

WATER COMMITTEE
AUGUST 23, 2006
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chuck Watkins, Chairman
Dr. George Patton, Vice Chairman
Tony Parrott
Chris Venice
Pete Frisina

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

David Jaeger

ABSENT:

Bill McNally

STAFF PRESENT:

Dennis Davenport

GUEST:

Russell Ray

Rick Jeffries

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

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON AUGUST 9, 2006.

Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton made the motion and Tony Parrott seconded, to approve the minutes from the meeting on August 9, 2006. There was no opposition.

II. REQUEST FOR BACKUP WATER FOR NEWTON PLANTATION WATER SYSTEM.

Mr. Parrott introduced Mr. Jeffries, owner of Newton Plantation Water System, to the committee. Mr. Jeffries addressed the committee asking for consideration of his request for backup water service.

Mr. Jeffries stated that on December 1 of last year he bought the Newton Plantation Water System from Mr. Newton. There are four wells, one is a main well. If he loses the main well, for which he has spare pumps, but he has to get somebody to put them in, he does lose water pressure. What he wants to do is put a two inch meter in, a backflow preventor, double check valve, in case something happens, he doesn't lose water pressure or lose water, especially if there is a power outage, such as in an ice storm. He would like to maintain the people's water out there. There is a tank and fire protection. But, if the tank gets low the people are out of water. He has been in the water business twenty years. (He has heard of Mr. Parrott and actually met him one time). His request is to be able to put a tap there. Twenty gallons a minute usually maintains the system; during peak hours it might be thirty-five or forty gallons a minute. It is not a big demand. He went on to say that since he bought the system he would have already turned it on one time if the tap was already in place. He would have used it last week. A lightning storm got the well. By the time he could get the well drillers out there, the pressure had gone down. It

would have been for about twenty hours. It would not have been much water at all. He is willing to pay whatever it takes to put it in, and pay a minimum bill even though he won't be using it. But, he would be glad to pay the minimum bill.

Mr. Parrott commented that we need to address the situation of having our system hooked up and the well system hooked up at the same time. We require an individual homeowner to disconnect the well and we only provide water if they have no other source hooked up at the same. The only exceptions are the two accounts we have for the City of Fayetteville and the Town of Brooks. They both have a system and we provide backup water for them through a contract. This is a little different, since it is just one subdivision. It is a State permitted water system. He is in compliance currently, with the State.

Mr. Jeffries commented that he has spent a lot of money getting it where it needed to be. It was kind of run down. He redid all the well houses, put in new chlorine chemical pumps and paid the fees to the State, just like everybody else and run all the tests.

Mr. Parrott stated the biggest question is, do we want to be a backup water source for a private well system? Chairman Watkins commented that from the mechanics of it, you could put an atmospheric backflow in and a section of pipe. He has to leave that piece of pipe out, where there is no cross connection, until he needs our water source. Be totally disconnected from the County system.

Mr. Jeffries stated there are 124 customers. Mrs. Venice asked how many well systems are in Fayette County. Mr. Parrott replied that he believes there are 11 private well systems. Mr. Jeffries commented that he is trying to purchase Dix Lee On across the street.

Attorney Davenport commented another issue to think about, and this is no reflection on this particular system, just in general. At some point it is going to transition from an emergency use to an everyday use. For example, if the well system is low for reasons other than mechanical issues. If the backup is there, they tap into the county, but what period of time do you allow that to occur before you say the well system is not working properly and they need to come onto county water. There needs to be some kind of objective standard to say, under these circumstances, this is classified as emergency backup, but for this length of time, you need to transition from your private system to the County water system. This may not happen with this particular system, but inevitably over time something is going to fail with a private system. It is easier to pay the per thousand gallon usage versus the minimum per house and the thousand gallon usage per house.

Mr. Parrott commented that we are closer than we were in the past to these private systems. We are not five miles away any longer. When the older Mr. Newton had this system, a pump went out and they were without water for three days. We were four miles away at that time.

Mr. Jeffries stated this system is all six inch pipe. The system was put in pretty good. The valves still work, the well houses were just run down. Every lot is metered. He has replaced nearly three fourths of the meters. Most of them had quit and they were guesstimating. He has replaced them with Sensus meters. He thinks he has made a lot of the people happy. He put a little attention toward the system. They saw a difference when he rebuilt the well houses. He has met most of them. He would just like to keep that day, here and there, since December 1 it has been only 1 day. If he had this backup, he could have turned it on and would not have gotten any phone calls. His biggest concern is in the winter time, if we have an ice storm, like we did back in the early 80's. We lost power for four or five days. They are out of water, too, for four or five days. Then there would be no fire protection either. As long as he can keep the tank full, there would still be fire protection. The tank holds 30,000 gallons. That is usually more than enough to fight a fire.

