

# Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission

January 16, 2006

## Minutes

The Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 4:00 PM, Monday, January 16, 2006, in the Rogers City Administration Building. Commissions Donnie Moore, Don Kendall, Donna Warren, Lon Pepple, and Jerry Pittman were present. Rogers Water Utilities staff in attendance were Tom McAlister, Mark Johnson, Mike Lawrence, Joyce Johnson, Everett Balk, Stephen Ponder, Tim House, and Ken Wooden. Others in attendance were Ben Lipscomb, Derrel Smith, Debby Wieneke, Bill Janes, Dana Reed, Tom Reed, Brook Reinhard, John Mack, and Lori Harrison-Stone. Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 4:02. PM.

There was a motion by Pepple, second by Warren, to approve the December minutes as submitted. Pepple, Moore, and Kendall voted aye, Warren and Pittman abstained. The motion carried.

Tom McAlister, RWU Manager, recognized Mark Johnson, Utilities Engineer, for fifteen years of devoted service as a member of Rogers Water Utilities. Johnson said that he liked his job and appreciated the opportunity to work for the citizens of Rogers.

Continuing, Johnson gave the Commission a brief update on the pending projects having a potential impact on the Rogers Water Utilities. He said that the Highway Department had asked for complete plans on all utilities relocations regarding the Perry Road/I 540 interchange, by January 27. He said that the Mt. Hebron water line project was ready to start, pending the acquisition of a couple of easements.

Continuing, Johnson said that the City of Rogers was going to widen South First Street, from Olrich St. south to Pleasant Grove Road. He said that the street contractor, DECCO, had bid on the water sewer relocations; however, the low bidder was Seven Valleys Construction, for \$779,549.25. He recommended the bid to the Commission. There was a motion by Pittman, second by Kendall, to accept the low bid from Seven Valleys. All in favor, motion carried.

Pittman asked Johnson if easement acquisition was going to be a problem on Mt. Hebron? Johnson said no, that the easements were very minor, and that the water line appurtenances might be moved to the other side of the road if necessary. Moore asked about S. 26<sup>th</sup> St. Johnson said that the project was on hold for the time being. Ben

Lipscomb, City Attorney, said that one property owner in particular did not want to sell his property for a right-of-way.

Moore asked about the sewer line relocation at the Perry Road/I 540 interchange. Johnson said that project was almost designed, and that the cost estimate was about \$2 million.

Moore recognized Everett Balk, Project Facilitation Engineer. Balk gave a brief report on the activities of his section. He said that another engineer, Ken Wooden, had been hired to help with plan review. He said that his section had committed to do an initial review of all plans submitted for approval in two weeks or less, so the project backlog was gone. He said that all standard details and specifications were now available on the Utilities' website, [rwu.org](http://rwu.org). Concluding, Balk said that a system was being developed in-house to better track all the projects submitted for approval.

Moore asked if the consulting engineers could track their projects on the website. Balk said that could happen eventually, but stressed that the system was under construction. Pepple asked if staff had looked at MS Projects? Balk said yes, but it did not fit what the staff wanted to do. He said that the system staff was developing was a custom-built relational database in ACCESS. Moore asked how many projects submitted this month? Balk guessed about twenty so far, but opined that business was about to pick up after the holiday respite. Moore asked if the engineers were taking advantage of the predesign meetings. Balk said that more were taking advantage than not.

Moore recognized Debby Wieneke, Director, Habitat for Humanity (HH) of Benton County. Wieneke had written a letter last year asking for a waiver of any or all connection fees for the Proposed Habitat Trails subdivision on S. Old Wire Road. At the last Commission meeting, she was asked to return so that a full Commission could decide on her request. Ben Lipscomb said that he had researched the statutes, and decided that the Commission could make a donation to a secular charity. McAlister asked Wieneke if HH was secular. Wieneke replied that HH was founded on Christian principles. Lipscomb said that, if that was the case, then no, the Commission could not make a gift to HH. Was waiving a fee different than making a gift? Someone asked. Lipscomb said that it was a very fine line, and could "argue both sides of the question".

Kendall said that he was more comfortable making a charitable donation than waiving fees. He said he did not think the connection fees could be administered if the Commission started waiving fees before the fees were even in place. Lipscomb asked Wieneke for a copy of her organizational by-laws to determine if HH was really "a faith-based" organization. Wieneke said she would. Moore asked Wieneke back to the February Commission meeting for a final resolution. She said that she would come back.

Moore recognized Mr. Tom Reed, 618 S. 5th St. Reed said that he had had a lot of problems with sewer backups at his residence. He said that he had replaced the sewer service line from his house to the curb. Reed said that RWU had replaced his sewer tap in street, but left about ten feet of Orangeburg pipe in the street. He said he was continuing

to have difficulty, and wanted the Commission to pay to fix the rest of his sewer service. He also complained that there was no written policy at RWU on who was responsible for service lines in the street. He said that a lot of his neighbors had a similar problem.

McAlister said that the policy of RWU had been for many years that the service line was private property to the sewer main, no matter where it was located. He admitted that Reed's problem was not unique, and that the cost to open cut a street and repair it was beyond the financial means of most residents. He said that he had offered to "split the cost with Mr. Reed", but Reed had demurred and expressed his desire to be heard by the Commission.

There followed many questions from the Commission about what had been done in the past, how much would it cost to repair the remaining sewer line, etc. Mark Johnson said that the cost would be high, because it was a small job and hardly worth the bother for most contractors. Moore said that, since there were so many problems associated with faulty service lines, such as stoppages, backups, infiltration, and inflow, that RWU should be glad to fix the problem in the street, provided the customer replaced or fixed the service line on private property. Finally, Pittman moved, second by Kendall, to direct RWU staff to repair Reed's sewer line in the street (as well as other similarly situated neighbors), and to develop a written policy dealing with private sewer lines in public rights-of-way, for review by the Commission. All in favor, motion carried.

Moore recognized Joyce Johnson, Utilities Controller. Johnson presented the Commission with December 2005 financial sheets. She noted that half of FY '06 was gone, and that revenues continued to be stronger than expected. Most of the credit (or blame) went to the hot, dryer than normal weather, she said. She noted that the interest on reserves was up significantly from last year.

McAlister presented the Commissioners with a copy of the Executive Summary of the Master Plan for Beaver Water District, dated 2006. McAlister recommended the report to the Commission for its startling population projections. The growth projections cannot be realized unless adequate infrastructure is in place for all the new residents of Northwest Arkansas, he said.

McAlister asked that the February Commission meeting be set back one week, to February 27, to avoid President's Day. There were no objections.

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom S. McAlister, Acting Secretary  
Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission

