

**WATER COMMITTEE**  
**SEPTEMBER 27, 2006**  
**MINUTES**

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

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS:**           David Jaeger  
**ABSENT:**                                 Bill McNally  
  Pete Frisina

**STAFF PRESENT:**                   Dennis Davenport  
  Russell Ray

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chuck Watkins at 8:15 A.M.

**I.     APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2006.**

Vice Chairman Dr. George Patton made the motion and Tony Parrott seconded, to approve the minutes from the meeting on September 28, 2006. There was no opposition.

**II.    REQUEST FOR BACKUP FOR PRIVATE WATER SYSTEMS.**

Mr. Parrott reported that there are about a dozen permitted systems in Fayette County. Among these, there are over a thousand customers. The connection for backup to a private water system does not sell water full time. However, it obligates that amount of water full time. For example, we have a contract with the City of Fayetteville as a wholesale customer. They can get a million gallons of water per day. Even when they don't get a million gallons a day, the State views this as a million gallons a day obligation that we have. That is part of the consideration, when they view how much water we have available when they approve line extensions or when we send line extensions in. In December the City may not get any water, and depending on the weather they may not get any in the summer. We could be obligating too much of our water, just as a temporary backup, without getting any revenue.

Attorney Davenport commented that another component of that discussion had to do with once you make that connection. There are a couple of things that happen immediately. Number one, the State could view that as part of your system and heighten your responsibility for what happens with that part of what is now to be construed as your system. The second part of that is, while there may be a legitimate emergency, initially necessitating this connection to occur, he thinks the natural progression over time is for that definition of emergency to become broader

and broader. There may be even more of a benefit to the private water system owner just to run off county water if the problem costs too much to fix. That owner of the private system is simply passing the charges on to those consumers, and giving them county water. We are just serving as his wholesaler, so to speak. Even if it was confined to legitimate emergencies, once you make that connection the first time, from that point forward, you will be obligated to make the connection, whether the relationship changes with the private property owner dealing with the county or not. Now you are looking at the end user. There are a lot of negatives that can come out of being the backup to the private water system owner.

Mr. Davenport went on to say that one thing to consider is when this person makes the decision to go into business to sell this water, all of the dollars they put into it go toward operations and maintenance and backup capabilities, that is what their business is. Mr. Parrott does the same thing with this water system to be sure things work properly. There is really not a lot of good that can come out of being the backup, other than the end user certainly has less of a down time with the lack of water. If the system is not functioning properly to begin with and they use the county as backup with more and more regularity, it becomes more of a hybrid system. It becomes more of a county system than it does a private system. The separation is probably best. Once you make the connection, the lines of liability start getting blurred, as far as who owns it and who is responsible.

David Jaeger pointed out the possibility that the county could be put in the position of inheriting the system if they are connected to it, whether it is because it is more convenient for the private owner to use the county source instead of fixing his own problem. Then you run the risk of inheriting a substandard system. The design criteria that we normally put into the Water System components that the County installs are unknown in this situation. This could place a burden on the county that potentially outweighs the benefit. Then the question is does the County want to backup a private entity. A public utility backing up a private utility; is that a policy the County wants to have. There are other systems out there. Do we want to set precedent on one?

Further discussion pertained to how many customers are served by these private systems, how much water the County could be obligating itself to provide, the critical time they would need emergency water from the County, or having a contract with the private individual.

Attorney Davenport recommended that we not enter into an agreement to provide backup water to private water systems at this time. The committee agreed not to make a change to current policy.

Mr. Davenport suggested that we tell Mr. Jeffries that we have considered his request, and at this time we are not interested in being a backup to his utility system. A letter needs to be sent to Mr. Jeffries to let him know that the position of the committee is we don't provide a backup to private water systems.

Chairman Watkins questioned what would be involved if all twelve private systems in the County went out of service immediately. What would it take for us to be able to hook them on and provide them water? Mr. Parrott stated he would have some information for the committee at the next meeting.

### **III. DISCUSSION OF HIGHWAY 74 SOUTH ROAD WIDENING PROJECT.**

Mr. Parrott commented that Highway 74 south of Highway 54 in Peachtree City will be widened. We have the plans for the first phase. In negotiating with DOT, they will pay for over \$450,000.00 worth of our relocation out there. However, it will still cost the Water System about \$250,000.00. In Phase II, our loop line and raw water line are in an easement outside the right-of-way. We have several different situations related to this project. Because they maintain the lanes, add lanes, they change the grade on part of it; we have to have a contractor that is willing to pick up and move from one end of the job to the other just to keep their project going the way they have it staged. On the Highway 54 West section from Highway 74 out to the county line we used Kenny Shockley who is our contractor.

Mr. Jaeger stated this project had a lot of starting and stopping. There were many unknowns, and directives by the DOT. Using Shockley, who is the annual water line contractor, who works on unit price basis, makes dealing with all that very smooth. He gets paid for what he does, for the amount of pipe he moves, for the man hours and equipment hours for non unit price items. He can react to the request of DOT, or to the conditions of the project quickly, and change quickly. If we tried to bid out that job, we would be constantly getting change order requests.

Chairman Watkins commented that another contractor might not understand. He asked if the bid could be done to allow for all the changes. Mr. Jaeger stated we could do a bid with an educated guess at the number of things that you might encounter, but you have to bid out a unit price; such as moving around the job, or labor and equipment, and hours.

Mr. Parrott made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that we use our annual contractor for the water line relocation work necessary for the DOT project DOT.STP209.1(1). Vice Chairman Dr. Patton seconded and there was no opposition.

### **WITHDRAWAL PERMIT FOR LINE CREEK.**

Mr. Parrott referenced a letter to Chairman Dunn from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources that approves a permit to withdraw surface water from Line Creek. He stated that he is pleased to announce that the permit is 17 million gallons per day for a maximum of 24 hours. This gives us 12 ½ million gallons a day if we don't exceed that for a monthly average. The annual average is 10.4 million gallons a day.

**There being no further business, Chairman Chuck Watkins adjourned the meeting at 8:53 A.M.**

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**Chuck Watkins**

**The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 25th day of October, 2006.**

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**Lisa McElwaney**