

Town of Oriental
Water Advisory Committee Meeting
January 27, 2014

A meeting of the Town of Oriental Water Advisory Committee was held on Monday, January 27, 2014 at 1:30 PM. Chairman Jim Barton determined a quorum to be present and called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM. Absent at meeting start was Vice Chairman Jackie Mahan who arrived a few minutes late.

PRESENT: Chairman Jim Barton, Vice Chairman Jackie Mahan, Members Larry DeChesser, and Warren Johnson, Town Manager Wyatt Cutler, Commissioner Larry Summers, Public Works Director Jason Collett, Town Employee Andrew Cox, Deputy Town Clerk Jayne Beyer, WAC Candidate David Rittenhouse and Oriental Town citizen Gerry Crowley.

Opening Remarks/Welcome

Chairman Barton introduced David Rittenhouse and Gerry Crowley. Mr. Rittenhouse is a recent arrival to the Town of Oriental. With a background in Environmental Engineering, Mr. Rittenhouse has expressed interest in becoming a member of the Water Advisory Committee to fill a vacancy; and he had submitted his biography (attached) to Town Hall, copies of which were distributed to WAC members. Mr. Crowley was present to discuss what he perceived to be a problem with the Whittaker Creek wastewater mixing station located between his property (610) and that of Dr. Marc Willi (608) on Windward Drive.

Agenda Item 1 - Wastewater Overflow Discharge

Chairman Barton summarized the issue brought forward by Mr. Crowley using the information and photographs attached to his original e-mail. After alerting the Town to the problem, Mr. Crowley met with Manager Cutler and Public Works Director Collett before sending his e-mail to include Commissioner Summers and the WAC membership. Upon seeing the e-mail, Chairman Barton added the topic to the WAC meeting agenda and invited Mr. Crowley to the meeting.

Mr. Crowley stated his observations, noting that he has lived at that location since before the time of its installation approximately 6 years ago. With a background in engineering, Mr. Crowley believes the original design is faulty. Specifically, he has noted what he describes as unusual overflow discharge from the vent piping. The mixing station was designed by a Raleigh-based engineering firm to replace the previous waste water discharge into a well located on Windward Drive closer to the water plant.

According to Manager Cutler and Mr. Crowley, the new mixing station is approximately 600 feet from the water plant. The piping was installed using a hydraulic bore and the initial station consists of a pipe that is submerged beneath Whittaker Creek. The waste water discharge is pushed from its tank in the water plant by pump (total of two which alternate). The vent line was added some years back and then lengthened again by the engineering firm. Additional holes have been drilled in the piping arrangements as well to the lines below the water surface.

After much discussion led by Jason Collett, Jason said the overflow appears to be sporadic; and in his opinion as Town Public Works Department Director, it is likely coincidental with recent changes made to the Water Plant. Lead and lag pump combined are believed to be causing the issue. When filters regenerate, he believes that they overtake the capacity of the lead pump. A few months ago, plant personnel changed the setting of the level of the water in the lead pump (Glen Snader/SRS recommendation); and with the additional higher water level, the lag pump now kicks in before the lead

pump shuts down; and Mr. Collett believes that is when the overflow runoff occurs. Neither he nor Mr. Crowley believes that the discharge piping holes this time are plugged as apparently they have been in the past. Town personnel adjusted the pump level in an attempt to alleviate the problem; but according to Mr. Crowley as of the morning of January 27th, it appears to be happening again. We are also apparently getting a seal failure error on one of the pumps, which Jason said may be contributing to the problem as well; but a number of the attendees believe this is unlikely since seal failure would likely have the opposite effect. Jason Collett and his crew will continue to look at the vent and pumps and try to solve the problem.

Mr. Crowley was asked by Chairman Barton if he would be willing to lend his expertise to determining the cause of the overflow along with member DeChesser and the Public Works crew. Mr. Crowley and Mr. DeChesser both expressed their willingness if required. Mr. Collett objected saying it was a Public Works problem to solve. After some discussion, Chairman Barton, after conferring with Manager Cutler, and with approval by the WAC asked Mr. Collett to continue his efforts and report back to the WAC in two weeks time with his findings (action item).

Agenda Item 2 - Water Plant Status/Status of the SRS contract

Glen Snader passed away on January 1st. Because he was a “one man show”, SRS can no longer exist; and the company is unable to handle further contracted work.

