

**UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING  
Monday, June 22, 2009**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tom Jackson, Utilities Director  
Steve Adams, Engineering Manager  
Sharon Knippenberg, Finance Department  
Mike Markgraf

**CALL TO ORDER/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Roll Call
- B. Next Scheduled Meeting - July 27, 2009

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Regular Meeting - June 1, 2009
  - Mr. Dauster MOVED, Mr. Carroll SECONDED approval.
  - Mr. Bennett stated he did not believe he made the statement that his neighbors watered whenever they wanted, adding he had stated some obvious violators such as the City and some of his neighbors were not being fined. He requested his comments regarding watering violations be expanded.
  - Mr. Fabian MOVED, Mr. Carroll SECONDED approval of the minutes as amended.  
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 5.25 feet mean sea level (msl) which equated to 152.51 million gallons (mg) of flow over the spillway, noting chlorides were 128 milligrams per liter (mpl). He stated some meteorologists believed the rainy season had not begun, and that last month's rains were due to a passing tropical system, adding a high pressure system sitting over Georgia and Louisiana was affecting Florida's weather; however, that was expected to change soon. He opined the City was in good shape with its water supply. He displayed a graph of Shell Creek Reservoir Levels, as delineated in the agenda packet, briefly reviewing same, explaining the recent drought period was similar to a period in 2001, adding that data was helping staff understand how the reservoir responded to

low rainfall conditions. He stated in the past 3 years there had only been 3 or 4 occasions where the elevation in the reservoir had been above average; however, it had been above average several times during the past few weeks, adding staff was encouraged that signaled an end to the 3 year drought. He noted the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) would decide at their June 30, 2009 meeting whether to extend the modified Phase III restrictions. He then displayed the Utility Operational Data for May, 2009, as delineated in the agenda packet, briefly reviewing the monthly totals, noting 31 mg had been recovered from the Aquifer Storage Recovery Program (ASR) during May to improve water quality. He pointed out when adding the raw water and the water recovered from the ASR, there was a 9 mg difference, noting staff had checked the meters to insure all the water was being accounted for. He surmised the inconsistency was due to the ASR meters not being used for a year; thus, those meters would be recalibrated.

- Mr. Weiler questioned whether the record high for the reservoir was above 7.5.
- Mr. Jackson replied affirmatively.
- Mr. Weiler inquired whether there was any additional storage for the water that flowed over the weir.
- Mr. Jackson replied in the negative.
- Mr. Sabatino announced Item 5.A. would be moved up on the agenda.

NOTE: Item 5.A. was heard before Item 3.B.

B. Capital Project Data Sheet – Priority Efforts

- Mr. Sabatino pointed out staff had provided the summary requested by Mr. Kessler, requesting staff include the tracking numbers for the current fiscal year.
- Mr. Jackson agreed.
- Mr. Dauster questioned whether the value of the construction contract for the Aquifer Storage Recovery Project represented the total.
- Mr. Adams replied affirmatively.
- Mr. Dauster asserted \$750,000 was being carried forward from fiscal year 2008, questioning whether there was a surplus of \$250,000.
- Mr. Adams replied \$1 million had been budgeted; however, unexpended funds would be returned to the utility fund, pointing out there was some cost uncertainty with construction projects. He explained unexpended funds could be reallocated at the end of the project.
- Discussion ensued regarding reallocating funds.
- Mr. Sabatino summarized the Board did not want to micromanage but wanted to know the status of individual projects and their impact on the Capital Improvement Program

(CIP).

C. City Council Action on Utilities Agenda Status

- Mr. Jackson confirmed there were no questions.
- Mr. Adams explained staff sometimes had difficulty understanding the schedules set by Charlotte County's Public Works Department for their transportation projects, noting the Burnt Store Road and Piper Road projects were now in the design phase. He stated only last week he learned Charlotte County had opted to bid the two projects quickly; therefore, the necessary interlocal agreements had been scheduled for review by City Council on July 1, 2009 without the Board's input. He explained the wording of the agreements was the same as *Aqui Esta*.
- Mr. Sabatino interjected the Board had suggested changes to the language for the interconnect, adding if those changes were not going to be addressed, it was necessary to discuss it.
- Mr. Jackson replied the City Attorney was reviewing the language, adding staff would proceed with the agreements with amendments as necessary.
- Mr. Sabatino stated the Board's recommendation was stipulated on the changes being made.
- Mr. Adams stated Charlotte County's interlocal agreement had been fair and beneficial to the City's utility, explaining the City provided its design to the County, and the County then bid the entire project and awarded same to a single contractor. He stated the City paid only for the utility portion of the work, noting this process resulted in a cost savings to the City.
- Mr. Sabatino interjected staff should review the minutes of the last meeting for member comments, adding concerns were related to the open ended cost figures and the proper legal language.

