



Water Committee Minutes
February 14, 2024
8:30 A.M.

Committee Members Present: Bryan Keller, Chair
Vanessa Tigert, Vice-Chair
Steve Rapson, County Administrator
Jeff Hill, Fire Chief
Bill Holland, Citizen Representative
Jim Poff, Citizen Representative
William Yarde, Citizen Representative

Committee Non-Voting Members: Dennis Davenport, County Attorney
Michael Diaz, Arcadis
Aaron Capelouto, Arcadis

Staff Present: James Munster, Field Operations Director
Capri Reeves, Customer Support Manager
Carrie Gibby, Finance Operations Manager
Susan Lee, Water Production & Operations Manager
Russell Ray, Facilities & Projects Specialist
Lacy Gray, Crosstown Plant Manager
Lindsey Choisnet, Engineering Technician

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bryan Keller at 8:30 a.m.

Acceptance of Agenda

Bryan Keller moved to amend the agenda to add the nominations of Chair and Vice-Chair. Vanessa Tigert seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1. Nomination of Chair and Vice-Chair

Jeff Hill nominated Bryan Keller as Chair of the Water Committee. Vanessa Tigert seconded the nomination. The motion passed unanimously.

Bryan Keller nominated Vanessa Tigert as Vice-Chair of the Water Committee. Steve Rapson seconded the nomination. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of the Minutes from the December 13, 2023 meeting

Jeff Hill made the motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on December 13, 2023. Vanessa Tigert seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. System Updates

Field Operations

James Munster discussed the large main break that occurred on January 26 at Morning Creek Bridge on Highway 85 North. We received our first call around 9:20 a.m. and by 10:50 a.m. the leak at the bridge was isolated. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) assessed that a lane on the southbound side had to be shut down until repairs were completed because the compacted soil under the bridge approach had washed out. Crews worked throughout the night and pumped 50 cubic feet of flowable fill into the void under the approach. Talking with GDOT, the flowable fill was supposed to be a permanent fix but it was much slower in setting than expected, estimated to take 28 days, and would have a strength of only 125 pounds per square inch (psi).

Mr. Rapson explained that GDOT's original position was to replace everything on the bridge at an estimated cost of one million dollars. After much discussion, we chose the option that would be a fraction of that cost and refilled the void with a 3000-psi grout. The total cost of the repair should be available by our next Water Committee meeting. We believe the break was caused by settling that had occurred since 2008 when the bridge was raised.

Multiple Fayette County departments assisted throughout the repair process, and we are deeply thankful for their coordination and cooperation.

Business Operations

Carrie Gibby touched on some of the benefits of our Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) solution. Customers and Water System staff can monitor accounts, view usage, and set alerts for different criteria through the AMI dashboard available online at www.eyeonwater.com. We are analyzing how to best utilize this AMI data by implementing processes and procedures into the current positions and structure of the organization and ultimately elevate our level of customer service.

Capri Reeves announced the full deployment of our AMI project. We're starting to receive feedback from those customers who were part of the initial deployment and are now receiving their first bills with the AMI meters. A lot of the feedback is regarding the bill amounts. The AMI technology and online dashboard help explain the bill amounts by allowing customers to see their actual usage with hourly updates.

Mr. Rapson added that AMI is one of the reasons why we as a utility do not have to implement a rate increase because, in essence, we're now capturing true usage. It's important to be clear that the additional revenue will help us fund future capital improvement projects and the AMI project itself. This information is not anything new but it's good to be reminded of where and why we started.

Water Plant Operations

Susan Lee advised that high-service pump #2 at Crosstown Water Treatment Plant has been repaired and reinstalled. There are plans for replacing the control valve on Crosstown's pump #1 within the next few months.

The Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) project is continuing. We're hoping that will be completed by the end of the fiscal year in June.

Russell Ray explained our participation in the Risk Management Program, which is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule that implements Section 112 (r) of the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments to improve chemical accident prevention at facilities. This rule requires facilities that use extremely hazardous substances to develop a Risk Management Plan (RMP), which helps the community to understand what we have on-site and helps our staff to properly maintain these chemicals. Chlorine gas, a hazardous chemical, is kept at our water treatment plants. Fayette County's RMP is updated with revised dates and organizational changes routinely, usually during the inspection period. Some updates, like changes in emergency contacts, must be performed online at the EPA's website whenever a change occurs. Over 55 hours were spent preparing for the Crosstown inspection. The EPA performs inspections every three years and we're consistently improving our processes.