Manager Cutler stated that the contracted work was almost complete. We believe we have all parts and pieces due from SRS. We need resin that they had ordered for us to complete pump 2 resin replacement and that should be the end of their contract requirements. There were two items of new work Wyatt and Glen had discussed, the first being work on the waste water system and the other on the air scrubber. Wyatt described the latter which reduces hydrogen sulfide odor in the atmosphere as a “nice to have”. Discussions between Manager Cutler and Joyce Snader, Glen’s widow indicated that she has no interest in continuing the business.

Chairman Barton had last week contacted Harry Bailey of DENR Washington to determine if there are other contractors who might take over this work since SRS supported nearly all of the eastern Carolina public water systems. Other than one possible firm in VA Beach, DENR has not found local firms. SRS was unique. They have supported Oriental for at least 10 years. Manager Cutler and Chairman Barton discussed by telephone last week for Wyatt to ask Glen’s widow whether there are any materials that may be helpful to our efforts. Wyatt did this. She has already returned a water pump meter and base and has agreed to give Wyatt every file that she can find, including information on controls, operations and maintenance procedures for the water plant.

In the meantime, Wyatt has talked with a company in Kernersville which provided most of the valves and with a Goldsboro company which provided the pumps. He has also spoken with Wilson Rhodes in Greenville who most likely can provide controls assistance since nearly all of what SRS installed were commercial off the shelf (COTS).

The WAC agreed that we should leverage these contractors, gather existing documents and templates from others (e.g. ORC Terry Groome in Aurora), review the material provided to us by the NC Rural Water Association, request support from DENR Washington as required and/or create our own Operations and Maintenance Manual (one is in draft form) and procedures. Drew Cox stated he supports the idea of developing in-house capabilities and manuals.

(Action) Jason Collett will ask Mike Hill from NC Rural Water and/or personnel from DENR to help determine who suppliers are, and then ask those resources, based on tank gallons, how much salt

brine is needed, etc. Additionally, Glen Snader was researching and would supply an emergency response system for the water plant. Wyatt revealed that the original notification system is not functioning.

(Action) Wyatt and Jason will investigate solutions and include estimates for the complete a list of REQUIRED annual items in preparation for the water plant budget to be reviewed by the WAC at the March financial meetings. SRS had also started valve maintenance training. Larry DeChesser has agreed to help train the PW members on valves, pumps as needed.

Agenda Item 3 – Review and Approval of the December WAC Minutes

The minutes were reviewed; completed actions were briefed and updated. A motion was made by Warren Johnson and seconded by Larry DeChesser and was approved by unanimous (4-0) vote.

Agenda Item 4 - Review Chapter K (Water Service Ordinance)

Updates made since its last review by the WAC in December were reviewed. Chairman Barton stated that the ordinance had been reviewed by the Town Manager and Town Clerk the week before. They made several substantive edits to the ordinance including membership and fees schedule.

Chairman Barton had circulated the ordinance to WAC members by e-mail with “track changes” on. However, he went through a review of those changes and the rationale for each. Upon completion, Chairman Barton solicited further inputs from WAC members.

Vice Chairman Mahan noted that the document needs a final spell check. Mr. Barton then read aloud two changes recommended by Commissioner Summers. The first of these updates Article I, Section 3 to read “...The Town of Oriental is a Council - Manager Form of government”, correcting the previous language. A new Section 4 describing procedures for new service outside the Town limits was reviewed with minor changes.

With no further comment or additions, a motion was offered by Chairman Barton to approve the replacement Chapter K. The motion was seconded by member Johnson and approved by unanimous (4-0) vote for forwarding to Commissioners (with incorporated changes) prior to their next agenda meeting.

(Action) Town Clerk Heidi Artley will incorporate all of the changes along with the forwarding paragraph. She will distribute it for one final spell check and review by WAC Chairman Barton and Vice Chairman Mahan NLT Tuesday January 28th.

Agenda Item 5 - Backflow and Cross Connection Manual Final Review

The manual has been completed since October 27th but was deferred by WAC agreement until completion of Chapter K. Chapter K references it as a Town manual. Chairman Barton noted he had an action from the December meeting to contact DENR Washington to request assistance with a survey of testable devices and to solicit assistance from DENR for ORC support since Town Manager Wyatt Cutler had been having difficulty contacting personnel from Pamlico County Public Works. Chairman Barton reported the results of those discussions. While Wyatt indicated he had eventually made contact with Paul Campbell, DENR (Harry Bailey) with whom Mr. Barton spoke said that it was their job to help and offered up the services of Jamie Midgett and Dyke Luben from his office to help with the survey. DENR will assist us in determining what devices are present and where, if any, new ones should be installed.