D. Utility Fund Balance

- Ms. Sharon Knippenberg displayed the Percentage of Fiscal Year Elapsed 66.7%, as delineated in the agenda materials, reporting as of May, revenues were exceeding budget by approximately \$43,000. She stated that seemed to be the current trend; therefore, staff was preparing the pro forma with that adjustment, noting that final pro forma would be printed in the annual budget document. She stated all City departments had been requested to provide current projections, noting staff would be able to provide year end data at the next meeting. She displayed a revenue graph, briefly reviewing same, offering to answer questions.
- Mr. Carroll confirmed the City was billed for its own water usage, opining the additional irrigation on US41 and the fountain at Lashley Park increased the City's water usage.

He questioned whether the City tracked their usage.

- Ms. Knippenberg replied the City's expenses were tracked just like any good business, adding there was a concern about keeping expenses down. She pointed out the water used in the fountain was treated and recycled, similar to a swimming pool. She then stated the City tracked the top ten water users, noting hotels were typically in the top ten; however, the City was not.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

NOTE: Item 5.A. was heard after Item 2.B.

#### **A. Fluoride**

- Mr. Mike Markgraf, a local dentist, explained he began his dental career in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where the community water supplies were fluoridated at the optimal level of 1 part per million (ppm), voicing concern that Punta Gorda's water supply was not fluoridated. He stated he had secured an endorsement from the Charlotte County Dental Society, noting other local agencies supported his effort, and he anticipated receiving an endorsement from the Charlotte County Chapter of the Medical Society later this week. He stated 90% of his patients were above the age of 60, asserting the benefits of fluoride extended to people of all ages, and the data provided included an article regarding same. He voiced concern regarding the extent and prevalence of decay among area children, adding adult residents who lived in the area for more than 4 to 5 years appeared to have a greater instance of tooth decay. He suggested natives of the area had more problems with tooth decay and tooth loss than his patients in Wisconsin, advising elderly residents taking multiple medications could experience dry mouth which further contributed to tooth decay and gum disease. He opined fluoride would make a difference. He drew members' attention to a Florida Department of Health map of Florida counties which delineated fluoridation levels as of 2007, stating it was necessary to differentiate between naturally occurring fluoride and optimal fluoridation, adding Punta Gorda's naturally occurring fluoridation level was 0.1 ppm. He explained fluoride was a mineral that was leached into the water supply, noting fluoride levels and optimal fluoridation figures varied considerably; however, optimal fluoridation for Florida was 0.8 ppm. He stated most of the counties with less than optimal fluoridation were rural with small populations, adding fluoridating the water for those communities was likely hampered by the cost of obtaining the equipment. He reported out of 165,000 residents of Charlotte County, approximately 142,000 were connected to a community water supply, reporting 77% of Florida's community water supplies were fluoridated compared to the national figure of 63%. He stated the largest 20 cities in the United States were fluoridated, adding he would like to see residents of

Charlotte County have optimal fluoridation in their water supply. He reported the Federal government allocated \$150,000 annually to the Florida Department of Health for a Fluoridation Grant Program, noting the funds were overseen by Mr. Sean Isaac and could be used to offset up to 100% of the cost of equipment and equipment installation as well as up to 15% of the engineering cost. He stated fluoride in low levels had been shown to reduce tooth decay which resulted in a reduction in tooth loss, adding that further resulted in a reduction of time lost at school and work. He explained too much fluoride could cause fluorosis in young children's teeth, adding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under the direction of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), had ruled there should be no more than 4 ppm of fluoride in a community water supply; however, they were considering reducing the standard to 2 to reduce the incidents of fluorosis. He stated there were arguments that fluoride was a dangerous chemical that could affect systemic function of the body, pointing out the internet made it possible to publish a certain point of view worldwide in a short time; however, it was another matter to have a peer reviewed article published in a "name brand" publication. He identified the components of a true research report, noting such reports were typically reviewed and approved by peers before being published. He opined fluoride at optimal levels was not a health hazard; however, fluoride at accelerated levels had the potential to be a health hazard, asserting as long as the rules were followed, there would be no problem. He concluded no community had been successfully sued for introducing fluoride into the water supply.

- Mr. Carroll questioned what other options, such as tooth paste and mouthwash, existed to provide fluoride other than through the water, adding he was uncertain how effective those products were.
- Mr. Markgraff replied all toothpastes approved by the American Dental Association (ADA) had fluoride in them, acknowledging there were other sources of obtaining fluoride. He stated the United States and Canada had concluded that the most efficacious way of introducing fluoride to the general population was through the water supply, adding if desired, it was possible to have fluoride removed from the water by installing a reverse osmosis system. He stated there were products that could be used as a substitute for fluoride in the water; however, it was necessary for an individual to be proactive in order to obtain those benefits.
- Mr. Carroll asserted this was an incident where the government was providing the solution that otherwise might not be obtained by the resident, clarifying the government was creating an environment where a benefit was automatically received which could not reasonably be objected to without adding some additional equipment in a home.

