

Greg Edds, Chairman
Jim Greene, Vice- Chairman
Mike Caskey
Judy Klusman
Craig Pierce

Aaron Church, County Manager
Carolyn Barger, Clerk to the Board
John W. Dees, II, County Attorney

Rowan County Board of Commissioners

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MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

JANUARY 14, 2021 – 1:00 PM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

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Participating Remotely: Greg Edds, Chairman
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman
Judy Klusman, Member
Mike Caskey, Member

Absent: Craig Pierce, Member

County Manager Aaron Church, Clerk to the Board Carolyn Barger, County Attorney Jay Dees, Assistant County Manager/CIO Randy Cress and Finance Director James Howden were also participating remotely.

Chairman Edds convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Chaplain Michael Taylor provided the Invocation.

Chairman Edds led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Greene moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to approve the agenda passed unanimously (4-0).

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Klusman moved approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously (4-0).

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

A. Proclamation for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. devoted his life to advancing equality, social justice, and opportunity for all, and challenged all Americans to participate in the never-ending work of building a more perfect union; and

WHEREAS, the 103rd Congress established the King Holiday and Service Act of 1994, inspiring millions of Americans to continue to fulfill Dr. King's vision of service to their neighbors and communities; and

WHEREAS, the King Holiday is an appropriate day to honor Dr. King, by meeting local and national needs, and by bringing our citizens together with an ongoing commitment to service throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Rowan County commemorate Dr. King's leadership and strength of character and realize the ongoing struggle to keep the dream alive for peace and dignity in our community and throughout the world.

NOW THEREFORE, the Rowan County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim January 18, 2021 as DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY in Rowan County and encourages its citizens to honor Dr. King's lifetime work on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and throughout the year for the betterment of all mankind.

2. PRESENTATION FROM HAZEN ENGINEERS

Aaron Babson and Roger Arnold with Hazen and Sawyer provided an update on the three (3) tasks approved by the Board of Commissioners in September 2020.

Mr. Arnold, the Company's lead and copper expert from Richmond, Virginia, provided an overview for the Northeast Rowan County Water System. The system served 162 active meter connections (450 people). The residents were previously served by private groundwater wells affected by industrial contamination. Mr. Arnold said the residents transitioned to receiving the public water supply in September 2018 as a consecutive system of Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU). The water was treated by SRU and provided at point of entry through a master meter on Long Ferry Road.

SRU was the Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) and responsible for operation and maintenance of the system. SRU was responsible for compliance with federal, state and local laws, rules and ordinances. SRU conducted system customer billing and bill collection and Rowan County paid SRU \$4,500 per month for the above services.

Using a power point, Mr. Arnold discussed Lead and Copper Rule Compliance (LCR). According to Mr. Arnold, significant changes were underway for LCR. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) required ten (10) homes to be sampled in the system on a regular basis. There was no lead and copper monitoring prior to the date the homes went to the public water system. Lead levels in four (4) homes exceeded the Action Level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The source of lead was limited to privately-owned plumbing materials as determined by the knowledge of distribution system materials and inspections completed on those exceeding the action level. The LCR required "optimal corrosion control treatment" in the distribution system.

Using the power point, Mr. Arnold explained how lead and copper are released into the water through corrosion of building plumbing materials. Updated graphs showing the most recent samplings from the end of 2020 were provided and showed there continued to be some localized high lead levels within the system.

Chairman Edds inquired as to whether the same houses were used in each of the five (5) tests. Mr. Arnold said generally speaking the same houses were used. Mr. Arnold elaborated further by saying there were some minor changes in the testing based on customer participation and a willingness to test with a sample kit.

The proposed scope of work for the project consisted of three (3) task orders.

Task order #1 was for the Chemical Booster Pump Station - Design, bidding and construction of a chemical booster pump station.

Task order #2 was for Corrosion Control Testing to be done with Virginia Tech.

Task order #3 was for LCR Compliance Support and water quality analysis and optimization.

To further highlight the goals of the task orders, Mr. Arnold provided the following breakdown:

Task 1 Goals:

Feb. 5, 2020 - NC DEQ Letter

Make changes to provide water at the system point of entry with the following parameters:

- pH between 7.2 and 7.8
- Orthophosphate concentration between 1.0 mg/L and 3.0 mg/L

- A Chemical Booster Pump Station may be required to meet this designation.

- Project goal is to provide a design for a pump station meeting the requirements indicated by the State

Mr. Arnold provided more in-depth information regarding the chemical booster station.

Commissioner Greene inquired if an employee would have to remain at the chemical booster station fulltime or whether an SRU employee would be able to handle those duties. Mr. Arnold said there had been discussions with the project team about staffing and there were regulations pertaining to the staffing of these types of facilities. Mr. Arnold said he would check on the operator staffing requirement and get back with the Board as to the specifics.

Continuing with the power point, Mr. Arnold discussed the proposed site for the chemical booster station. Mr. Arnold showed the status of the design, which was expected to total approximately \$630,000. The design was submitted to the State and the County received public water supply authorization to construct on January 6, 2021. In early February 2021, it was anticipated to submit for the Rowan County building permit approval and advertisement. The pump station effectiveness would be decided by the results of the Virginia Tech study in Task 2.

