

Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission

November 27, 2001

Minutes

The Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 10:30 AM, Tuesday, November 27, 2001, in the Rogers Water Utilities Training Center. Present were Commissioners Donnie Moore, Dick McLelland, Lon Pepple, and Jerry Pittman. Long-time Commissioner Beck Scott passed away on Thursday, November 22, 2001. Rogers Water Utilities staff in attendance were Tom McAlister, Mike Lawrence, Mark Johnson, Joyce Johnson, Earl Rausch, Don Roberts, and Steve Ponder. Others in the audience were E. J. Miller, Kevin Thomas, George Swanson, and Lori Harrison-Stone. Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM.

Moore recognized Mark Johnson, P. E., Utilities Engineer. Johnson presented the Commission with a spreadsheet detailing the status of the many projects in which the Commission had a pecuniary interest. Johnson reported progress on the 1998 Sewer Bond Project called VI-A (the southwest sewer project). Most of the irate property owners had been satisfied by efforts of the new Contractor, McClelland & Sons. Johnson said that the sewer project known as Phase VIII (the southeast Rogers sewer) was designed and he hoped to bring bids to the Commission by the December meeting. Johnson presented a aerial photograph showing the route of the proposed sewer on S. First Street and Old Wire Road, the current City Limits, and the area tributary to the proposed sewer (over 1300 acres, some of which was in the county).

Continuing, Johnson reported that the Phase III water project (Highway 540 and Pleasant Grove) would be bid next month. Johnson said that the water project on Pleasant Ridge was continuing ahead of schedule. Johnson said that the water extensions in Osage Reservation Addition were progressing slowly and anticipated the contractor (Golden Son) would not finish the project on time. He said that the utilities adjustment design required by the widening of New Hope Road were waiting for a final design from the state Highway Department.

Continuing, Johnson informed the Commission that Willis Parks Construction, the contractor for Phase II water project (Northwest Rogers) had left town and would not be back to complete the project. The last part of the project was a proposed hydraulic loop to be completed on Centre Court Road, across Highway 540, west to a new main in

Horse barn Road. A sleeve had been buried across the Highway 540 about twenty years ago to facilitate expansion to the west across the highway. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Johnson said, the last 1000 feet needed to be jacked and bored across private property at the end of the cul de sac of Centre Court. Parks would not even give the Utilities a price to do the extra work. Johnson said that McClelland and Sons had given a price of \$101,640. Johnson opined that the high price was probably justified due to the difficulty of the job, but he said that the connection needed to be made in any case. Pittman asked if Parks had been paid for any of the work, to which Johnson replied in the negative. There was a motion by Pittman, second by McLelland, to waive the requirements of competitive bids and award the job to McClelland and Sons, for \$101,640. All in favor, motion carried.

On another matter, Johnson told the commission about a sewer main that crossed the Blossomway drainage near S. 13th St. He said he had received numerous complaints from the Rogers street department about the sewer main, since it was too shallow to allow adequate maintenance of the ditch. Johnson said that the sewer could be rerouted to another trunk sewer, and lowered three to four feet, which should be adequate for the street department and keep the sewer main out of harm's way. He estimated the job at about \$40,000. Johnson asked for permission to design the project and advertise for bids. There was a motion by Pittman, second by McLelland, to grant Johnson's request. All in favor, motion carried.

Chairman Moore took a moment and announced commissioner Beck Scott's passing, acknowledging his excellent service to the community through his work on the Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission. Moore requested that the opening on the Commission be advertised, so that those interested in the position might be considered by the remaining Commission. McLelland commented that some of the Commissioners might have some good candidates in mind. McAlister said that he would put an ad in the newspaper.

Moore recognized Mr. George Swanson, 15238 Tulsa Drive. Swanson gave a brief history of a problem with a leak at his home, and the high water bills that ensued. He said that he used more water in three months than he normally used in two years. Additionally, he had a plumber out to his house several times. A leak was eventually discovered on his household service line, and he had the plumber replace the entire line. Specifically, Swanson said that he should have been told about his leak earlier, so that he could have dealt with the problem earlier, saving his money and the Commission's water. Pepple asked Mr. Swanson what he thought was the fair thing to do? Swanson said that he thought the Commission should "share the pain equally" with him. Pepple commented that it sounded like Swanson's plumber might be incompetent, since he did not find the leak on his first try. McLelland asked Swanson if he had any homeowner warranty, since Swanson had moved into the home last June? Swanson said there was no warranty. Moore asked if there were any motions from the Commission. McLelland said that this was a staff matter that did not concern the Commission. Pittman said that he had to agree with McLelland, that the Commission could not be held liable for faulty plumbing. The Commission took no action on Mr. Swanson's request.

Moore recognized Joyce Johnson, Utilities Controller. Johnson presented the Commission with financial statements for the water and sewer departments. She noted that the income budget was tracking the actual experience, but trailing Fiscal Year 2001's year-to-date budget. She surmised that part of the problem was the fact that interest on investments was much lower than projected last March when the budget was finalized. McLelland said that the Utilities should rebudget to allow for the decline in interest income. Johnson said that she would. McAlister noted the trend in the industrial sector for much smaller demands.

Johnson brought up the issue of Christmas bonuses for RWU employees. She said that the utilities had followed suit with the rest of the City and awarded \$125 bonuses to all full-time employees had been with the Utilities for an entire year. She said that the Christmas bonus would cost the Commission \$6973. McLelland asked if this was a matter that needed the attention of the Commission? McAlister said that it was a budgeted item, but that it was traditional to bring the matter to the Commission. Pittman commented that, if the financial position of the Utilities continued to decline, the employees should be counseled not to expect the Christmas bonus at the same level next year.

Moore shared with the other Commissioners that were not able to attend the meeting at Beaver Water District last month, the District is planning an expansion estimated at \$82 million. He said that the BWD Board of Directors reminded him of Rogers' need to build additional storage. One Commissioner commented that he thought the matter had been settled once before. McAlister said that the Commission had directed the staff to build an additional ground storage tank and pump station, but Beaver Water District had objected strenuously. BWD claimed that they could not fill Bentonville's ground storage and the proposed Rogers tank at the same time. McAlister reminded the Commission that his number one priority for the water system was to separate from Bentonville by purchasing that city's interest in the existing transmission mains. McAlister said that he and the engineers had discussed building ground storage and additional elevated storage, but that any thing Rogers did would indirectly benefit the City of Bentonville. McLelland asked what was the economic advantage of ground storage over elevated storage? McAlister said it was much less expensive on a per gallon basis to build ground storage. Johnson said that his group could design the tank and pump station, and if the engineers could bid the job by next March, then the storage and pump station could be online by the end of next year. Moore said that it was the Commission's responsibility to take care of the citizens of Rogers by protecting their water supply, and that the Commission could not wait for Bentonville to decide to build its own transmission main. There was a motion by Pittman, second by McLelland, to direct the staff of RWU to proceed with the design of a ground storage tank and pump station. All in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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