

**UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING  
Monday, June 1, 2009**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joseph Sabatino, Chairman  
Howard Bennett, Thomas Carroll,  
John Dauster, Steve Fabian,  
Thomas Kessler, Jeff Weiler

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tom Jackson, Utilities Director  
Vice Mayor Goldberg  
Councilmember Albers  
Tim Smallwood, Utilities Department

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - June 22, 2009
- Mr. Carroll announced he might not be available for the next meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Regular Meeting - April 27, 2009
- Mr. Dauster MOVED, Mr. Carroll SECONDED approval. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
- B. Budget Meeting - April 13, 2009
- Mr. Dauster MOVED, Mr. Fabian SECONDED approval. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**STATUS REPORT**

- A. Utility Operational Data
- Mr. Tom Jackson displayed the United States Geological Survey (USGS) graph of the reservoir, as delineated in the agenda materials, reporting the reservoir level was 5.32 feet mean sea level (msl) which equated to 206 million gallons (mg) of flow over the spillway, noting chlorides had been slowly decreasing, which indicated a flush of fresh water; however, the measurements were not available at this time. He reported chlorides never reached the maximum concentration level (mcl) this year, opining same was a result of the Southwest Florida Water Management District's (SWFWMD) efforts to clean up the water being pumped upstream into the reservoir. He stated there had been more than 9 inches of rainfall during the month of May, noting the normal amount of rainfall was 3 inches. He displayed a graph of Shell Creek Reservoir Levels, as delineated in the agenda packet, briefly reviewing same. He stated according to Mr. Ralph Montgomery, an expert on the City's watershed, the last time the rainy season had begun in May was in the 1970s, and that the City was likely entering a wet cycle which could last approximately 30 years. He displayed the Utility Operational Data for April, 2009, as

delineated in the agenda packet, briefly reviewing the monthly totals, noting 2.8 mg had been recovered from the Aquifer Storage Recovery Program (ASR) during the last week of April to reduce demand on the reservoir. He reported the City had recently completed an Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) study, noting the City's I/I was normal compared to similar size systems. He stated the City's I/I had been reduced approximately 50% during the last 5 years, adding a corrective action plan had been devised to identify projects to make further improvements.

- Mr. Fabian inquired if water would be injected into the ASRs.
- Mr. Jackson replied water would be injected when the water quality improved.
- Mr. Dauster questioned if water was depleted from the ASR before fresh water was injected.
- Mr. Jackson explained ground water moved continuously and eventually spilled out into the creeks, noting according to the consultant, water remained in the zone of recovery for approximately 2 years. He stated the intent was to recover and inject as much water as possible in order to maintain a fresh supply. He then stated staff was close to being cost effective with the City's I/I program; however, unforeseen problems could occur next year, explaining the program would help maintain the system at a certain level going forward, which is what had been done for the past ten years; however, no major gravity lines were proposed at this time.
- Mr. Weiler opined the I/I figures were substantial.
- Mr. Jackson replied flows had decreased by 1% as a result of the economy as well as residents leaving the area, adding it was necessary to consider those factors.
- Mr. Weiler inquired if chlorides increased when the I/I figures were high.
- Mr. Jackson replied affirmatively, explaining the City's gravity systems were influenced by the saltwater canals. He concluded the City conducted smoke testing and notified residents of same as far in advance as possible.

B. Capital Project Data Sheet – Priority Efforts

- Mr. Dauster questioned if the \$2.6 million cost for the Burnt Store Road improvements was Punta Gorda's cost.
- Mr. Jackson replied affirmatively, adding only Punta Gorda's cost was listed unless specifically stated otherwise.
- Mr. Kessler recalled a summary sheet had been requested.
- Mr. Jackson countered the summary sheet requested had been for the Capital Improvement Program where projects had been assigned to specific accounts; however, he would provide same.
- Mr. Kessler noted the Burnt Store project activity log from May 12, 2009 indicated

“Seminole Gulf advises they have changed project requirements”, questioning the meaning of same.