- Mr. Markgraf stated according to the CDC, fluoride was one of the ten greatest health measurements taken in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Mr. Bennett stated articles regarding the adverse affects of fluoride had been published, adding studies were being conducted all over the world, and the CDC had embarked on a study to determine the prevalence of negative occurrences. He stated only 5.7% of the world's population drank fluoridated water, adding in Europe, only the United Kingdom and Ireland fluoridated their water.
- Mr. Markgraf reiterated there were other ways of administering fluoride.
- Mr. Bennett stated one publication indicated children should not swallow toothpaste that contained fluoride.
- Mr. Markgraf pointed out any tube of toothpaste containing fluoride contained the same warning.
- Mr. Bennett asserted that was a red flag, adding the CDC was concerned about fluoridated water in infant formula. He stated giving fluoride to children under the age of 8 could affect the bone structure of their teeth and cause fluorosis, opining the health benefits of fluoride were outweighed by the adverse side affects. He stated the fact that so few countries fluoridated their water was a sign, adding his teeth were not healthy despite growing up with fluoridated water. He reiterated fluoride was problematic when the concentration was too high, stressing if fluoride was not present, there was no risk of over-concentration. He stated he would not be in favor of fluoridation. He then stated fluoride was a bi-product of manufacturing, adding if it was not added to the water, many companies would have to dispose of large concentrations, which was costly. He questioned whether the motivation for fluoridating water was economically driven.
- Mr. Kessler questioned whether the fluoridation process could be automated.
- Mr. Jackson replied the technology existed to dose water with accuracy.
- Mr. Kessler suggested costs related to same should be included in any proposal that was developed for City Council's consideration.
- Mr. Sabatino suggested the issue be discussed with Charlotte County Utilities, noting an interconnect between the City and the County was proposed for the future, which could create operational issues.
- Mr. Markgraf stated he intended to do so.
- Mr. Sabatino suggested staff research whether the cost of the upcoming plant expansion would be significantly impacted by the inclusion of a fluoridation process, adding staff should also determine whether any State grant funds would be available.
- Mr. Jackson recalled he mentioned at the previous meeting that it would be necessary to

integrate a fluoride system into the phase I expansion, adding a review committee would be formed later this date to choose a design consultant for the expansion. He stated he could request some preliminary figures be included in the project scope, noting he had spoken with Mr. Bob Cushing of Carollo Engineers, who would be speaking with his contact at the American Water Works Association (AWWA) in Washington, DC. He reported he had received multiple emails voicing opposition, adding same had been disseminated to the Board. He noted the comments received were all from out of State, adding he felt the truth was somewhere in the middle; therefore, he would like to conduct additional research on the matter. He concluded there was insufficient information at this time to make any decision.

- Mr. Dauster opined it was rare for the combination of fluoridated water and the use of fluoride toothpaste to create a problem, adding fluorosis typically occurred in patients who were from areas where there were great amounts of fluoride in the local water supply. He stated the ADA was attempting to help the public, concluding he did not see any negative aspects.
- Mr. Markgraf reported the CDC and the United States Public Health Service conducted a study to determine the annual cost of injecting fluoride after the pumps were in place, adding the cost depended on the size of the utility. He stated the study indicated the cost to a water supply that serviced 20,000+ people was \$.50 per person annually.
- Mr. Sabatino commented it was necessary to be as objective as possible, adding the Board would rely on the experts to guide them in their decision-making process. He stated members wanted to do what was right for the residents, adding any recommendation to City Council should include sufficient information to allow them to make an informed decision.
- Mr. Weiler questioned whether fluoride was of greater benefit to children since they had developing teeth.
- Mr. Markgraf responded fluoride was a mineral that was incorporated into the crystalline structure of the enamel of the tooth and made the tooth harder, acknowledging children received the greater benefit. He stated fluoride could leach out when drinking fluids; however, it could be replenished by drinking fluoridated water or through topically applied fluoride, adding his practice applied prescription level fluoride to children up to the age of 16. He explained that fluoride was systemically taken up by the body and excreted as a part of bodily functions.
- Mr. Weiler stated in Wisconsin, the school system required children to visit the dentist, adding of his 45 employees, many were Florida natives, and they had never seen a dentist.

