

Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority

Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2015

Chairman Ehrhardt called the July 9, 2015 Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority Board Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Members present included Chairman Dave Ehrhardt, Vice Chairman Shade Storey and Board Member Joe Hicks.

Also present: Attorney Paul Smart, Finance Director Judy Smith, Authority Engineer Joey Leslie, Water/Wastewater Manager Mark Dudziak, CIO/GIS Analyst Mike Johnson and Board Secretary Karen Johnson. Visitors included Alex Pace, Main Street Newspapers, Rick Shmurak and Amanda Sutter, Walton Development, Tommy Rainey and various residents of Pleasant Acres and Beth Grimes, Bates Carter and Associates.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chairman Storey made a motion to approve the June 11, 2015 board meeting minutes.

Member Hicks seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objection and all board members present voting.

New Business

Pleasant Acres Petition and Request

Engineer Leslie thanked the residents of Pleasant Acres for coming to the meeting. He explained he spoke with Tommy Rainey, the Pleasant Acres representative, regarding their water quality issues. He stated the residents of Pleasant Acres have signed a petition (165 signatures) requesting assistance from the Authority with their water quality concerns. He briefly explained our Neighborhood Water Line Extension Policy.

Engineer Leslie stated that Piedmont Water is the water service provider for the Pleasant Acres community. He stated that the Authority provides a backup connection that can serve as Piedmont's water system supply when needed. Engineer Leslie said when Piedmont's well can't keep up with the demands they can purchase water from us at a retail rate. He explained that Piedmont Water has their own permit through the Georgia EPD and is responsible for water quality delivered to the customer.

Engineer Leslie opened the floor for the residents' comments and concerns but reminded them that we do not operate their water system. He also stated that he did inform the Utility Director for Piedmont Water that this item was on our agenda.

Chairman Ehrhardt asked how long Piedmont has served the Pleasant Acres community. Mr. Rainey said three to four years. Mr. Rainey provided samples of water from various residents and compared those samples to the Authority water.

The following comments and concerns were voiced.

1. Residents are purchasing water to drink because of the poor quality of water provided to them and are concerned about their health.
2. Customer service issues with Piedmont.
3. Appliances have been damaged due to poor water quality.
4. There is a noticeable improvement to water quality when the Authority is supplying the water. They said you can definitely tell when the Authority is supplying the water.
5. Fire flow concerns.
6. Poor water pressure.

Engineer Leslie discussed several issues that could be causing the water quality problem. He said the well itself could be causing the issues, rust in the tank and/or the water lines are old.

Water Manager Dudziak discussed the EPD requirements and said Piedmont is in compliance.

Engineer Leslie explained the options for immediate help. He stated that a wholesale rate could be negotiated with Piedmont if they disconnect from their well. He said this might improve the quality of the water.

Several residents asked about water pressure and fire protection if we took over the system. A question was asked if a PRV would have to be installed at the customer meters. Engineer Leslie said our policies would not apply to Piedmont. Finance Director Smith said the contract with our customers does recommend one.

Chairman Ehrhardt asked about backflow protection. Engineer Leslie said the backflow protection is inadequate at this time. He said it has already been flagged by our backflow staff. He stated Piedmont has been made aware of this issue.

Engineer Leslie stated that Piedmont sounds willing to disconnect from their well if we would give them a wholesale rate. He said a rate has not been negotiated. He stated the Authority would supply Piedmont a water supply at the connection, not operate their system.

Mr. Rainey said "How long do we have to put up with them before y'all come in?"

Attorney Smart stated ultimately this is not up to the Authority. He said Piedmont would have to be involved in the decision for the Authority to take over the system. He reiterated that even if the Authority wholesales water to Piedmont, the Pleasant Acre citizens would still be customers of Piedmont.

Engineer Leslie emphasized that Piedmont would still be responsible for the water quality at the tap. He said the piping might be rusty too. The Authority would provide clean water to the connection but Piedmont would have to get clean water to the customer.

A resident asked if fire hydrants could be installed if we wholesaled water to Piedmont. Engineer Leslie said “no”. He explained that the water line size would have to be upgraded to carry the flow so the only way to do that would be to replace all the lines in the system.

Engineer Leslie said we have had a meeting with Piedmont and we are negotiating. Vice Chairman Storey asked if Piedmont is open to the wholesale agreement. Engineer Leslie said they are very open to this idea.

Chairman Ehrhardt asked Attorney Smart if it would be okay to make Piedmont a wholesale offer. Attorney Smart said “yes”, with the conditions previously discussed i.e. disconnecting from the well and providing backflow protection.

Vice Chairman Storey made a motion to authorize Engineer Leslie and staff to negotiate a board approved wholesale rate with Piedmont Water for the Pleasant Acres Community.

Member Hicks seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objection and all board members present voting.

