

# **Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission**

**September 17, 2007**

## **Minutes**

The Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 4:00 PM, Monday, September 17, 2007, in the Rogers City Hall.

Commissioners present were Donnie Moore, Don Kendall, Donna Warren, Lon Pepple, and Travis Greene. Rogers Water Utilities staff in attendance were Tom McAlister, Mark Johnson, Joyce Johnson, William Evans, Mike Lawrence, Pat Sharp, Earl Rausch, Tim House, and Stephen Ponder. Others in the audience included Mark Lundy, Drew Van Winkle, John Henley, Derrel Smith, Ben Hicks, Marlene Hicks, Meg Hyson, Gregory Hyson, Marjory Grimm, Monty Grimm, Billinda and Mike Watts, Evie Blad, Robert Frazier, Frank and Miriam Williams, Gene and Norm Gibson, David Holladay, Frank Winscott, and Randy Ritchey. Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM.

There was a motion by Kendall, second by Greene, to approve the minutes of the July meeting as submitted (there was no August meeting). All in favor, motion carried.

Joyce Johnson, Utilities Controller, and Pat Sharp, Field Operations Team Leader, were recognized for ten years of dedicated service to Rogers Water Utilities this month.

Moore recognized Mark Johnson, Utilities Engineer. Johnson gave the Commission a brief report detailing the status of the several projects in which the Commission had a potential pecuniary interest. He reported that the water transmission main project in Dogwood St. and Osage Creek was finished. Johnson said that the design for the proposed elevated tank at S. 24<sup>th</sup> St. and Lilac St. was almost complete and he planned to advertise next Sunday for bids.

Continuing, Johnson said that all the water and sewer adjustments in New hope Road were finally complete. He noted that the water line in the proposed Pauline Whittaker Parkway was installed. He said that project could not be completed until the City's street Contractor finished the paving and drainage. Johnson said that the City of Rogers planned to advertise the S. 26<sup>th</sup> St. widening project next month. He said that his staff was making changes to the plans for the necessary water and sewer relocations, and would bid that work at the same time as the street work.

Finally, Johnson reported that plans for the widening of Pleasant Grove Road west of I 540 had been reviewed and approved. He noted that the same engineer the City used for the street project was used to design the water and sewer improvements and relocations.

He said that the proposed widening of the Pleasant Grove Road Bridge over I 540 would have little effect on the existing water and sewer facilities in the area.

Moore recognized Everett Balk, Project Facilitation Engineer. Balk presented the Commission with a brief report of the activities of his section. He commented about the drop off in the number of plans submitted for review and approval over the past two months. He said his staff was aiding Mark Johnson with plan production, and the Rogers Pollution Control Facility with plans for a sludge dryer.

Moore recognized Mark Johnson again. Johnson reported that his staff had designed another route for the proposed 24-inch water main across I 540 north of New Hope Road. He said that, since the highway was built in a deep cut, a proposed jack and bore across the highway would be excessively deep, unless the bore was further north. He said that there was sufficient right-of-way on the west side in the Metropark addition, roughly aligned with the proposed Ash St. bridge. The land owner on the east side of the highway, Bob Oliver, had asked for “a waiver of all fees” for any future development, in return for an easement. Johnson said that the Utilities’ contractor, Crossland Heavy, had submitted a proposed change order of \$1.3 million. He said that he had had no time to discuss the cost increase with any of the Utilities’ business partners (Tim Graham, Collins Haynes, Nari Krushiker) before the Commission meeting. Johnson said that the existing water system was sufficient for the two hotels under construction and a third hotel under consideration. A catastrophic fire would tax the system, he said. Johnson said the water transmission main was part of an overall master plan that would loop transmission mains around the city of Rogers, not just for the hotel development.