Jim Poff asked if there is a plan to move away from Chlorine gas to an inherently safer technology for the disinfection of drinking water, such as Sodium Hypochlorite. Many utilities have already done this. Mr. Rapson answered that could be an option through the Capital Improvement Program.

Ms. Tigert stressed that we have to adhere to a lot of environmental and state regulations so making this Committee aware of those efforts is a priority.

Arcadis

Aaron Capelouto provided updates for ongoing Arcadis projects. Regarding AMI, our installed meter count was nearly 2000 as of yesterday. The installation of our larger meters remains our priority; at last check, 30 were installed with several more scheduled through the rest of the month.

Arcadis is also making efforts to verify and validate the Badger Meter and Pedal Valves pay requests. Several conditions must be met before they submit payment, such as proper installation and ensuring the meters are reading for two consecutive days. We're also looking at zero consumption meters and verifying with customer service that a zero reading is accurate. Arcadis is working closely with the Water System and Badger Meter to ensure we are being invoiced accurately.

Mr. Keller asked if there were any updates on the AMI meter-box lid situation that was discussed in our last meeting. Ms. Tigert advised that we're verifying the percentage of expected lid replacements. We have ordered enough lids to get us through this fiscal year and, based on our analysis, will accommodate lid replacements in our next budget cycle. It will be an impact.

Mr. Rapson added that, although the percentage of replacements is higher than anticipated, everything Mr. Capelouto discussed is about quality control and we appreciate that. Also, the Board of Commissioners approved at the February 8 meeting a three-year contract renewal for Arcadis to not only follow through on the AMI project but also be the Water System's Engineer of Record for the next three years.

Mr. Poff asked if Pedal Valves is doing the lead service line inventory while installing the new meters. As a refresher, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Lead Service Line Replacement Program requires that we provide the EPA with an inventory of all individual lead service lines in our service area by October 2024. Mr. Capelouto answered that we have not encountered any lead service lines thus far. Part of Pedal Valves' installation process is to report on the materials.

4. Director's Report

Ms. Tigert reported that the City of Fayetteville's entire water system will be out of service for at least one week to run routine maintenance. Because of this, FCWS will be providing the entire City of Fayetteville their water during the week of February 12. We usually sell them roughly 60% of their usage but this week will be 100%.

5. Public Comment

Emmanuel Haldopoulos, Treasurer of the Lake Kedron Community Homeowners Association (HOA), expressed discontent regarding the doubling of irrigation rates effective July 1, 2022. As a comparison with other utilities, Georgia Power has increased its rates four times over the past 4 years, with the highest being a 15% increase in January 2022. Had the HOA been aware of the irrigation fee increase, their strategic plan regarding green space and additional irrigation meters would have changed. The HOA has eight irrigation meters under two accounts that go unused six months out of the year. With the increased base rate for irrigation meters, that's almost \$1800 the HOA is being charged during those months of no water consumption.

Ms. Reeves explained that there is an option to terminate irrigation accounts on a seasonal basis. Customers need to request both termination and reactivation of their irrigation accounts, but there is no additional cost for these services.

Mr. Rapson added that Fayette County is part of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (District). Under the District's Water Resource Management Plan, we are required to issue increased conservation pricing equal to or greater than 200% of the first-tier rate for single-family residential customers.

Brochures advising of the rate increase were sent to all accounts with designated irrigation meters in early June 2022. The same information was also posted on FCWS's website in the Spring of 2022 and discussed at the June 8, 2022 Water Committee meeting and May 13, 2022 Board of Commissioners meeting, both of which are open to the public.

6. Committee's Comments
No comments.

Adjournment

Bryan Keller made a motion to adjourn the Water Committee meeting on February 14, 2024. Vanessa Tigert seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The February 14, 2024 Water Committee meeting adjourned at 9:08 a.m.



Bryan D. Keller, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 13 day of March, 2024.



Lindsey Choisset, Water Committee Clerk