

**WATER COMMITTEE**  
**AUGUST 24, 2016**  
**MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pete Frisina, Chairman  
James K “Chip” Conner, Vice Chairman  
Commissioner Charles Oddo  
Steve Rapson  
Lee Pope  
Jimmy Preau

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS:** Dennis Davenport  
Michael Diaz

**GUESTS:** Stephen Hogan  
Tony Parrott  
Dean Breest

**STAFF PRESENT:** Russell Ray  
Chief Harold Myers

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pete Frisina at 8:00 A.M.

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON AUGUST 10, 2016.**

Vice Chairman Conner made the motion and Jimmy Preau seconded, to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2016 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**II. UPDATE ON WATER TREATMENT PLANTS.**

Michael Diaz reported Lakeshore has been doing a great job getting filters one through four completed. They have been trying to get the main air header which is part of the critical backwash air scour system for the filters. They are still targeting sometime beginning of September to get those filters operational. The chlorine dioxide system is coming along and the PAC system was delivered yesterday. He commented that this next month coming up, a lot of items are going to start coming together. They are trying to keep the project on schedule.

Mr. Diaz updated the committee on the Zero to Waste project. He said as Filter Magic mobilizes to try to get filters one through four operational to start getting that system installed, as well as integrated with the new filter backwash system we will start seeing increased savings in water and operational costs.

**Mr. Diaz said it is exciting to see these results. They are on the GAWP Fall Conference schedule to talk about the filter optimization that they have been going through at this plant.**

**Russell Ray showed photos of the Chemical System and Actuator Improvements Project. This was the liquid lime system, the actuator system at the Lake Horton Pump Station, and the permanganate building. He went on to say that one hundred percent of the payments have been processed; with the final payment being processed at this time. The project came in at cost, approximately 1.9 million dollars. The equipment is working; a few adjustments are being made.**

**Mr. Ray went on to talk about the Lakeshore Project. It continues to move forward, and we have equipment arriving; the PAC system arrived yesterday. We are processing payment number 12 on this project. He then showed photos of the filters; the air scour line on the back wall, and the patching that was needed.**

**Mr. Diaz stated they are contemplating pushing hard to get the filters operational in September, and then getting the chlorine dioxide and the PAC system on line could take an additional month or so. Mr. Pope commented that rain and weather has impacted them, as well as some Water System items have impacted their scheduling.**

### **III. DISCUSSION OF MINIMUM AGE FOR SOLO PADDLING.**

**Attorney Davenport explained there are four different code sections that deal with this issue. Each code section is tied to a specific reservoir. The language is the same, but Chapter 18 is divided up under Articles that are specific to the individual reservoirs. To the extent there are some differences, but on this issue the language is the same across the board. Currently the ordinance says that if you are under 14 years old, you must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. If you are under 12 years old you can't pilot one of these vessels. He said we are talking about what are known as Class A vessels which are under 16 feet in length. For the most part that takes care of pretty much everything you see out there. The request is that we allow children between 12 and 15 to paddle solo. If you look at our language when it says if you are under 14 you must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian; he asked what does accompanied by means. Does it mean being there with your parent, does it mean having the parent in the vessel with you.**

**Mr. Pope said he thinks it is physically in the vessel. Mr. Davenport said that is one opinion. Mr. Rapson said the other opinion is they could be from the shoreline. Mr. Davenport said the problem with our current language is it is using the phrase "accompanied by" but does not define what that means. The state law uses that same phrase and it defines what accompanied by means; it says you must be in the vessel with the minor. Whenever state law says accompanied by it means the parent or legal guardian must be in the vessel with the minor. He said we don't define that so it makes it very difficult to enforce. What does accompanied by mean?**

**Mr. Davenport went on to say that state law says if you are going to pilot a vessel, operate a vessel, and you are between 12 and 15, you can do it under one of two circumstances. Number one, you are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, which they are in the vessel with you; or, number two, you take a course sanctioned by the department that shows that you are competent to operate that vessel. Unless you do one of those two things you can't pilot that vessel. State law minimum standard is with a parent or guardian in the vessel, or take a boating course. Those are the two issues. With that being the threshold, he said we do not have the authority to say we can do something less restrictive than the state.**

**Mr. Davenport recommended that if we are looking at allowing persons 12 to 15 years old to operate or to paddle solo, we can do so, but we need to bring in the state amendments which were put on board back in late 2013; in order to mirror those requirements. It would allow the 12 to 15 years old to paddle solo on these Class A vessels. But, it means they would have to take a sanctioned boating course.**

**Mr. Davenport stated there was a second request, which was for an exemption to be created for children younger than 12 participating in the ROW America Rowing Program as long as those children are under the direct supervision of a certified instructor. He said he sees a problem with allowing children under 12 to paddle; the memo does not say paddle, it just says to participate. You can participate all you want to; but if you talk about paddling solo, that is not going to happen. Even if you are under direct supervision, the law used to read direct supervision, and that was taken out for the 12 to 15 years old. Having direct supervision does not allow someone under 12 years old, under state law to paddle solo; assuming that is what this means to participate. If to participate means to take a course with ROW America that does not involve paddling solo, that is fine. But, the exemption can't be created to allow them to paddle solo under 12 years old, in his opinion.**

**Mr. Davenport recommended that we say to the Board of Commissioners you need four sections of your ordinance amended to track state law so that those persons between 12 and 15, if they choose to paddle solo would have to get certification for that activity. If they don't want to get certification, they must have a parent or legal guardian in the vessel with them while they are on the lake.**

**Chief Harold Myers said he looked at this again. State and county ordinance are a little bit different. Our county ordinance for people under 12 is more strict than the state for non-motorized. The state says they can't operate any vessel over 16 foot in length regardless if it is motorized or not. People under 12, according to the state, can operate a vessel under 16 foot as long as it is not motorized. This is according to DNR, our ordinance says anybody under 12 can't operate anything regardless of whether it is motorized or not. Mr. Davenport said this is DNR's interpretation of state law. Right now, we conflict with state law because we allow; right now it says if you are 14 you can operate and paddle solo. We are not consistent with state law because we allow 14 year olds to paddle solo without certification. State law would not allow a 14 year old to paddle solo without certification.**

Further discussion pertained to 12 year olds, and above 12 years old.

Steve Rapson made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to modify the four sections of the ordinance to mirror State law for the question of the 12 to 15 year olds as proposed. Lee Pope seconded for discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Steve Rapson made a second motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that we adhere to the County Attorney's opinion that under State law he sees no exemption for there to be anybody paddling solo 12 years and under. Commission Chairman Oddo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION OF STARR'S MILL PROPOSAL.**

Mr. Pope said he went back to look at the church after we were there the other day. He said he thinks they did an excellent job; and he thinks that is something the Water Committee should discuss or entertain considering something similar at the Starr's Mill location. He said he does not think that we want to close the door on the wonderful opportunity that we have to work together. What they did there was amazing, even on how they went back and did the whole thing with the shingles and stuff to show that they do take care in historical preservation of that facility. He said he would like to see us sit down and discuss in more detail about what we would all like to see moving forward. He said that is just from his opinion, he does not know what anybody else thinks. He thinks the Starr's Mill facility is very well known; it is talked about all over the state and outside the state. He said this is an opportunity to improve that place. He said he has a dream and a vision to build some sort of Heritage Environmental Center down there; similar to what Gwinnett did; nowhere near that scale. That will increase foot traffic there, because he thinks we have to educate people on our wetlands and our watersheds and how important they are to our future. Certainly, that location is a great place for us to partner with Southern Conservation Trust, WASA, and all of us to partner together. Educate the public and the children that are coming up. Anything done there will only enhance that location. He said he thinks what was done was amazing and we should sit down and talk more in detail.

Mr. Breest said after the meeting last month he looked up some figures. Someone had asked about the tourist stuff. The state of Georgia is one of 29 states in the US where tourism is either one, two, or the third largest industry. In Georgia agriculture is one, tourism is number two. It generates almost 60 billion dollars in direct impact, 3 billion dollars in local and state taxes and employs 430,000 Georgians. That is a very photographed site; has huge potential for tourists who are interested in history and natural resources; to come in. It is at the door step of our southern entrance to our county. The numbers are huge. He thinks that they would be delighted to work with any groups to try to enhance that; with the understanding that their goal is just to use it as a display center for the arts.

**Mr. Pope commented that he commended him on the vision and the plan; as the funds were accumulated, you moved to the next step. It was not like, we have everything done by tomorrow; they slowly got the funds, then got the volunteers and got the work done. That is very commendable. He does not know what kind of funding we will need, but it will take some time to do that. Obviously, Mr. Breest has the patience and the volunteers to get it done.**

**Mr. Breest said he talked to a number of different groups; a number of different individuals in the county since we met. A lot of people told him they would step forward and help with the restoration and improvement of that 17 acres. The county originally invested about \$400,000.00 in the 17 acres and the mill. Today the potential worth of that as a tourist site, as an art center could be worth tens of millions to the county. The big thing is, he thinks a lot of people; they had hundreds that helped out at the church; he said he thinks they would get thousands that would help out with Starr's Mill. He said he thinks it is that important to a lot of people.**