- Mr. Jackson replied staff was awaiting a new easement price.
- C. City Council Action on Utilities Agenda Status
  - Mr. Jackson confirmed there were no questions.
- D. Utility Fund Balance
  - Mr. Jackson announced the Finance Director and Controller were unavailable for the meeting.
  - Mr. Fabian stated expenses were still being projected over budget, questioning whether the data reflected changes suggested by UAB members.
  - Mr. Jackson replied affirmatively, pointing out the actual cost of fuel, chemicals and energy were lower than had been anticipated. He stated Finance staff would be requested to make the adjustments, concluding expenses would not exceed revenues.

#### **BUSINESS ITEMS**

- A. Interlocal Agreement – Piper Rd
  - Mr. Jackson drew members’ attention to the Interlocal Agreement between the City and Charlotte County, as delineated in the agenda packet, explaining Charlotte County had approved the format. He stated the County might expedite the project in order to qualify for stimulus funds; however, his understanding was that funds would have to have been expended this date to qualify.
  - Mr. Dauster voiced concern regarding Item 4, questioning whether the City was agreeing to pay \$1.7 million as well as any expenses beyond that figure.
  - Mr. Jackson replied affirmatively.
  - Mr. Dauster questioned how the City controlled costs.
  - Mr. Jackson responded the City’s approval was required for the contractor bid price as well as for every payment being authorized, pointing out City inspectors would be present at the job. He explained it saved costs and reduced conflicts when one contractor was used for both the City and the County’s portion of the work on such a large project, advising this contract procedure was typical.
  - Mr. Kessler opined the risk was low.
  - Mr. Jackson agreed.
  - Mr. Bennett pointed out Section 6 specified the contract amount must be “accepted by the City.”
  - Mr. Jackson reassured members this line relocation was straightforward.
  - Mr. Fabian opined “not to exceed” was a superfluous statement.
  - Mr. Bennett suggested the statement meant if the County exceeded the budget, they

were responsible for those expenses.

- Mr. Weiler questioned the price for moving the line out of the easement.
- Mr. Jackson replied he had received the engineer's estimate and would provide same.
- Mr. Sabatino suggested the language in Section 5 be revised to indicate the City's approval was required.
- Mr. Jackson stated staff would revise the language as suggested for review at the June meeting.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### A. Requested Information

- Mr. Jackson drew members' attention to the State rules related to Cross-Connection Controls provided in the agenda packet, noting he had also provided a copy of Chapter 17, Article II "Water Emergencies" from the City Code of Ordinances, briefly reviewing same.
- Mr. Sabatino questioned the timeframe for implementing the rule.
- Mr. Jackson responded during the City's last sanitary system survey, staff had been pressured to move forward, noting after the language first appeared in the Florida Administrative Code in 1999, it was modified and strengthened in 2005. He stated commercial properties were already being addressed; however, staff had been requested to identify high hazards on the residential side, adding although the rule was not date specific, it was necessary to move forward. He advised staff had begun to compile information related to what customers would be affected and how much it would cost, adding he would disseminate the information at the June meeting.
- Mr. Sabatino voiced concern regarding the cost to customers, asserting it was necessary to provide advance notification and reassurance that the City would attempt to minimize the cost.
- Mr. Bennett drew members' attention to the Operation, Maintenance and Repair (OM&R) data, noting same indicated no watering violations had been issued. He stated it was reported the City had been watering the plantings on US41 at 10:00 a.m., adding in his neighborhood, residents watered when they wanted to. He asserted it was possible to drive around any neighborhood and see residents watering all the time; however, as of April 30, 2009, the City had collected no fines.
- Mr. Jackson explained the data was incorrect, estimating 39 warnings and/or violations had been issued. He stated he would convey Mr. Bennett's comment to the Code Enforcement Division as well as to the Police Chief.
- Mr. Dauster voiced concern that each day of violation constituted a separate offense.
- Mr. Jackson explained the Code Enforcement Board could now consider mitigating

circumstances, adding he was unaware of any case where a resident had been fined for multiple days.

- Mr. Bennett stressed it was important to move forward with the Cross-Connection Control program, opining there was a discrepancy between the standard and the rule related to having a testable double-check valve.
- Mr. Jackson agreed. He explained the City had some flexibility in establishing its own standards, adding staff would devise same to comply with the intent of the rule.
- Mr. Kessler asserted the rule merely indicated the City had to have a control program, suggesting it be phased in with higher risk addressed first. He recommended a period of voluntary conversion prior to mandatory conversion for residential customers.
- Mr. Jackson stated the Board and City Council would play an important role in determining what the phases would be and the timing of same.