There were several questions from the Commission. Kendall wanted to know how much the original contract was for, and how much the Commission had agreed to pay for in the beginning. Johnson said that he thought the original contract was for about \$2.1 million, which included a sewer line in Stoney Brook Road. He could not recall the cost apportionment between the parties. Moore said he thought the Commission had committed itself to pay for the improvements. Kendall opined that conditions had changed. He also said that he thought it would be a mistake to waive the impact fees for anyone, since the fees were being challenged in a lawsuit. Pepple asked that the partners be apprised of the situation, and that staff bring a recommendation to the Commission at the next meeting.

Moore recognized Randy Ritchey, engineer for the proposed Angler’s Bend mixed-use development in Benton County. Ritchey told the Commission that he had been in contact with the staff, submitted plans for the development, and had received a letter from the RWU staff outlining the conditions for approval of the proposed development (the old Yogi Bear campground and waterslide) on Highway 94 East. One condition was that the Commission had to approve the extension of services, he said.

There were a lot of questions regarding the capacity of the existing water system. What about the water pressure? Moore asked. McAlister said that the staff had determined that the development could have up to 300 gallons per minute. He said that the development

would have to build a system of mains, pump(s), and tank(s) to meet peak demand or fire protection demand. Moore asked about the capacity of the existing wastewater treatment plant. Ritchey said that the plant was rated at about 30,000 gallons per day. What would the development require? Moore asked. McAlister said that, based on 2.5 persons per living unit and 100 gallons per person per day, the plant might see 40,000 gallons per day. Moore and Kendall expressed doubt about a privately owned wastewater treatment plant. How would the developer warrant the continued, long-term operation of it? Ritchey said that the developer would be willing to put up a bond.

Moore recognized several persons in the audience that were interested in the matter. Dave Holladay of Quail Meadow said he was worried about the possible effect on water pressure. Mike Watts expressed similar concerns, noting that when the Avalon Addition came on line, the water pressure fluctuated wildly when a hydrant was opened in that addition. Frank Winscott, Benton County JP, said that he was concerned about the wastewater treatment plant being operated by a private, out-of-state developer. In the end, the Commission deferred the recommendation of the development to the City Council, asking the engineer to get back with the staff and try to answer the questions raised at the Commission meeting.

Moore recognized Drew VanWinkle of Lundy Allard Company, auditors for the City of Rogers. Van Winkle presented the Commission with annual audits of the Water system and the sewer system. He pointed out two small changes from years past: he separated impact and access fee revenue separately, and he noted that the Rogers Water Utilities were being sued over the impact fees. There were no exceptions to the audit reports.

Moore recognized Mark Johnson again. Johnson gave the Commission a brief report on the feasibility of procuring easements for a possible connection to the planned treatment plant to be built by Northwest Arkansas Conservation Authority (NACA) west of Cave Springs. Johnson opined that most of the work could be performed in-house with existing engineering staff. He said that the staff would need to consult with environmental specialist to help pick the route from the existing treatment plant to the NACA plant. With the preparation of easements and procurement of same, he estimated that it would take at least a year, and cost about \$900,000.

Moore said that he asked staff to look at procurement of easements now, instead of waiting fifteen to twenty years, when land prices would be much higher, and construction much more difficult (expensive). McAlister said, that, if we were going to get easements, it would never be less expensive than it is now. Can we afford it? Kendall asked. McAlister said that there were sufficient funds in the sewer department to fund such a project. There was a motion by Kendall, second by Warren, to direct the staff to proceed with the project. All in favor, motion carried.

Moore recognized Joyce Johnson, Utilities Controller. Johnson presented the Commission with financial reports for July and August (there was no August meeting). Johnson reported that sales were flat compared to last year (an extended drought). She also noted that purchases were up from Beaver Water District, causing a higher than

normal unaccounted for water rate for the month. She said that a number of leaks had been found and repaired, and she expected the trend of raising unaccounted-for water rates to decrease.

Continuing, Johnson pointed out that the City of Rogers used much more water this year than last, probably due to the opening of the Rogers Splash Park. She noted that the wastewater treatment plant contractor was starting to make draws, so that would affect the schedule of funds negatively. No exceptions were taken to the reports.

McAlister announced that the next Commission meeting date was set for October 15, 2007.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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