

**CARROLL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
MINUTES OF UTILITIES ADVISORY COUNCIL
January 11, 2012
Carroll County Government Office Building
225 N. Center Street, Rm. 003
Westminster, Maryland 21157-5194
7 p.m.**

Attendees: *Council:* Michael Wilmore, Ellen Dix, Kevin Hann, Matt Candland

County Staff: Tom Rio, Jeff Topper, Sheree Lima, Joe Barrington, Tom Devilbiss, Penny Gist

Absent: Council: County Staff: Rob Burk, Jenny Hobbs, Robin Hooper

Reports

Minutes from meetings of 5/5/11 and 8/25/11: The minutes of the 5/5/11 and 8/25/11 meetings were approved.

Master Plan Updates/Revisions: *Bramble Hills service area and well* – Background: A future change for the Westminster water service area regards an area known as Bramble Hills involving about 13 residences. An agreement was reached between the County and the City of Westminster where the County will transfer ownership of a well on the Gesell property, located off of Maryland Route 27, including the adjacent Bramble Hills system to the City of Westminster. The easement area was surveyed and an easement transfer is being prepared. At the January, 2012 meeting Mr. Barrington noted recently speaking with Jeff Glass, Director of Public Works, City of Westminster. The volume of water that can be pumped from the well was established at 300,000 gallons per day maximum. This withdrawal from the well will be restricted to times when not withdrawing water from the nearby stream. Written petitions to the Maryland Department of the Environment and approval will be required for every time they want to use well.

Old Business

Citizen Concerns:

Water Theft: No new incidents of water theft have been reported. The Bureau of Utilities continues to place fire hydrant rings when the hydrants are flushed. Hopefully, the rings will help deter theft. County staff continues work on a bulk water sales implementation plan to make it easier for companies to legally obtain water. See “*bulk water sales*” under “*New Business*” for more information.

Council Representatives Needed: The council still needs one representative from the Bark Hill, Pleasant Valley, or Bramble Hills service areas and one from the Freedom area business community. A news release will be prepared by Mr. Topper’s office and a notice placed on the web site.

Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhanced Nutrient Removal Upgrade and Effluent Temperature Limits Status: It was clarified to the council by Mr. Barrington that the Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant continues to operate under the same permit and consent order; no revisions made.

In late November of 2011, about 150,000 gallons of partially treated wastewater overflowed into the Piney Run Creek due to about 3 inches of rainfall in a short time span. A determination on fines has not been issued yet. A turbidity meter, costing about \$7,000, is due to be installed at the plant to monitor plant effluent and notify the County before these types of incidents occur. Recently a manhole cover was removed, which was not authorized by the Bureau of Utilities and this allowed stormwater to flow into the operating system. It was asked when an act of vandalism occurs whether the County can still be fined – yes.

Freedom District Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Status: The consent order was discussed by County staff and Maryland Environmental Service on 1/9/12. Ms. Lima reported that the lower limit for copper that can be discharged is still in the permit. The Bureau of Utilities is using a corrosion inhibitor at the Freedom District Water Treatment Plant as the method to comply. Maryland Environmental Service gave the following enhanced nutrient removal upgrade completion schedule: start design – 11/1/12; start construction – 8/1/14; construction substantial completion – 8/1/16. Mr. Topper, along with technical committee members, evaluated 12 proposals. The top five will be giving presentations in the future to the County, then the design engineer firm will be selected.

Town of Sykesville Water Pipe Replacement Status: Mr. Candland reported that the Spout Hill Road replacement is finished. Main Street roadway is stabilized and patched. Mr. Barrington noted there is a planned capital project where older cast iron water and clay sewer system-wide replacement engineering design begins in 2018. Mr. Candland said there has been no decision on the Maryland Route 851 project, originally under the Town’s streetscape project. Upgrades in this area would best be performed over time under an agreement with State Highway Administration. The Town is urging the County to do their part, which is the water and sewer upgrade within the larger streetscape project. The State will not fund that. Some of the oldest sections of utilities along Maryland Route 851 and the majority of the pipes are in the 50-year old range. In the wintertime frozen ground causes breaks in the system. The Town wants to get it fixed so that residents and businesses will not have water service interruptions. The storm drain system and gas piping are relatively stable, so the roadway should not have to be dug up again for a long time and would be ready for paving by the State.

Environmental Protection Agency’s Total Maximum Daily Load Implementations and Impact on Water and Sewer Users/Operations: Mr. Devilbiss spoke to the Council. Allocation caps have been placed on all wastewater treatment systems by the Environmental Protection Agency and Maryland Department of the Environment. This is to protect the Chesapeake Bay and surrounding watershed areas. Plants with a capacity of .5 million gallons per day and above, of which there are 67 in Maryland, are to get their enhanced nutrient removal to meet the total maximum daily loads as part of the Chesapeake Bay Phase I Watershed Implementation Plan. Part of the strategy to do this is to either have the plants on line or in the construction phase by 2017. Complete funding is not possible without a raise in the “flush tax”. The State may not be able to upgrade all of the plants by the schedule anyway. An alternative is to decrease the discharge limits. However, this may involve technological advances that the plants don’t have. Planned growth in the Towns may exceed the caps; there may be no capacity remaining at existing wastewater treatment plants. Another alternative is to shrink the growth area, like the Town of Manchester.

Homeowner Education to Reduce Maintenance Burdens: At the 8/25/11 meeting, informing homeowners about ways to reduce maintenance burdens was discussed; i.e., replacing toilet flaps and ways to address kitchen grease. The Council would like educational information placed on the web site. The County doesn’t have a social networking page for this purpose. Mr. Hann asked Mr. Barrington about using the Bureau of

Utilities' annual consumer reports as a means to relay information. Ms. Dix noted the homeowners' associations could distribute information. Ms. Gist distributed an example of the current water and sewer bill format for the Council's review. There may be room for the Bureau of Utilities web site to be noted. There is a 6 month supply of pre-printed bills left. Changes to the bill can be suggested before quotes from vendors are sought. Quotes will be sought within the next few months. These options will be further explored and reports given to the Council.

Customer Billing/Collections: Ms. Dix questioned if part of a water and sewer bill payment could be accepted by the County and was told "no". The County's collection system doesn't allow for that. Can liens for non-payment of bills be placed on the property? The County Attorney's office can address this question. Mr. Topper noted sometimes customers that have a delinquent account will illegally turn the water back on after it has been shut off.

Asset Management – Geographic Information System (GIS) Based System Status: Previously, meetings were held with consultants to get cost proposals. Estimates cannot be funded so the project is being completed in-house. Ms. Lima reported that the first of two phases is in the process of being completed. That is gathering all available information, i.e., from the Bureau of Utilities, Risk Management and the Department of Land Use, Planning and Development. The second phase is that the Bureau of Engineering's survey division will use GPS (global positioning system) to locate manholes, hydrants, and other assets. The County's Geographic Information System staff is also helping to build this data base. Eventually, everything will be moved to an asset management computer program, which the County will purchase. Mr. Barrington noted that any inspection work performed with video equipment can be put in the system. If a developer has information in electronic format, that can be incorporated as well.

Springfield Water Tower Leaks: The tower at the Warfield Complex recently overflowed. The elevation is below the rest of the operating system. A past leak lasted for 3 days at 1,000 gallons per minute. The leaking Springfield water tower, which belongs to the Town of Sykesville, is still a concern. The tower is designed to hold about 250,000 gallons and is no longer needed for fire emergencies. Mr. Hann mentioned that the Maryland Department of the Environment is beginning to regulate water towers. New towers are being built with stirring equipment to keep the water moving. Mr. Barrington wants to close the valve on the tower but that is not allowed by Maryland Environmental Service. Mr. Candland asked about the possibility of eliminating the tower and wants a meeting arranged for discussion. It may be the tower could become a communication tower, or it could be sold for scrap metal. If it remains there, maintenance costs would be involved. A question arose whether Northrop Grumman Company's tower is in use by them. Staff does not know. If there is water in the tower, it would have been paid for by the company.

Baltimore Gas and Electric 50% Offer on Energy Saving Upgrades: At the 8/25/11 meeting it was reported that Messrs Topper and Barrington and the Bureau of Purchasing attended a Maryland counties joint meeting. The offer entails coordinating with other Counties to receive a 50%+ reimbursement. At the 1/11/12 meeting, Mr. Barrington reported that other counties don't want to commit to the offer. The County would like to. The County will send out its own request for proposals to get responses.

Bureau of Utilities Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Community Investment Project Budget Status: The preliminary budget was submitted to the Board of County Commissioners today. They will be presented with a final budget at a later date.

Bureau of Utilities Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Operating Budget Status: The preliminary budget was previously submitted to the Board of County Commissioners. Ms. Lima presented information on changes to the Council from two handouts: “Bureau of Utilities Water and Sewer Operating Budget Summaries for Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request”. Mr. Wilmore stated he has no objection to the changes.

Verizon, Sprint/Nextel, AT&T Projects Status: At the 8/25/11 meeting, Mr. Topper stated that several cell phone companies are paying to remove and replace antennae on several of the Bureau of Utilities’ water towers. Mr. Barrington reported that the Verizon work should be completed by the end of January. This is a source of revenue for the County.

