prior to having this policy he would not have gotten the water adjustment fund. We would have required him to pay that also. The committee agreed the policy has worked well and does not need to be changed at this time.**

#### **IV. WATER BAN AND DROUGHT DISCUSSION.**

**Mr. Parrott stated that he is pleased to announce that both Lake Kedron and Lake Horton are full. We are ready for summer time. With the mandatory water restrictions by the State he does not see that we will have any kind of problem. He would prefer that we still had odd/even all day long so we don't have that peak we have in the mornings from 6:00 to 10:00. But, we about have it worked out so we can work through that.**

**Chairman Watkins agreed with Mr. Parrott. That spreads out the usage. He asked the committee if they think it would be worthwhile to write a letter. State the situation telling them why we want to go back to odd/even watering. We have been using this system a long time. We have used it year round, where other people didn't use anything except what the State mandated. It has worked very well. Maybe they would give it some consideration.**

**Mr. Parrott commented that it shows our weak link at the 92 tank. The half a million gallon tank we have at 92 is the one that takes the most strain with the 6:00 to 10:00 surge we have in the mornings.**

**Mr. McNally suggested penning a letter that would ask for the exemption on that basis.**

**Outline what our problem is and that we are working to alleviate it. Then let the commissioners send it up and see what happens. It can't hurt to ask. Chairman Watkins commented we should give it some thought and discuss it again.**

**V. DISCUSSION OF SYSTEM FIRE HYDRANTS.**

**Mr. Parrott introduced Major Edward Cole. Mr. Cole explained that he moved into his home on Cedar Trail a year ago. He is a new resident on county water, and he has been real happy. He has not had any problems with the water service. He had concerns when the cold weather hit, about frozen pipes because he has lived in colder climates. He did not have any problem. He talked with the neighbors because there were not any hydrants on the street. They launched into a long story about how the county took over the water system that they ran themselves. Now, their water bills are huge and so forth. Obviously, there was more to it than that. He came and talked with Mr. Parrott. The question he asked Mr. Parrott was a simple one. When can he expect to get hydrants put in on the street. Mr. Parrott shared with him a lot of the other history that filled in the gaps on the challenges that the privately owned well had had, as far maintaining proper records in accordance with State regulations. And, the county's offer to take over the water system. The credits applied to the residents that allowed the installation of water meters and so forth. But, it did not answer the underlying question of when are we going to install fire hydrants on the line. They talked about the hydraulic water hammer affect when a hydrant is closed, sending a back pressure wave down the line. It can reach 50% greater than the static pressure on the line. It can rupture a line of the type currently installed on the street.**

**Mr. Cole went on to say that Mr. Parrott agreed to put a flow meter on that line. He saw it hooked up to the hydrant which is half a mile from his house. It registered 110 lbs. static pressure. The pipe that is there is rated at 160 lbs., he is told. Mr. Parrott clarified this is the main line in the street, it is six inch Class 160 pipe. Mr. Cole added that Mr. Parrott is not in favor of installing fire hydrants along the street. Siting a requirement to replace the entire line in order to bring it up to the level that would withstand pressure of the hydraulic water hammer. Mr. Cole went on to say that he asked Mr. Parrott to consider something different, some type of water pressure reducer on that line that would alleviate that. He indicated those are hideously expensive and far outweigh the benefit gained. It cost more than replacing the pipe. That is the way it was described. The only other thing that he thought to consider is the fact that the water hammer force described comes when you suddenly cut off the pressure and if there is a way to put in some kind of a rashing device so that the valve on a hydrant does not close suddenly. As the wrench is turned perhaps you should have to turn it fifteen more times in order to get it to shut down so that the pressure wave occurs over time as opposed to the other. He does not know what the system has, what technology is available to the Water System as far as different types of hydrants to be installed. He could not help but think that there is an alternative to both the**

**cost of replacing the water line and the lack of support down Cedar Trail.**

**Chairman Watkins stated he understands he is interested in fire hydrants for his area. He asked how close the closest fire hydrant is? Mr. Cole replied it is 4/10 of a mile. The street is 1/2 a mile long.**

**Chairman Watkins explained that we have quite a few areas that the lines need upgrading. This will be done in a systematic way. He does not know where Cedar Trail is on the list, but he knows the Fire Department and the Water System are working on upgrading specific areas. Mr. Parrott explained that Cedar Trail fell in the range that the water line is adequate to serve all the customers. There are no plans to upgrade that line in order to put fire hydrants on it. We are working to get water to areas that do not even have water service. We have a standard that anybody putting in another private system would have to meet our standard pipe and hydrants. The areas where the County bought Peachtree City, Tyrone and picked up Westbridge subdivision, any of those picked up that way, they all have individual problems with having the adequate fire flow. Westbridge was a well system of 149 customers. It is 6" pipe. The only way to get 1,000 gallons to the hydrants on the back side of that would be to replace the piping in that subdivision. We are closer to it than we were because of the system growing. Mr. Parrott used the example of Buckeye Road. Buckeye was installed in 1972. It has 4" line with fire hydrants on it. Since the system has grown and they put in another section back in the back, they were required to tie into the 16" line off Lee's Mill. The hydrants on the 4" line now are almost up to the 1,000 gpm flow. Some of the areas where we have substandard pipe size are getting closer to the standard as the system keeps growing.**

**Chairman Watkins told Mr. Cole that the committee appreciates him coming in wanting the hydrants, but as Mr. Parrott explained, we have areas that we don't have adequate pipes for water service, much less hydrants. Those are going to take precedent. We can't give a time today when we would upgrade, if we do upgrade his area.**