**Mr. Rapson asked Chairman Frisina if there is anything from an overlay district that we need to be cognizant of. Chairman Frisina said overlay and zoning has no effect on Starr's Mill, county owned property whatsoever. Mr. Breest said research turned up after that last meeting was a comment about it floods. Yes, it floods occasionally. The reason it floods is on 85 South, in 1950, the road was raised over 20 feet and the bridge was put in place. The federal government says a bridge has a useful life span of 50 years; that bridge is now approaching 70 years. There are 600,000 bridges in the United States; the federal government says a third of them are obsolete. By federal definition, that bridge, even though structurally it may be sound and will work for a long time; it could be earmarked for some change, especially with the development that is going on down there. If a new bridge was put in, instead of the opening that is there now that restricts the amount of water that flows through it, make it 3 or 4 times larger and not only would it never flood, upstream from there would not back up either.**

**Mr. Rapson commented that fixing one problem creates a downstream problem. You have to be cognizant of what you are doing, we could flood someone else. He said he has no problem evaluating what needs to be done. Southern Conservation Trust has done some high level master planning; talking about the environmental site, there has been a lot of talk in regards to; now The Ridge is open. If you look at a map of the entire area, you have The Ridge, The Ridge flows into Southern Conservation Trust, flows into a WASA site, then flows into a Fayette County site. That entire creek; one of the proposals is to open that up for kayakers to kayak from The Ridge all the way down to Starr's Mill. There are a lot of issues associated with that, he thinks Southern Conservation Trust has to talk to almost 54 different parcel owners to be able to make that happen. There have also been connectivity discussions with the school system in connecting the Starr's Mill complex with Starr's Mill itself so that the students could take a path system to get down there to do environmental type things as well. There are a lot of discussions going on behind**

the scenes. He said he thinks we have two or three wetland parcels for some type of board walk that was envisioned way back when. As far as he is concerned all those players can come to the table and see whether we could maybe make something happen down there. In addition to that we need to bring in the Historical Society who is concerned about the structure of the building and what goes in the building. We need to talk to the local artists as well. Some of the things he expressed to Mr. Breest were the fact that it does flood means that is not a building that you can regulate the humidity in because there is no HVAC system. There is no electricity in the building, so you have to be cognizant of that as well. The artists have to be cognizant of that. He said he thinks we can explore all those options. He is not necessarily opposed to it, but what he does not want to do is exclude a group from being at the table to either express their support or their concerns, see if we can evaluate all that. If the Committee is interested in doing that, he thinks we charge Mr. Pope with working with all the different players, WASA, Mr. Breest, and the Historical Society, with Southern Conservation Trust, whoever wants to be involved. Maybe develop some type of “this is what we think the master plan will be”; are you all interested in doing the master plan. At that point go to the Board of Commissioners and get the sanction of the Board. Commissioner Oddo commented he thinks it is worthwhile pursuing.

Tony Parrott commented the Historical Society had a Board meeting on Sunday. The Historical Society would like for this to remain a passive recreation site; any additional visions or nightmares down there would be way too much for the site itself. Seventeen acres is not seventeen acres of dry land; you have a whole lot less than seventeen acres. If you want to go in there and cut everything down and plant something else, do you really want to change a site that is what it is? He said he knows the Historical Society would enjoy being on whatever committee for this freight train that is running down, but the vote from the Historical Society was for it to remain passive.

Mr. Pope asked about the Historical Society’s thoughts about the Hopeful Baptist Church, were they involved in that at all. Mr. Parrott replied no. Mr. Rapson said in his mind there is no harm in evaluating all that and taking a look at it. It does not mean we have to take an action on it. We need to evaluate any type of site that we have. It may very well stay where it is at today, it may very well morph into something different, it may very well involve the Starr’s Mill building itself, it may involve another three or four acres that we want to do an Environmental Facility on. What he does know, is if we don’t look at it and we don’t master plan, then it won’t happen. If nothing else, let’s says we do nothing with Starr’s Mill but we do very similar improvements that they have at Primitive Baptist for the parking. Just so when you pull into it, it looks more like a state park, it has nice bollards, it has nice chains, it has a parking area that is decent. It can be impervious; there are lots of improvements that he thinks we can do for the facility that would enhance it. People are using it whether we do anything with it or not, there are folks down there almost every weekend taking wedding pictures and prom pictures. There are folks

that use the facility and right now, the egress getting in and out of there is perhaps not the best.

Vice Chairman Conner said he hates to see the building itself cut up for air conditioning and electrical, all that kind of stuff. He said he does not want to see that. Mr. Rapson said that was one of his biggest concerns. Primitive Baptist Church does not have any of that either.

Mr. Breest said the proposal from the Fayette Photographic Society is no changes to the building itself; they would not put any electrical in it; they would not put any air conditioning in it. They would not do a lot of things. It would be used as is, as a historical building. Photographs can be hung up on easels, displayed on easels; they can be put in there and removed on a regular basis. In the movie Sweet Home Alabama there were many things that were done to beautify that beauty in the opinion of many people, but after that movie was over the administration at that time demanded that all that be ripped out. They don't see from their point of view what you are saying.