#### B. Fluoride

- Mr. Jackson stated a local dentist questioned why the City's water was not fluoridated, adding that dentist wanted to give a presentation on the subject but needed more time to prepare. He stated Mr. Dauster had provided some background information, distributing same, explaining the City did not fluoridate its water as it posed a health and safety hazard to the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) operators, and the risk outweighed the benefit. He stated there was some naturally occurring fluoride; however, it was below the recommended dosage, noting opinions on fluoride benefits varied. He stated it would be expensive to convert the City's system, pointing out only 11% of Charlotte County's population was under age 18, and only 8% of the City's was under age 18. He questioned whether the expense was worth reaching less than 8% of the population and what could be done to protect the remaining 92%. He reported neither the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority nor Charlotte County fluoridated their water, questioning whether the utility should assume the risk, expense, maintenance and dosing issues to protect a very small percentage of the population. He stated due to the cost, any project to fluoridate the water should be completed in conjunction with the phase 1 ground water expansion rather than as a separate project, noting there was no funding budgeted for such a project. He noted State grants had been available in the past; however, it was uncertain whether funds were still available.
- Mr. Bennett opined fluoridation could cause legal problems if an interconnect was constructed.
- Mr. Jackson stated according to SWFWMD data, the Peace River contained 1/10 part per million natural fluoride; however, PRMWRSA's Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) indicated the water contained 1 part per million, which was within the dosage range

recommended by the American Dental Association, concluding there were many issues to consider with fluoridation.

- Mr. Carroll questioned whether the cost benefit analysis included the benefits to the children in terms of saved dental costs or whether the analysis only included the cost benefit to the utility.
- Mr. Jackson replied only the benefit to the utility.
- Mr. Carroll requested cost data related to the benefit to the community be provided, opining there would be a benefit to the community even though it would not benefit the utility. He questioned if there were other dangerous chemicals at the plant that were hazardous to the operators.
- Mr. Jackson replied chlorine.
- Mr. Carroll reiterated there were other dangerous chemicals, and staff was able to manage same.
- Mr. Dauster explained fluoride benefitted adults as well as children, adding fluoride as part of the diet worked from the inside out rather than from the outside in like topical applications. He opined it might be difficult to maintain the appropriate level of fluoride when the naturally occurring fluoride in the City's raw water supply varied, adding it would be necessary to check the water on a daily basis. He stated he was not previously aware of the population percentages, adding the materials he researched were somewhat outdated; however, the cost benefit analyses indicated the larger the community, the less expensive fluoridation became. He stated he did not see any data that was specific to the cost per person; however, the cost benefit analysis did include the cost for dental work if no fluoride was added, adding the concern was how to best support the health of the people living in this area. He stated he understood the cost constraints but wanted to consider the overall benefit of fluoridating the water.
- Mr. Jackson stated chlorine was a hazardous chemical that could kill the people living within ¼ mile of the water plant, stressing it was not reasonable to say since staff safely handled one hazardous chemical, they could handle another. He pointed out it would be twice as much to worry about and to deal with.
- Mr. Sabatino suggested staff research the actual number of accidents involving fluoride.
- Mr. Jackson stated American Waterworks Association set the standards for plant design and operation, adding they did not recommend fluoridation.
- Mr. Bennett opined the Federal government would have mandated fluoridation if it was a good thing.
- Mr. Jackson reiterated any fluoridation project should be combined with the expansion project.

