

# Minutes

## WATER AND SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular meeting

7 p.m. Aug. 1, 2024

Board Meeting Room of Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.



Present: Chair Jenn Sykes, Vice Chair Daniel Rawlins, Members Grace Beeler, Steed Robinson and Barry Weston, and Commissioner Robb English

Absent: Member Mo Rasheed

Staff: Civil Engineering Technician Tyler Freeman; Environmental Engineering Supervisor Bryant Green; and Utilities Director Marie Strandwitz

### 1. Call to order and welcome of guests

Chair Jenn Sykes called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. She took roll call and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

### 2. Agenda changes and approval

There were no changes to the agenda.

Motion: Vice Chair Daniel Rawlins moved to approve the agenda with no changes. Member Barry Weston seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

### 3. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on June 6, 2024.

Motion: Member Steed Robinson moved to approve the June 6, 2024, minutes with corrections. Weston seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

Correction: Change date in minutes from June 6, 2023, to June 6, 2024.

### 4. Updates

#### A. Utilities status report highlights

Environmental Engineering Supervisor Bryant Green presented the utilities status report. Discussion on presented topics included:

- The NPDES permit renewal package and wastewater nutrient load restrictions. Projections about the future of wastewater nutrient limits.
- Energy usage of the water plant and wastewater plant, which comprise 80-90% of the town's power bill.
- We're still on Phase I water withdrawal restrictions, which is typical for this time of year.
- The details behind West Triangle High School's 6,600-gallon calculation for sewer discharge. The charter school is currently applying for a Special Use Permit. Water supply is less of a concern in this instance than sewer discharge because the building already has fire suppression, which is the main need for water supply.

- Comet project water estimates concerning hotel use versus family dwelling units.
- 3M settlement agreement. We could receive around \$800,000 (ballpark estimate). Allocation will be based on flow and PFAS sample results. The other one settlement could be around \$25,000, and there are two other settlements that haven't materialized yet.
- Lead service line inventory indicates that we won't have a lot of replacements to do.
- Civil Engineering Technician Tyler Freeman's last day in the office will be Aug. 23, 2024.
- The OWASA Booster Pump station name has been changed to Starfield Circle.

## 5. Discussion

### A. Agenda for joint meeting with Board of Commissioners

There was discussion of topics to discuss with the Board of Commissioners at the joint meeting in August. Sykes mentioned she will be out of town and unable to attend the meeting. Rawlins confirmed that he will be present at the meeting. Utilities Director Marie Strandwitz proposed to draft a memo on the committee's behalf prior to the meeting to outline the committee's concerns and questions.

Discussion continued from the last meeting regarding committee members' frustration that they no longer have many topics to address and that their recommendations on topics are not always followed by the Board of Commissioners. There was further discussion of the challenges in recruitment for the committee, and a general lack of energy and momentum of the committee. The group detailed the important contributions the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee has made over the years. There was discussion of the history of the committee, including its relationship with other departments and their participation in the meetings, which no longer occurs.

Questions raised to bring before the Board of Commissioners included:

- If the Board of Commissioners wants this committee to remain active, what topics would they like the committee to review, and what would the goal of the committee's participation be?
- Is the current frequency of meetings appropriate? Should the committee meet less frequently or become an ad hoc committee or task force to address topics as needed?
  - If the committee became ad hoc, what provisions would be in place to call the committee to meet? Who would be on the committee, regular citizens or those with particular expertise?

It was noted that with fewer members on the committee, meeting quorum may become more of a challenge.

Strandwitz said she would clarify who would run the joint meeting.

There was discussion of the impact of the committee on staff resources. Strandwitz confirmed that the activities of the committee impact more than just the staff who attend the meetings.

Commissioner Robb English shared the types of comments the Board of Commissioners receives from the public regarding water and sewer. He agreed that a memo from Strandwitz would be helpful, especially if it highlighted the history of the committee and the work the committee has done in the past.

There was discussion among committee members about the contrast between what authority they expected to have by joining the board versus the reality of the limited advisory role the board serves.

There was discussion of equity as it relates to residential water access and the policy of shutting off residents' water if they cannot pay their water bill. Some commissioners expressed frustration that the equity decisions typically fall in the hands of the Finance Department or with the county instead of the town.

**6. Reports from Meetings**

A. Meeting from June 10

Weston reported on the budget vote. He provided updates on cost-sharing at Nash Place and a grant to study the Hassell tank. He reported that the notable thing that came out of the budget vote is that there is a plan to implement a 7.5% rate increase each year for the next three years. Green added that even at that rate we will not be able to cover all our expenses.

B. Meeting from June 24

Member Grace Beeler reported on the annexation intent letter for 3013 Ruby Lane. She reported that there is hookup available at the site, though it is not served yet. She also mentioned that the stormwater system for Covington Commons is 80-90% complete, though they are still working on the stormwater pond.

**7. Assignments for Board of Commissioners meetings**

A. Meeting Aug. 12 (Sykes/Rawlins)

B. Meeting Aug. 15 (Robinson/Rasheed)

C. Meeting Aug. 26 (Rawlins/Weston)

D. Meeting Sept. 9 (Rasheed/Beeler)

E. Meeting Sept. 23 (Weston/Sykes)

**8. Future agenda items**

No future agenda items were discussed.

**9. Adjournment**

Motion: Weston moved to adjourn the meeting. Sykes declared no second needed.

Sykes adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m. without a vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Freeman  
Civil Engineering Technician  
Staff support to the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

Approved: Month X, 202X