(Action) Wyatt will call Skip Lee (Pamlico County Inspector) to determine what commercial businesses do when they install backflow devices. Then **(Action)** he will draft a letter to the

testable backflow device owners indicating that a survey of testable backflow devices recently identified that they have one on their property. The letter will inform them why the testable devices are typically needed or required by law; and we will ask the owner to advise their continued need for the device. If they continue to use the device, there will be a testing fee associated with these devices in accordance with the new manual. If they remove it, we need a copy of the work order proving it has been removed. Jason Collett will e-mail the list of the last survey he conducted which indicated there are 13 testable devices in the town.

Mr. Bailey also mentioned to Mr. Barton that an unscheduled ORC Backflow/Cross Connection Class was being hosted in Kinston and he gave Mr. Barton the point of contact. After discussion by phone with Chairman Barton and then with Mr. Bailey, Wyatt Cutler arranged for Town employee Jesse Burgess to attend the class. He began the class on Monday, January 27th. It was decided that help with the survey would be postponed until after Jesse's return from class.

Vice Chairman Mahan queried Town Manager Cutler on training steps taken for Town personnel. Vice Chair Mahan asked about the certification and training plan for the Town Public Works employees. **It was a previous action item** and this WAC meeting was the first time that the WAC heard of the "somewhat" formal plan (although no formal dates yet on anything other than Jesse Burgess in the class this week). **(Continuing Action)** Wyatt and Jason need to develop and brief the WAC on the training plan. As the plan is developed we are looking at creating redundancy but with qualification comes a "hook" to commit to a certain period of time after training to ensure that training, paid for by the town is not lost if personnel decide to "jump ship". Josh Gibson wants to sit for his B Well license. Drew Cox will attend C Well and Waste Water School.

Two minor changes were noted in the manual, those being references to two new forms which will be used once the program has been initiated. The first of these forms is a testable device application form. The other is a testable device report to be maintained by the ORC. The rationale for not including the forms is that forms may change over time and the manual would have to change each time. Member DeChesser moved that the Manual be approved with the two changes. The motion was seconded by member Johnson and passed unanimously (4-0).

(Action) Heidi Artley will make the changes and include it in the material for the Board of Commissioners agenda workshop. Chairman Barton will be present to brief and respond to questions at the workshop and at the public meeting for both the Chapter K replacement and the Cross Connection and backflow manual.

Agenda Item 6 – Other Business

Mr. Rittenhouse was excused from the meeting. The first issue was the candidacy of Mr. Rittenhouse. His bio was reviewed. He was deemed to be a most suitable candidate for WAC membership. A motion was made by Chairman Barton and seconded by member Johnson to recommend to the Town Board his appointment to the WAC. The motion was approved unanimously (4-0).

The second issue was raised by Vice Chairman Mahan who wanted clarification on the Consumer Confidence report. Specifically, she asked for an improvement in communications channels between the Town and the WAC. She requested that the WAC be alerted whenever something big will happen **that will impact the public or leave the WAC open to questions** (advance notice of consumer confidence report, etc.); this will ensure that members are not caught "flat footed" by public water events that the public hold concern and scrutiny. As WAC members are sometimes queried by town citizens about specific water system issues, it is important that we are adequately briefed.

The third item was the scheduling of the March financial meetings. After discussion of what tools would be used (Dashboard) and the review procedures (essentially the first review of the Town Manager's water plant budget before submission to the Town Board), it was agreed that we would hold financial meetings on March 20th and March 24th. As a prelude to that and in the absence of the Town manager, Heidi Artley will provide an overview of Wyatt's budget at the next (02/24/14) WAC Meeting. Additionally Chairman Barton will circulate again the presentation received by DENR PWSS which describes rate setting tools and procedures.

Chairman Barton then made a Motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairman Mahan seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:34 PM.

The next Water Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, February 24, 2014 at 1:30 PM at Town Hall.

Jim Barton, Chairman

Jayne Beyer, Deputy Town Clerk