

**CHARLOTTE WATER
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
July 21, 2016**

Charlotte Water Advisory Committee met Thursday, July 21, 2016, 2:30 pm at 4222 Westmont Drive, Charlotte, NC.

Members Present: Pride Patton, Barbara Bleiweiss, Jim Duke, Leslie Jones

Members Absent: Frank McMahan, Barry Webb, one position is vacant

Staff Present:	Barry Gullet	Director
	Regina Cousar	Continuous Improvement Manger
	Karen Weatherly	Assistant City Attorney
	Steve Miller	Customer Service Manager
	Carl Wilson	Chief Engineer
	James McLeod	Interim Assistant Business Manager
	Terra Neal	Office Assistant IV

Safety Minute

Brake Maintenance

Introductions

New member Barbara Bleiweiss was introduced to the group.

Election of Chairman

A motion was made by Jim Duke, and seconded by Barbara Bleiweiss, to elect Leslie Jones. Motion was approved.

Election of Vice Chair

A motion was made by Jim Duke, and seconded by Pride Patton, to elect Frank McMahan. Motion was approved.

Water Meter Equipment Issues

The drive-by water meter reading system was implemented beginning in 2002. Since that time, several equipment related issues resulted in meter assembly components being replaced. In 2009 there was an escalation of customer complaints alleging problems with meter accuracy. The department completed a meter audit in 2009 as part of a 40 point customer service improvement plan. More recently, a substantial number of the electronic radio transmitters (ERTs) that are one component of the water meter installation were identified as being subject to premature failure. A settlement has been reached with the vendor whereby the vendor is providing and installing (via their contractor) replacement ERTs. The vendor also

agreed to reimburse Charlotte Water for charges the department has already incurred related to replacing ERTs that failed prematurely.

As a part of the ERT replacement effort, Charlotte Water is upgrading meter registers (another of the components of the water meter assembly) to a current model (the existing ones are out of production) at Charlotte Water cost. This a cost Charlotte Water was going to incur soon regardless of the ERT issue.

Water Quality

Water quality problems widely reported by news media across the region and the country in the wake of Flint, Michigan, coal ash controversy, chemical spills, etc. are eroding confidence in drinking water systems. Charlotte Water is stepping up communication and outreach efforts to be sure customers have access to accurate, timely information about the quality of the drinking water they receive from us. As a part of this stepped up effort, an interactive map is available on the Charlotte Water website now where customers can see results from water quality testing across the service area.

Wesley Heights/Summit Avenue

Charlotte Water has an on-going capital program to replace/rehabilitate aging water mains. Construction work that was underway on one of these projects in the Wesley Heights neighborhood created discolored water several times over a short time period. Customers filed repeated complaints and although Charlotte Water responded to each and was able to flush the discolored water from the water system, NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) responded to the customer complaints by issuing a Notice of Deficiency to Charlotte Water. Charlotte Water prepared and is implementing a plan of action to assure the problem is resolved. Samples are being tested at least weekly for iron concentrations and to be sure all other parameters are in the normal range

Lead Testing

EPA requires water utilities to perform lead testing periodically to insure that the water treatment process is protecting customers from lead that may be present in pipes and private plumbing. The Charlotte area has very few lead pipes, but some houses may have lead-based solder that was used to join copper plumbing before 1987.

EPA protocols allow water systems with a good history of low lead levels to sample at three year intervals. Charlotte Water has such a history and has been on a three year testing cycle. Testing was last done in 2013 so this is our testing year. EPA specifies how many samples must be collected and the characteristics of each sample location. The samples are required to be collected by the customer from their inside faucet after it has not been used for at least six hours. Customers meeting the necessary criteria are recruited and trained in the sampling procedure.

Out of the 52 samples collected from customers, 48 had no lead detected (detection level is 3 ppb), 3 were detected below the EPA's action level of 15 ppb, and one sample was measured at 53 ppb. The other characteristics of the sample from this location were not typical of drinking water. The customer at that location was immediately contacted and told about the results. Charlotte Water staff reviewed the sampling procedure with the customer and the customer agreed to collect another sample the next morning. A sample was also collected from an outside faucet and tested for routine parameters. The

routine parameters were typical of drinking water, unlike the sample originally received. The second lead sample result was barely above the 3 ppb detection level. The same location had been sampled in 2014 and had a lead level then of 4.8 ppb, well within expectations.

Disinfection

Last summer, there was an issue with disinfection by-products (THMs) in the drinking water. The department did not incur any water quality violations, but was close to exceeding standards. The issue arose because of a spike in bromide levels in the raw water. It is believed the bromide spike was created when Duke Energy changed operations to meet air quality/emissions requirements and unintentionally created a water issue. Once Charlotte Water brought it to their attention, Duke changed their process. Test results are showing that bromide and consequently THM levels this year have returned to normal levels.

Community Partnerships

Charlotte Water works very closely with the Mecklenburg County Health Department to identify any health concerns that may arise from related to drinking water. Members of the Health Department participated in the press conference for the water quality report and provided good feedback to the media regarding the quality of the water.

Coal Ash Issue

Duke Energy decommissioned their Riverbend power plant on Mountain Island Lake a few years ago. Currently, they are in the process of decanting water off the top of the coal ash basins. That water is closely monitored to be sure it will not have negative impacts on our drinking water supply. Recently, testing indicated that arsenic levels in the decanted water were higher than normal. Duke has stopped discharging water and is in the process of implementing treatment techniques to clean the water before it goes into the lake. Water withdrawn from the Catawba River intake tested negative for arsenic.

Financial Report

Revenues in June exceeded the 3 year average. June's personnel services expenses are in line with 3 years averages, and operating expenses are \$2 million below the 3 year average. Total revenues are up 2.78%. Total expenses for June are significantly lower than the 3 year average due to large capitalization incurred in March instead of at year end. Cash flow is positive and favorable in comparison to the 3 year average.

Currently, the financial team is seeking new ways to determine how to best present budget comparisons.

Hot Topics

1. Regina Cousar is leaving her position as the Continuous Improvement Manager to become the Chief Operation Officer at Spartanburg Water
2. Ron Hargrove joined Charlotte Water as Deputy Director
3. Policy issues
 - a. Private streets and private development – There are two issues here. First, Charlotte Water is reviewing how to best provide water service to customers who live on private streets. Second, Charlotte Water needs to review how we interface with private water systems, especially investor owned utilities, who are providing service within our current

service area. These are both issues that will be coming to the Advisory Committee for discussion.

- b.** Water main rehabilitation program – Charlotte Water is beginning discussion around whether there is a need to expand the water main rehabilitation/replacement program.
- 4.** A suggestion was made to organize more educational resources on the water system for new advisory board members.

Meeting Adjourned - 3:46 pm

KCJ