Contractor/County Compliance Issues: At the 8/25/11 meeting, Ms. Dix brought up a number of incidences where she thought things were not done properly by contractors or County agencies. She has since met with Mr. Rio and Jason Green, Bureau Chief, Permits and Inspections to discuss the issues in detail. Ms. Dix believes that some sort of tracking or record-keeping of contractors’ oversights should be done. The inspection staff can do this, but they are limited in size. The County Permits Office needs to be aware of past incidents when permits are applied for. Home buyers think their only recourse is to contact the contractor. They could be getting in contact with the Permits Office. Buyers are paying out of pocket for repairs they’re not responsible for. Mr. Candland stated that his experience with the County Permits Office has been excellent. Mr. Hann heard that a hydraulic pressure test on interior plumbing is going to be enforced. Mr. Rio will check on this. Ms. Dix noted that work crews are left unsupervised. Mr. Rio stated the contractor’s license is in jeopardy if something goes wrong.

Take-Home Vehicles: Mr. Hann asked why County trucks are being parked at pumping stations and plants. Employees are not allowed to take home vehicles due to cost-saving measures. The County Maintenance Facility lot cannot accommodate them so they are parked at the Bureau of Utilities facilities. Mr. Wilmore asked how much money is being saved. Mr. Topper said he could get that information for the Council. Mr. Hann is concerned whether staff can handle sewage leaks and overflows after hours in a timely manner. Is there a possibility of potential fines due to this? Fortunately, where the vehicles are being parked is closer to their homes than the central facility.

New Business

2012 Meeting Schedule: The meeting schedule for the Council was discussed. It was decided that the next meeting would be held in April, then one each in August and November. In 2013 the first meeting will be in February. That is when budgets are being prepared and the Council would be able to become more involved in the process.

Public Hearing Notifications: Mr. Wilmore asked that the Council be notified of upcoming public hearings regarding the Water and Sewer Master Plans.

Leishear Project near Mt. Airy: Previously, the Council was sent 3 Carroll County Times articles dated 9/26/10, 9/21/11, and 9/23/11. The Harrison Leishear property is located between Boteler Road and Maryland Rte. 27 in Mt. Airy. Tom Devilbiss gave an overview of the project. Some acreage was transferred to the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) for economic development and some will be for recreational use. Four wells were drilled on the property; 2 were “good”, 2 were “marginal”. The article dated 9/21/11 states the County would reserve about 70,000 gallons for future development. The Town would use the rest of the daily water supply (about 80,000 gallons). The Town and the Board of Commissioners

are still under negotiation. An appropriation permit has not been acquired from the State for use of water from the wells.

Council Meetings Postings on Web Site: Mr. Wilmore inquired whether the Council's meetings and agendas are being posted on the web site – yes they are; under “Upcoming Meetings and Agendas” located on the County government web page with a link available on the Council's web page.

Bulk Water Sales: Copies of the Notice of Public Hearing on 1/19/12 Proposed Amendment to the Code of Public Local Laws, Chapter 179, Sewer and Water -- § 179-7D - bulk water rates; and the draft ordinance were distributed to the Council. The Board of Commissioners will hear public comments on the proposed amendment, which would revise the rate structure and process for obtaining bulk water at County facilities. Amending the ordinance is required in order to put a bulk water sales implementation plan in place. The Bureau of Utilities maintains a list of companies interested in bulk water sales and will send notice to them. A news release will be prepared and information placed on web pages. Mr. Wilmore asked how a price per gallon was derived. Mr. Topper explained that the price covers the cost of the water. The Board of Commissioners can adjust the price through resolution rather than having to change the ordinance.

Rain Water – “Green Buildings”: Mr. Wilmore asked if staff has heard anything regarding releasing rain water from “green building” storage systems into operating systems. Mr. Barrington hasn't seen any permits to do this.

The meeting was adjourned. Meetings will be scheduled for April, August and November.

Note: Originally scheduled meeting for November 17, 2011 was moved to December 15, 2011 due to budget reports not being completed. December 15 meeting was rescheduled to January 11, 2012 due to only two council members being available.

cc: *Council Members*
Thomas J. Rio, Director of Public Works
Jeffrey Topper, Deputy Director of Public Works
Joe Barrington, Chief, Bureau of Utilities
Sheree Lima, Financial Manager, Department of Public Works
Robert Burk, Comptroller
Thomas S. Devilbiss, Acting Director, Land Use, Planning & Development
Robin Hooper, Budget Analyst, Department of Management & Budget
Jenny Hobbs, Financial Analyst, Department of the Comptroller
Steve Powell, Chief of Staff, Board of County Commissioners
Utilities Advisory Council File

Handouts: Water and Sewer Billing Form

Bureau of Utilities Water and Sewer Operating Budget Summaries for Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request

Leishear project Carroll County Times news articles – 9/26/10, 9/21/11, 9/23/11

Notice of Public Hearing on 1/19/12 Proposed Amendment to the Code of Public Local Laws, Chapter 179, Sewer and Water -- § 179-7D - bulk water rates; and draft ordinance

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