

Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission

September 19, 2005

Minutes

The Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 4:00 PM, Monday, September 19, 2005, in the Rogers City Administration Building. Commissioners Donnie Moore, Don Kendall, Jerry Pittman, and Donna Warren were present. Lon Pepple was absent. Rogers Water Utilities staff in attendance were Tom McAlister, Mark Johnson, Joyce Johnson, Everett Balk, William Evans, Earl Rausch, Mike Lawrence, Tim House, Stephen Ponder, and Buddy Shook. Others in attendance were City Attorney Ben Lipscomb, Amy Kleiwer, John Keller, David Todd, Chris Griffin, Don Stanley, Derrel Smith, and John Easterling. Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

There was a motion by Pittman, second by Warren, to approve the minutes of the August meeting as submitted. All in favor, motion carried.

Moore recognized Mark Johnson, Utilities Engineer. Johnson presented the Commission with an update on the progress of the ongoing projects in which the Commission had a financial interest. He noted that a new item was on his report, which he referred to as the Highway 12/Prairie Creek waterline relocation. Johnson said that an old water main had been unearthed by erosion in a creek bed near Dream Valley Road. He said that the proximity to Highway 12 had caused a delay in the relocation.

Continuing, Johnson said that the water and sewer relocations for the major street widening projects were still waiting for rights-of-way acquisitions. He said that the Perry Road interchange sewer relocation project was under design.

Ben Lipscomb asked where were the utilities at the Village on the Creeks highway sign? Johnson said that there weren't any water or sewer facilities there.

Kendall asked about the street to serve the proposed Holiday Inn. Johnson said that the plans showed a thoroughfare running between Horsebarn Road and the Interstate, to mate up with a similarly aligned road in the Metro commercial subdivision on the north.

Moore asked about the office expansion project. Johnson said that plans had been received, and it was time to sit down with the architect and staff to go over the details.

Moore recognized Everett Balk, Project Facilitation Engineer. Balk presented a brief report of the activities of his section. He noted that a technician had moved into his office to help with the plan review process. However, there was still a backlog of plans to be reviewed, with a typical wait of four to six weeks for the first review. He said he had 35 plan sets in his office waiting for a review.

Pittman asked if that was an acceptable period of time to wait for a review? Balk said that was a policy decision for others to decide. Moore asked how long it took to get a plan through the planning commission. Mark Johnson replied that a subdivision would normally take at least six weeks to go through the approval process. Johnson said that he talked with a realtor recently, and told him that developers needed to budget more time for the approval process.

Moore recognized William Evans, Superintendent of Field Operations. Evans presented the Commission with two bids for the replacement of the 1986 Vactor sewer cleaning machine. The low bid was from Vactor, but the machine bid did not meet the minimum specifications. The higher of the two bids, from Vaccon, did meet the specifications, Evans said.

Moore asked how did the low cost machine fall short? Were the differences significant? Evans held up two hand-written sheets detailing the exceptions Vactor took to the specifications. However, he noted the main differences were safety issues for the operator. There was a motion by Pittman, second by Warren, to approve the bid from Vaccon, for \$229,800. All in favor, motion carried.

Moore recognized Drew Van Winkle of the auditing firm of Lundy Allard LLC. Van Winkle presented the Commission with audit reports for fiscal year 2005 for the Water Department and the Sewer Department. He noted that water revenue was up significantly, due to water rate increase effective 1-1-05. He also noted that “contributed capital” was up significantly over the proceeding year. Van Winkle said contributed capital was the value placed on infrastructure built by private developers and handed over to the City for operation and maintenance.

In the management letter, Van Winkle noted that, like last year, there was a perceived problem with “segregation of duties” in the business office. From time to time, Joyce Johnson, Utilities Controller, was still handling cash when shorthanded. Joyce said that hers was a small office, and, during lunch hour, she sometimes had to cover the drive through in order to maintain service to the public.

Moore recognized David Todd of CEI Engineering, Inc. Todd represented the developer of Our Farm, a non-profit ministry to troubled teens. Todd said that the owners had several acres in Benton County on Hwy 94 East where the owner wished to build a compound of a few buildings. The project required an extension of the existing main a few hundred feet. There was a motion by Pittman, second by Warren, to approve the mainline extension, subject to approval by the City Council. All in favor, motion carried.

Moore recognized Joyce Johnson again. Johnson presented the Commission with financial reports for August 2005. Johnson pointed to the large increase in water consumption over the same period last year. Conversely, sewer sales were off slightly, she said.

Moore asked how sewer sales could be off when the reports showed an increase of over 1400 customers from the proceeding year. Johnson said that meters were read on slightly different schedules from month to month, and that August 2004 took 33 days to read, versus 31 days for August 2005.

Pittman asked about the big increase in “labor sales” in the water department. Johnson said that she did not know the reason, but would find out and let him know.

Tom McAlister, Rogers Water Utilities Manager, said that a public meeting was held earlier in the day to fulfill the requirements of the State Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). He said that representatives from Black and Veatch, the Utilities’ consulting engineers, gave a brief Power Point slide show depicting the status of the proposed wastewater treatment plant expansion. He said that a public hearing would have to be held in order to satisfy RLF regulations. He said that he had set a tentative date of November 21, 2005, for the public hearing.

Continuing, he said that a question was raised during the public meeting that he could not answer: “How will this project affect my sewer rates?” McAlister said that the questions would need to be answered before the any monies were loaned from the RLF. To that end, McAlister said that he had a proposal from Tom Gould of HDR, Inc., to perform a sewer rate study for the sewer department, at a cost of approximately \$42,000. McAlister opined that Gould had done very good work for the Utilities in the past on the recent water rate increase and the connection fees study of early 2005. He asked for permission to enter into a contract with Gould for a comprehensive sewer rate study. There was a motion by Pittman, second by Warren, to grant the request. All in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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