- Mr. Markgraf stated in Wisconsin it was State law that children could not attend kindergarten until they had seen a dentist.
  - Mr. Weiler inquired whether the Florida Program funds could be utilized for a school program.
  - Mr. Markgraf replied in the negative, noting the State Dental Society funded school programs that were held in February of each year.
  - Mr. Weiler inquired whether \$150,000 would be sufficient to pay for a fluoride system.
  - Mr. Jackson replied with uncertainty. He then commented he was a native Floridian and had all his teeth, adding his mother was a Florida native and had all her teeth when she passed away at the age of 80.
  - Mr. Bennett stated 50% of fluoride taken in by the body was eliminated; however, the remaining 50% remained and accumulated in the body, adding same was called osteosarcoma.
  - Mr. Markgraf interjected that was cancer.
  - Mr. Bennett continued, stating the CDC was conducting a study regarding the accumulation of fluoride, noting other countries had also conducted studies.
  - Mr. Markgraf interjected there had been concerns about fluoride in the water since the 1960s and 1970s, adding the CDC and the EPA studies were an attempt to remain current on their basis of knowledge to insure what was being done was safe and appropriate. He stated to date, nothing had been found that indicated there was a problem.
  - Mr. Carroll questioned whether any research had been based on people having a routine dental program and having less tooth decay regardless of whether their water was fluoridated.
  - Mr. Markgraf responded in the negative, opining it would be difficult to formulate a study with a statistically significant population and controlling fluoride versus non-fluoride. He explained the diffusion effect of fluoride, noting there were many varying sources of fluoride. He confirmed there were no questions.
- B. Drought Surcharge
- Mr. Jackson drew members' attention to the Herald Tribune letter dated June 4, 2009 regarding utilities targeting water gluttons with a drought surcharge, noting SWFWMD's modified Phase III restrictions recommended that utilities adopt a drought surcharge. He stated Charlotte County called it an emergency rate surcharge, adding many neighboring municipalities had surcharges; however, the City did not. He stated commercial users and residential users using more than 15,000 gallons were targeted, adding an average family with a large home used approximately 6,000 gallons. He

reminded members City Council would be voting on the 3% increase to the Utility's rate structure at their July 8, 2009 meeting.

- Mr. Sabatino asserted if a surcharge was implemented, the Land Development Regulations would need to be evaluated, noting same mandated residents of the Special Residential Overlay Districts to irrigate.
- Mr. Jackson clarified the City already had a tiered rate structure as a condition of its Water Use Permit, noting the rate structure was punitive in nature. He advised the drought surcharge was an additional charge.
- Mr. Fabian stated the less gallons used, the more paid per gallon.
- Mr. Jackson stated that was due to the wastewater rate structure, clarifying wastewater was not metered.
- Mr. Carroll objected to the term glutton.
- Mr. Kessler commented it took five years for a public entity to recover from a negative public perception, opined the timing was poor to implement a drought surcharge when rates were being raised.
- Mr. Jackson explained he put this item on the agenda so that he could check yes on the drought form he completed every month that questioned whether he was discussing drought surcharges.

C. FY 2010 Strategic Plan

- Mr. Jackson stated the Plan had been provided for members' information and input.
- Mr. Kessler inquired whether there were implications to the Utility budget if the City installed fountains on the Harborwalk.
- Mr. Jackson replied in the negative. He advised the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) had provided funds for municipalities to purchase trees for the medians on State roads, adding those municipalities were now responsible for maintaining the plantings in those medians (rather than FDOT). He reported staff had requested that whenever possible, localized groundwater wells be drilled in the median to handle the irrigation, adding although there was a higher initial cost, the life cycle cost was less.

**MEMBER COMMENTS**

- Mr. Dauster questioned how to proceed with the fluoride issue.
- Mr. Jackson explained when a design engineer was selected for the Phase I project, he would request they provide, as part of the scope, an engineering opinion and costs for a fluoridation project. He stated in the meantime, he would discuss the issue with some of the City's existing engineers, adding he was opposed to it; however, he would remain open minded. He stated he would obtain costs as quickly as possible and present the

information to the Board.

- Mr. Dauster questioned how the philosophical question of whether to fluoridate the water would be answered.
- Mr. Sabatino interjected it was necessary to obtain the cost information before discussing same.
- Mr. Weiler stated City Council had vetoed installing pump-out facilities at Ponce de Leon Park, adding there were water quality grants available that funded 75% for such public facilities. He offered to provide the information.
- Mr. Dauster interjected the Waterfront Development Advisory Committee (WDAC) was researching obtaining a pump-out boat.
- Mr. Jackson clarified City Council was not opposed to providing pump out service; however, they were uncertain as to the best place to do so.
- Mr. Fabian requested an organizational chart for the various local and regional governing water boards, such as the Peace River Basin Board.
- Mr. Jackson agreed to provide same at a future meeting.
- Mr. Sabatino suggested members take advantage of the opportunity to tour the City's facilities, complimenting staff for their work on site during the recent PRBB meeting. He stated the City's employees were dedicated, involved and conscientious.
- Mr. Bennett stated he would like to have attended; however, the notice had been too short.
- Mr. Jackson offered to take members on individual tours.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting Adjourned: 10:41 a.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Sabatino, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Smith, Recording Secretary