Mr. Pope said that is why he suggested a panel, to make sure we put a stop where we want to. Vice Chairman Conner said he would like to see a separate building for environmental. Mr. Rapson said it would have to be; you could not do anything close to; he has seen pictures of the water being almost four foot over where the dam is built right now. It would have to be up towards high ground, where the filter house and all that are located.

Commissioner Oddo commented the one thing intriguing about this is it not often that private people step up to do something. Many times, where the county might want to do something we don't have the funds to do it. Investigating what we can do is definitely worthwhile. Mr. Rapson said let's get the Historical Society who have very strong views in that building in the room with us. The last thing you want to do is feel like you, the Board is headed in a direction, and we are not being totally inclusive of all folks, whether they are in support or not supportive. They need a seat at the table so those views can be discussed and vetted. He said what he thinks we are saying is Mr. Pope can take this on and then when they think they have something they want to present, they can bring it back to the Water Committee. Let's make sure we are inclusive and obviously get someone from the Historical Society on there.

Steve Rapson made a motion to recommend to the Board of Commissioners for the Water System Director to evaluate a master plan for the Starr's Mill site, work with all parties discussed and bring something back to the Water Committee at some future date, and to keep the Water Committee apprised as they go through the process. Ultimately this would require a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration and approval. Commission Chairman Oddo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT.**

**Michael Diaz stated he got a message from Keisha Thorpe from Peachtree City WASA; she was present when the Gold Awards were given to Fayette County Water System at the Board of Commissioners meeting about a month ago. He said the group with Georgia Association of Water Professionals is heavily involved with the Georgia Model Water Tower competition. They are seeking volunteers because in late October the first time it is coming to Fayette County. The Georgia Model Water Tower competition introduces middle school students to the water profession. Students learn about water resource engineering, infrastructure, water treatment and water conservation in the hopes that some will decide to become future water professionals. This year it will go to Cobb, Griffin, Henry, and Fulton; on October 21 at the J C Booth Middle School it will be held here in Fayette County for the first time. If there is anybody interested in volunteering and helping the contact is Amy Warnock, [amy.warnock@cobbcounty.org](mailto:amy.warnock@cobbcounty.org), phone number 770-419-6374.**

**Mr. Diaz went on to say in September there will be an opportunity for people that are going to be volunteering, whether they are going to be judging or assisting, setting up and everything else. Mr. Pope commented that Joseph Spann is active in that, but we are looking for somebody outside the Water System to maybe volunteer. It is actually a pretty neat contest; he said he is glad they involved us.**

**Stephen Hogan commented that he has participated for about 4 years now. All types of people are needed, anywhere from technical judges to aesthetic looking judges, to determine what their opinion of how the towers look. He said there are even judges for their interviews. He said Mr. Spann was talking about bringing some folks from the plant and bringing some folks from WASA. He said they are talking about bringing one of the trucks for demonstration purposes. The main purpose is the have interaction with people in the industry all the way from government officials to the person that turns the wrench. The competition itself is the vehicle to have that interaction with people of the industry. You volunteer whatever amount of time or if you just want to show up to see it for the first time, it will be interesting to see how smart these kids are. They are given the minimum parameters; he said he encourages everyone if you don't have time to volunteer, please stop by and say hello and take a look at the process.**

**Mr. Diaz said is a great opportunity to reach out to this group of middle school students. Right now, in the industry we are seeing some short comings with regards to people filling in any type position, whether it is operators or technicians. Mr. Pope said this is another way for us to introduce our job opportunities in the school system. He said when he was in school he had no idea this type of job opportunity existed. We are working with the school board now to do some internships; we need to let the school system and the children know that these jobs are out there and available. By having this competition it gets the attention focused on our organization; so we can let people know what is available out there. A lot of people don't even realize the many job opportunities that are available. He said what Mr.**

**Diaz is alluding to is we have a generation beginning to retire, approaching ages of sometimes 70 plus in age and we don't have anybody to fill their shoes. This is a way to introduce those jobs to those kids.**

**Mr. Hogan added that last year for their internship they had a young gentleman from Starr's Mill High School do a school work program. He was an intern with the Water and Sewerage Authority. He is now entering Mississippi State in civil engineering with focus on water in the environment. Whether we changed his mind or encouraged his decision, he does not know, but the gentleman felt like this was confirmation this is where he needed to go. He is looking forward to hearing from him down the road. Mr. Rapson suggested reaching out to Virginia Gibbs, with her work with Clayton State and her work with interns, she would want to be a part of that.**

**There being no further business, Chairman Pete Frisina adjourned the meeting at 8:45 A.M.**

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**Peter A. Frisina**

**The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 14th day of September, 2016.**

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**Lisa Speegle**