Attorney Smart noted that when the contract was brought before the board, it would be in a public meeting.

Mark Ballman, 3189 Winder Highway - Billing Dispute

Chairman Ehrhardt introduced Mr. Ballman and gave him the floor. Mr. Ballman explained to the Board his reason for filing a billing dispute, stating there was no way he could have used that quantity of water during that time period.

Mr. Ballman said an Authority technician on site went over several possible scenarios with him. He stated he hired a plumber and was told it didn't look like the water went through the meter.

Mr. Ballman stated he is asking for the water bill to be forgiven and for a new meter to be installed.

Engineer Leslie explained how our meters and e-coders operate. He stated the report showed a continuous leak from 2/21/15 through 2/24/15. He acknowledged the leak stopped, according to the e-coder data, but could not speculate why. A discussion ensued as to the accuracy of the Authority's meters. Authority staff indicated that they are confident with the accuracy of our meters.

Mr. Ballman requested to have his meter replaced because he does not trust its accuracy. Board member Hicks asked staff if we could replace his meter. Engineer Leslie said staff would do whatever is recommended by the board, but staff trusts the accuracy of the meters. The board directed staff to replace his meter. Staff indicated they would prepare a work order and replace his meter as soon as possible.

Engineer Leslie explained our leak policy to Mr. Ballman. Chairman Ehrhardt mentioned that the board policy does not apply without receipts proving costs were incurred to repair a leak. Staff mentioned that the e-coder indicates a leak that has stopped and the board may, or may not, consider it evidence of a leak at their discretion.

The Board tabled this item pending further investigation.

Walton Development Preliminary Application Staff Recommendation

Mr. Shmurak of Walton Development came before the Board asking them to consider providing a will serve letter for the Belle Spring tract they are developing. He said they need this letter in order to apply for a Georgia Ready Site Certification.

Engineer Leslie explained current Authority standards require Board approval for any preliminary application exceeding 6,000 gallons per day. Engineer Leslie stated that in 2013 the Authority gave Walton Development a will serve letter that was good for two years.

Engineer Leslie discussed the proposed development including peak flows and averages. He said the new development would be very large and it would constitute 15% of our total flow. He said the Authority does have the capacity to serve this development. He recommended certain conditions in order to provide the will serve letter. Engineer Leslie provided the Board with the preliminary will serve letter for their consideration.

Member Hicks asked if over the next two years would there be any issues with the Authority being able to provide that capacity. Engineer Leslie said not in his opinion. He said it would not be a big share of our reservoir allocation.

Attorney Smart said he was fine with the proposed will serve letter but he would be more comfortable if there was wording tying it to the preliminary application. Engineer Leslie said we have the capacity so it is best to use our Bear Creek allocation. He said the way the drought management plan is now if you can increase your average daily demand they better off you are. He said it will benefit Jackson County because we do not currently get anywhere near our allocation.

Vice Chairman Storey asked Mr. Shmurak what his timeframe on receiving the letter is. He said the application has been held up for three months so as quickly as they can get it.

Chairman Ehrhardt said he thought in general the letter looked good but wanted to look into the flows more.

Vice Chairman Storey asked if there was a way for us to have time to look at the flows and digest it but not have to wait until next month's meeting.

Attorney Smart said a way to do that is to authorize the Chairman and Board in their discretion to execute the letter consistent with the guidance given by the Board or, have a Called Meeting.

Chairman Ehrhardt said we have two board members not present so this item will be tabled until the August meeting.

Presentation of the JCWSA 2014 CAFR

Beth Grimes of Bates, Carter & Company presented the 2014 CAFR to the Board. She explained what a CAFR is and that it adds a lot of transparency to the reporting of the Authority.

Ms. Grimes said that the Authority receives a Certificate of Achievement every year from the Government Financial Officers Association. She said that since Finance Director Smith has come on board that she has been key in making that happen.

Ms. Grimes highlighted several important areas. She thanked Finance Director Smith and her staff for taking the responsibility of the audit very seriously. She said it is a clean audit and is representative of what an audit is supposed to be like.

Member Hicks made a motion to accept the Jackson County Water and Sewerage Authority 2014 Audit as presented.

Vice Chairman Storey seconded the motion. The motion carried with no objection and all board members present voting.

Managers Report

Engineer Leslie presented the JCWSA SPLOST Preliminary Project Presentation that was previously presented to the Jackson County BOC at their annual retreat. He briefly discussed fourteen possible projects. He said the projects have been listed by cost ranking.

Chairman Ehrhardt said he felt the presentation was well received and Manager Klerk and Engineer Leslie did a great job with the presentation.

Engineer Leslie discussed the status of the sewer plant project. He said it was coming along very well and we are now waiting for equipment and the building

With there being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Karen Johnson
Board Secretary