Task 2 was for the corrosion control study at Virginia Tech. There were several ongoing steps to evaluate corrosion control that included water quality analysis, sample site assessments, investigative tap sampling and corrosion control testing.

Mr. Arnold discussed the bench-scale corrosion testing process being done at Virginia Tech.

Task 3 was the LCR compliance strategy update. There were four (4) potential compliance strategies being updated. The State's water quality designation must be met by June 12, 2021.

Actions Taken to Date included:

- Public education materials and notifications distributed to residents
- Voluntary lead and copper sampling program offered to customers
- Seven households participated
- One result exceeded the lead Action Level
- Certified point-of-use filters for lead removal provided to four customers with lead results above the Action Level
- Virtual community meetings weren't well attended
- Rowan County Under Contract to Engineer and Virginia Tech
- Virginia Tech study in progress to determine appropriate corrosion control treatment
- Booster Pump Station design nearing completion
- Distribution system water quality monitoring in progress

Rowan County was considering a contract to distribute certified filters to all residents in the distribution system.

Mr. Arnold elaborated on the Publicly Owned Utility (POU) Filter Distribution as follows:
Implementation Schedule: Delivered by February 15, 2021

- Rowan County in discussions with a firm to assist in distribution of POU Filters certified for the removal of lead to below action levels to all customers whether affected by lead solder piping or not (free of charge to the customer)
- Customers will also receive a lead and copper sampling kit requesting a sample of the water quality in each home. Goal is to identify all homes with potential lead sources in plumbing.
- Consider an incentive to the customer to promote participation in this sampling effort. The County Manager recommended a one-month water use credit not to exceed \$72 for participation in the sampling program.

The next steps were to:

- Complete the Virginia Tech Study to determine effective mitigation measures
- Complete voluntary sampling assessment
- Submit treatment change request form to DEQ
- Implement the chosen alternative to best protect the citizens of Rowan County

Mr. Babson referred to the earlier inquiry from Commissioner Greene pertaining to an employee being required to be at the chemical booster station. Mr. Babson said the responsibility ultimately fell under the ORC for the system and he understood the requirement was for a minimum daily visit from the operator.

Commissioner Greene said a lot of information had been presented during the meeting to not only the Board but to the water customers. Commissioner Greene felt the most important issue today was to encourage all 162 customers to help the County get samples of their water and to let the public know the County was trying to eliminate all lead.

- Wendy Everhart, who was participating in the meeting remotely, posted the following inquiries: “I am a homeowner in the area. Am I understanding this correctly that this is only occurring in those homes where water sits in lead material within those homes? Is the concern that water from those homes is leading to lead levels to neighboring homes who may not have lead materials?”

Mr. Arnold explained that water coming from SRU was treated and did not contain lead. Water moving through the distribution system up to private residences also did not contain lead. Mr. Arnold said the issue was localized to within individual buildings, which made it a challenge for utilities to address. Mr. Arnold said the most important factor was to determine if there was any lead for homes constructed prior to around 1986. Mr. Arnold discussed the importance of participating in the voluntary sampling program, which not only helped the County going forward but also helped the customers understand if there was lead in their plumbing and lead in their water as a result. Mr. Arnold outlined the steps residents could take to minimize their risks if their homes did have lead in the plumbing. The steps included flushing water for three (3) minutes prior to use. Mr. Arnold mentioned that many of the communications coming from Rowan County outlined the steps users can take. Mr. Arnold stated if there was lead in one (1) home, it was localized and would not affect the water quality to its adjacent neighbors.

Commissioner Greene said the public should also be aware that boiling water would not get rid of the lead. The water had to be filtered or treated.

For further clarity to Ms. Everhart, Jim Behmer of SRU stated there were backflow valves in meter boxes and no water was back-siphoned into the system and into another home.

Commissioner Greene reiterated the Board did not have all the information it needed and was taking steps to protect the people in the area. The final decision would be made once the information was received from Virginia Tech and the engineers.

- Ms. Everhart posed an additional question as follows: “Can you help me understand how the booster system will help if this is an individual home issue?”

Mr. Arnold said the LCR required utilities to treat the water in a way that minimized the potential for release of lead in homes where there may be a lead source. As shown in the presentation, the situation was best described as a shared responsibility. The plumbing was owned by each private resident; the water utility had a responsibility with the current federal regulations to find a way to treat the water in order to minimize the release of lead in any homes that could have a source of lead. Mr. Arnold said it was important to recognize there were limits to what treatments could do for the homes that did contain lead plumbing. In working with Virginia Tech, Mr. Arnold said the County hoped to find a treatment strategy that would reduce the potential for lead to enter the water.

Commissioner Klusman asked Ms. Everhart to encourage her neighbors to get the test and to work with the County on making sure their water is safe.

Chairman Edds agreed with Commissioner Klusman and said the more tests and results received, the more specific the County could be with treatment.

Chairman Edds moved to approve the contract with 120Water (who is handling distribution of the pitchers and also the testing kits), not to exceed \$38,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously (4-0).

Chairman Edds moved to authorize staff to provide a \$72 credit to water customers who participate in the lead testing program provided by 120Water. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously (4-0).

3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Klusman moved to adjourn at 1:47 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Carolyn Barger, MMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board