

Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission

December 18, 2006

Minutes

The Rogers Waterworks and Sewer Commission held its regularly scheduled meeting at 4:00 PM, Monday, December 18, 2006, in the Rogers City Council Chambers, Rogers City Hall. Commissioners Donnie Moore, Jerry Pittman, Lon Pepple, and Don Kendall were present. Donna Warren was absent. Rogers Water Utilities staff in attendance were Tom McAlister, Mark Johnson, Everett Balk, Joyce Johnson, Earl Rausch, Mike Lawrence, and William Evans. Others in the audience were Lori Harrison-Stone, Asa Hutchinson, and Richard Burleigh. Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

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

Moore recognized Mark Johnson, P. E., Utilities Engineer. Johnson presented the Commission with a report detailing the status of the several projects in which the Commission had a monetary interest. He said that the design of the 24-inch water transmission main from S. 28th St. and W. Dogwood to the Home Depot store on S. 46th St. was underway, and he hoped to advertise for bids after Christmas, and bring bids back to the Commission in January. How many landowners would be affected? Pittman asked. Johnson said about four.

Continuing, Johnson reported that the water and sewer main project in Stoney Brook Road now had Stoney Brook road open again after almost two months. He said that the 24-inch water main was being rerouted to the south along the Simmons property in order to miss a newly constructed wall that forced the construction into the I 540 right-of-way. He said that the reroute required a permit from the Corps of Engineers and an easement from Patsy Simmons. Pittman asked how much more the reroute would cost. Johnson said that Simmons had asked for, as a condition of granting the easement, that RWU stabilize the creek channel, and he did not know what the construction cost would be yet. He did say the southern route was less pipe than the old route.

Continuing, Johnson said that the design for new, two million gallon elevated tank was on hold, while he worked on the previous two projects. He said that the City of Rogers intended to extend Pauline Whittaker Parkway west from I 540 to Champions Road, and that a new waterline would have to be built along the new street. Johnson said that the widening of S. 26th St. was back on the City's project schedule, and that the water line design would have to be updated.

Finally, Johnson said that the City of Rogers had decided to improve Horsebarn Road to a two lane road with curbs and gutters and underground drainage, which might

affect the existing water and sewer lines in the area. He also said that the City wanted to extend Price Lane from S. 8th St. east to S. First St., and that a water main would be involved. Pittman asked why Horsebarn Road was only planned to be a two-lane road. Johnson opined that most of the traffic would go up the new S. 52nd St. through all the new retail/office development. Where does 52nd St. come into Horsebarn? Kendall asked. Johnson said that it curved west at Stoney Brook Road. He said he would bring a drawing showing the alignment at the next Commission meeting.

Moore recognized Everett Balk, P. E., Project Facilitation Engineer. Balk gave the Commission a short report on the activities of his section. He said that the amount of plan review work had remained steady over the past several months, and that his section was getting the first review out within ten days of receipt, as promised. Moore asked how long the oldest set of plans had been sitting in his office, for any reason. Balk said that sometimes engineers do not respond in a timely manner, or that plans are changed due to Comments from the Planning Commission, and those plans take additional time; however, he said that the oldest plan set was about eight weeks old.

Moore recognized Tom McAlister, Manager, Rogers Water Utilities. McAlister recounted his recent experience with USEPA regarding TMDL's for Osage Creek. McAlister said that, according to the Clean Water Act of 1972, all water bodies that suffered an impairment of a designated use were listed by primacy agencies (ADEQ, EPA, for example), and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) were developed in order to restore the designated use. He said that Osage Creek, below the Rogers Pollution Control Facility outfall, had been listed in 2002 as impaired due to phosphorus. Since then, the cities of Rogers and Springdale had agreed to a 1mg/L total phosphorus discharge limit, Rogers had received a discharge permit for 1mg/L for TP, Springdale had built a \$35 million expansion, and Rogers' consulting engineers were busy finalizing the design of a \$20 million wastewater treatment plant expansion, based on the 1mg/L TP.

Continuing, McAlister said that he had found out that USEPA had hired a contractor to perform a TMDL study for the listed streams in Northwest Arkansas. Concerned, McAlister said that Springdale, Rogers, ADEQ, and EPA had met in Springdale along with Congressman John Boozman regarding the proposed TMDL. He said that EPA informed all those at the meeting that they intended to issue a draft TMDL before the end of the year. McAlister said that Rogers and Springdale both pleaded with EPA to wait and use more recent water quality data that would put the cities in a better light. EPA Region VI would not relent, until McAlister was notified by John Boozman two weeks ago that EPA had agreed not to issue the draft TMDL for up to two years, if the cities would agree to perform a watershed management plan. McAlister said that this was very good news indeed, since the draft TMDL would likely trigger lawsuits from the cities, Oklahoma, and environmental groups. He gave the credit to Arkansas congressional representatives Boozman, Pryor, and Lincoln.

There were several questions about the watershed management plan and its costs. McAlister said that the two cities (Rogers and Springdale) would likely get together with the state or a consultant and come up with a scope of work to be approved by ADEQ and

the EPA. He said that he wasn't sure of the cost, but he knew it had to be less than the \$14 million for a membrane filter plant to achieve a 0.2 or 0.3 mg/L TP. What were we actually gaining? Pepple asked. McAlister said that Rogers Water Utilities had two years it did not have before, in order to get a handle on all the sources of phosphorus. Moore said that Boozman deserved the credit, and that the delay of the draft TMDL was an early Christmas present.

Moore recognized Richard Burleigh, representing the developer of the Yacht Club in Benton County. Burleigh said that the developer agreed to pay all expenses involved in the extension of a water main to serve about 40 additional mobile homes. He said he was told to come to the Commission to get its permission. There was a motion by Pittman, second by Pepple, to approve up to 40 5/8ths-inch meters, subject to approval by the Rogers Council. All in favor, motion carried.

Moore recognized Joyce Johnson, CPA, Utilities Controller. Johnson presented the Commission with financial reports for October and November. She noted that the unaccounted for water rate was running along at 11% for the year and the month. She said that demand was down for the same period last year. Pittman asked about the bad debt expense. Why was it twice as high as the budgeted amount?

Johnson explained that, from time to time, she had to clean out old receivables, and that some of the bad debts were "construction related", not necessarily dead beats leaving with unpaid water bills. Johnson said that the Utilities used a collection agency, which was not very effective. She told of a customer who left Rogers in 1994 with a balance, and she recently came back to get water service, and the customer was forced to pay the old balance before water service was established. Taken as a percentage of total revenue, the amount of bad debts were very low, she said.

On another matter, Johnson said that she felt it necessary to amend the budget due to changes in the fiscal condition of the Water and Sewer Departments. She said that the recent \$15.5 million dollar bond issue affected several accounts in the water department. She also noted that revenue from hookup fees was much less than expected. Johnson said she would bring an amended budget to the Commission for their review at the next Commission meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom S. McAlister, Acting Secretary
Rogers Water Utilities

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