C. Interior Water Saving Rebate Items

- Mr. Jackson explained the City did not provide rebates for water saving devices; however, a rebate was offered for rain sensor shut-off devices for sprinkler systems constructed prior to 1991, adding it had been a cooperative funding program with SWFWMD, and although SWFWMD stopped funding the program, the City continued to offer a \$40 rebate if the device was added to an existing irrigation system. He stated the number of requests had declined sharply with only one rebate being issued in 2008, adding Charlotte County issued rebates for water saving devices and information regarding same had been included in the agenda packet; however, the County had sufficient staff to administer a rebate program. He stated it might be possible to obtain grant funding for such a program from SWFWMD at some point in the future.
- Mr. Fabian stated using 50% less water per flush would likely reduce a resident's water bill, inquiring how much of a cost savings could be realized.
- Mr. Jackson responded he would research same.
- Mr. Kessler opined the City could save 20 mg per year with water saving devices installed in each toilet.
- Mr. Sabatino interjected there might be more pressure to conserve in the future, suggesting there might be residents who could utilize the rebate; thus, staff should publicize same.
- Mr. Jackson stated he believed that information was provided in the City's CCR which had been mailed to all customers, pointing out the device was required by law after 1991; therefore, it was unlikely there were any residents remaining that would qualify.
- Mr. Carroll countered Hurricane Charley destroyed all the rain sensors, opining some might have been replaced; however, if the goal was to install rain sensors and reduce irrigation, it made no sense to refer to the date it was required.
- Mr. Jackson suggested a replacement program might be more appropriate.
- Mr. Fabian stated the program required a licensed plumber to install the sensor, adding same made the rebate less attractive. He opined residents could install the sensors themselves.
- Mr. Jackson stated he had allowed homeowners to install their own sensors.
- Mr. Bennett explained without the neutral electrical path created by the rain sensor, the sprinkler system could not work, adding contrary to Mr. Carroll's statement, rather than overwatering, without the sensor it was likely less water was being used.
- Mr. Jackson reiterated a replacement program might be more appropriate, adding he would revise the language for discussion at a future meeting.
- Mr. Carroll remarked offering a rebate program when rates were increasing was a good

strategic move.

D. Charlotte Park Project Update

- Mr. Jackson stated one resident of Charlotte Park voiced concern regarding the approximately \$800 cost of reconnecting to the water system, adding residents had received advance notice of the project and would receive additional notification 60 days prior to connection; however, that was still several months away. He stated it would be possible to give residents additional time by completing the entire Phase 1 transmission line and then begin making connections, noting that line would not be complete until April 2010.
- Discussion ensued regarding connections.
- Mr. Tim Smallwood said he had received approximately 10 phone calls regarding the project and of those, 9 residents were anxious for the system to be installed.
- Mr. Sabatino asserted as the complaint was received from an owner of four rental properties, his incentive was different than an individual homeowner, noting the project had been part of the CIP when the individual was a member of the Utility Advisory Board; therefore, he had ample time to save the money.
- Mr. Smallwood clarified Charlotte County rather than the City was overseeing the residential tie ins.
- Mr. Jackson stated the project had been discussed in the past, reiterating residents had been notified six months in advance and had several months before having to incur any cost.
- Mr. Carroll questioned whether City Council should be informed that UAB had reviewed the Charlotte Park project and were satisfied with same.
- Mr. Jackson stated none of the Councilmembers had contacted him regarding this issue; however, he could provide them with an update.
- Mr. Sabatino opined there was nothing wrong with disseminating information; however, the Councilmember in question was more than well versed regarding the issue since he received the original emails and responses. He remarked there was always a lesson to be learned, and clear communication to City Council in advance of any major project should be disseminated.
- Mr. Jackson clarified Councilmember McCormick had not posed any specific questions as a result of the emails he received.
- Mr. Weiler stated if staff only received one complaint, they were doing a good job, adding staff also did a good job of notification.

**MEMBER COMMENTS**

- Mr. Jackson reported SWFWMD and the Peace River Basin Board would hold their

quarterly meeting in City Council Chambers on Friday, June 5, 2009 at 9:00 a.m., at which time they would consider the City's cooperative funding request, announcing SWFWMD would recommend funding approval for the City's Phase 1 groundwater project (contingent upon some additional work with PRMW RSA). He noted City Council had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding for same. He explained after the meeting, participants would be taken on a tour of the WTP and would then attend a barbeque, noting the trolley would be used to transport participants to the Plant and then to tour the Plant. He invited UAB members to attend.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting Adjourned: 10:29 a.m.

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Joseph Sabatino, Chairman

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Karen Smith, Recording Secretary