**Mr. Cole explained he does not have concerns with the quality of the pipe or the nature of the service that he currently has. His concern is that there are no hydrants along Cedar Trail. When he spoke with the fire department, they indicated the only way they could provide fire support to his home is by bringing in the pumper truck. They would bring in the pumper and then turn around and call for another one, because that one would be quickly drained. They would start shuttling the tankers back and forth to try to control the blaze. When he queried Mr. Parrott about putting in a hydrant he said he can't do it because the hydrant produces a water hammer effect. When you close the valve, and the water is rushing through at a high rate of speed, and you close that valve it sends a pressure wave back down the pipe. That is with the water already flowing and the pressure wave traveling back up. That produces an effect that will shatter a pipe. The rating of the pipe is not sufficient at this time to insure against that effect. Which is why he**

raised the question of a different manufacture for a hydrant that would close that valve over time, as opposed to shutting it down, that allow that pressure wave to be dissipated over time. Probably over time is on the order of, instead of closing it over a few seconds, closing it over a minutes worth of time. That amount of time would allow the pressure wave to dissipate harmlessly. It is certainly within the realm of technology to produce, he just does not know if that is available to you now. He offers that as an alternative to replacing the Class 160 pipe that is currently along Cedar Trail.

Mr. Parrott stated he would check into this. David Jaegar commented he could inquire with some equipment vendors about this. Mr. Parrott explained that we use the AWWA standards and there is nothing in it. Chairman Watkins suggested the research be done. Look into if there some type of hydrant or device that could take this water hammer on the Class 160 pipe.

Chairman Watkins recommended to Mr. Cole to talk to the fire department and see if they would fund the cost of installing these hydrants. Mr. Parrott commented there is not much of a problem in paying for the hydrants to be installed. They have a budgeted amount for that. The committee agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.

Mr. Jaegar suggested investigating whether the 6" line size is large enough to serve the hydrant flows in the back of the street. Normally, you want an 8" line. Mr. Cole pointed out on the map where his street is located in relation to two new developments.

Mr. Parrott stated we are improving the system. We are meeting the current standards. It is the retrofits that are expensive. Tyrone, for example has some streets with 2, 2 ½ and 3" water lines. In order to put hydrants in we will have to upgrade those lines. It would take three or four hydrants to do Cedar Trail. That is not a problem as much as it is the Class 160 pipe. To his knowledge there was only one subdivision on the county system that has 160 pipe. It was Phase I of Beverly Manor. The pipe out there burst so many times that the Board finally approved changing out 1200' of pipe.

## **VI. DESIGN OF NEW HOPE ROAD WATER LINE AND BOOSTER PUMP STATION.**

Mr. Jaegar presented a sketch. Currently we have a half a million gallon tank at Lee's Mill and Highway 92. We are under construction with the two million gallon tank right now. That existing tank is on the northern part of the loop system. The lines that serve that tank are currently 16" lines. They were put in at the beginning of the loop system when the two million gallon tank and the plant that is under construction really had not been conceived of yet. When we finish the construction of that two million gallon tank as well as the tank on Ellis Road, the lines that are there now will be undersized, in order to fill that tank in a reasonable amount of time. One way you try to design a feed system to

the tank so you fill it overnight when you have the least demand. With the 16" lines on this loop system, you can't fill that new tank in that short a period of time. The concept that we are proposing is that basically you run a shorter distance, larger diameter line along New Hope Road. Which would be a 24" line. That line would allow you to take water from the plant in South Fayette County which will come on line late Spring and eventually fill the tank on Ellis Road. At that point, we have a booster station that will relay water along this 24" line to the tank at Lee's Mill and 92. The size of the line with reduced length allows you to do all that in a shorter period of time and also maintain lower pressures. That is the theory behind the 24" line proposed on New Hope Road and the booster pump station that would be located at the Ellis Road tank site.

Chairman Watkins clarified that we would have no problem filling the Ellis Road tank. Mr. Jaegar stated that would be direct from the new plant once it is on line. We have large diameter lines as part of the loop system in the southern part of the County that are 30" and 24" because they were put in later in the process. Also, it is closer to the plant.

Mr. Parrott explained that this water line is in our five year plan. As we get closer we need to ask the Board to approve some engineering for the booster pump station and the water line that is in conjunction with the water tank. We are not going to build the water line this year, but we need to have the design to go with the tank project we are about to do.

Dr. Patton made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to authorize Mallett & Associates to do the engineering study and design of the New Hope Road water line and booster pump station. Chris Venice seconded and there was no opposition.

## **VII. AWWA CONVENTION ATTENDANCE.**

Mr. Parrott reported that the next AWWA meeting will be in Washington D.C. June 17 to 21, 2001. He asked members who are interested in attending to let him know so registration can be done.

## **LETTER TO PEACHTREE CITY.**

Mr. Parrott reported that he sent City of Peachtree City a letter about the trees on Peachtree Parkway. He has already received a response from Jim Basinger. At the same time, he had the Distribution Crew clean the trees off the Lake Peachtree dam.

## **WATER TESTING IN PEACHTREE CITY.**

Mr. Jaegar reported that the consultants doing the testing in Peachtree City have requested that the Willowbend Well be put on line for thirty days prior to the next sampling. They have done the first sampling with the well off line and they need the



**County to be put Willowbend Well on line and leave it on line for thirty days to let it stabilize prior to their next sampling. Mr. Parrott stated he has no problem putting the well back on line. He asked if Mr. McNally had any legal concerns because of the controversy? Mr. McNally responded that we need to get the results from the consultants.**

**There being no further business, Chairman Chuck Watkins adjourned the meeting at 9:00 A.M.**

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**Chuck Watkins**

**The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 28th day of March, 2001.**

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**Lisa Gillis**