Vice Chairman Dr. Patton stated that he thinks we need to think this through. Mr. Parrott commented that we need a policy that would cover all private systems in Fayette County. Mr. Jeffries commented that he does mind paying a higher rate, if necessary.

Mr. Jaeger asked if the tank is elevated. Mr. Jeffries replied that there is a 15,000 gallon pressure tank and if the pressure gets low, there is an elevated tank with a booster pump that will pull out of it to pump the system back up. He can stand a good 18 hours of down time. The tank and booster pump will keep up, but once that goes out, he has low pressure.

Mr. Jaeger asked if he has backup power on the booster pump. Mr. Jeffries replied no, but he is looking at that. He is looking at getting a portable generator that he could leave on a trailer and hook it up. It would not take much, because it is just a two horse motor. It could probably run on one you could carry.

Mr. Jaeger commented that fire protection is another issue. A two inch meter won't supply fire protection in the event that his backup power wasn't there for the booster pump. He would not have fire flow if he was out of power. Mr. Parrott commented that he has fire flow now, only because of the tank being full. Mr. Jeffries explained that there is some fire protection from gravity flow from the tank, and the booster pump kicks in.

Chairman Watkins thanked Mr. Jeffries for his time and said that the Water Committee would discuss his request and get back to him. Mr. Jeffries thanked the committee for their time.

The committee discussed at length the standard that needs to be developed in supplying a private well system, charges need to be determined, liability to the County if there were a fire during the time the County is supplying water on an emergency basis, and what size service is sufficient in the event of a fire.

Mr. Parrott commented that the State views this type of situation as a long range obligation of this much water production any day. We are not just obligating a certain amount of water just one day, the State looks at it that you have obligated the water every day. Both the contract with Brooks and the City of Fayetteville are viewed this way.

Further discussion pertained to minimum charges per house being part of the base charge for the large meter charge, and we don't normally serve a subdivision with one large meter. How will the State view Fayette County if, during the time we are serving water, there are violations?

A subcommittee of Mr. Parrott, Mr. Davenport and Mr. Jaeger was formed to look into this subject and bring back a recommendation to the committee.

III. SANITARY SEWER DISCUSSION.

Mr. Parrott stated he had revised the memo listing the overall goals of the county owning, approving and operating community septic systems and community drip irrigation systems. This includes using our currently approved collection system specifications for a gravity system. Installing a gravity system means that some time in the future we will have a traditional wastewater treatment plant. It would tie into the collection system. Some adjoining counties, such as Gwinnett, have over 100 of these systems that they are tying into their system. He recommended using the same forms used by EPD for the subsurface engineering and the sanitary sewer extension form that help provide the information to the Water System. The Water System staff and consulting engineer will review them and after approval, will submit the forms to EPD for part of our overall wastewater treatment system. Each lot will have a septic tank, and the homeowner will be required to pump the tank every five years. The size and installation of the tank will be according to the rules adopted by the Department of Human Resources currently. Each tank will be required to have a filter. There are other rules required by the Department of Human Resources for installation of a tank, including clean outs and depth of the tank. We would not need to reinvent the wheel in order to come up with size and installation of the septic tanks. We would require 100% replacement area for both the community septic and the drip irrigation systems. We propose \$4.38 per thousand gallons metered water with a minimum bill and have a separate rate for industrial/commercial, multi-family.

Mr. Parrott mentioned that we are still researching information on the water rate structure that Chairman Watkins requested he check into. Even if we charge average year, we still need to generate the same type of money. Instead of a rate being \$4.38 per thousand year round, the rate would be: for example, \$7.00 per thousand up to what the average is. We still need to generate enough money to operate the system. He stated he had attached a copy of a sales flyer that has community on site sewer disposal systems.

The committee further discussed the chance of losing money on a system in one area, and another generating enough income to compensate. Could we charge more for the system that is losing money? All the lots within a subdivision will be required to be on the sewer system. Subdivision regulations need to be changed.

Mr. Parrott made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of owning and operating community septic systems and community drip irrigation systems. Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton seconded and there was no opposition.

JULY METER SALES

Mr. Parrott mentioned that during the month of July, the Water System sold 24 meters. At no time since January, 1985 have we sold as few as 24 meters. We budget 75 per month.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Parrott made a motion to adjourn to executive session for discussion of one legal item. Chris Venice seconded and the committee adjourned to executive session.

Attorney Davenport briefed the committee on this item. No action was taken.

There being no further business, Chairman Chuck Watkins adjourned the meeting at 8:55 A.M.

Chuck Watkins

The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 13th day of September, 2006.

Lisa McElwaney