

**CHARLOTTE WATER  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
November 18, 2021**

Charlotte Water Advisory Committee Remote Meeting Conducted via WebEx Events on Thursday, November 18, 2:30 pm. This remote meeting was conducted by WebEx in accordance with statute law

Members Present: William Cornett, Barbara Bleiweis, Cemental Grayson, Gordon Miller

Members Absent: N/A

Staff Present:	Angela Charles	Director
	David Czerr	Deputy Director
	Ronald Hargrove	Deputy Director
	Shawn Coffman	Deputy Director
	Jackie Jarrell	Deputy Director
	Mike Davis	Deputy Director
	Chad Howell	Utilities Manager
	Scott Clark	Utilities Manager
	Jennifer Frost	Public Affairs Manager
	Keri Cantrell	Chief Utilities Engineer
	Jeff Davis	Engineering Division Manager
	Keith Shirley	Program Manager
	Thomas Powers	Assistant City Attorney Sr
	Karen Weatherly	City Attorney
	Carolyn Ross	Administrative Services Manager
	Steve Miller	Utilities Manager

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Barbara Bleiweis and seconded by Bill Cornett to approve the October minutes. The motion was approved.

**Financials and Budget Process Updates**

Chad Howell (Utilities Manager) presented the Finance and Budget Update, and the following key points were noted:

- Three budgets were currently being processed with financial statements for 2021 being closed on a strong footing, and \$390m capital projects being supported from reserves.
- In relation to the 2022 budget, revenues were currently strong and strengthened by some new residential developments. The Operations Budget was on track to break even.
- The 2023 budget was in the process of being drafted in line with the Strategic Plan. The final draft budget would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

### **Operational and Capital Update**

Ron Hargrove (Deputy Director) provided an Operations Update relating to the Charlotte Distribution and Collection System, and the following key points were highlighted:

- The drought condition in some parts of North Carolina and average water demand for 2021 had increased significantly on the previous year from 105 to 117 MGD ytd.
- In terms of the distribution system, the number of leaks were increasing (with one hundred leaks recorded in one day alone) mainly due to staff shortages and breaks in pipes. Additional research was being undertaken concerning the condition of pipes and the impact of weather transitions. On-going engineering/boring work had also damaged some pipes causing leaks.
- In relation to water collection systems, debris and grease were the main factors generating problems.

Jeff Davis (Engineering Division Manager) provided a Capital Update (on behalf of Carl Wilson (Chief Utilities Manager)). Arising from his presentation, it was noted that:

- The \$30.2 million projects concluding in Fall 2022 would provide some key reliability and UV improvements to the Mallard Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project was currently behind schedule although good progress had been achieved over the summer with new effluent and disc filters coming online. Major upcoming works included chemical feed and UV improvements.
- The five-year \$5m roofing replacement program would be finishing ahead of schedule and under budget in 2022. Some recent supply chain problems were being mitigated and should not materially impact on concluding the project.
- There was a general discussion about the on-going need for Charlotte Water to safeguard its capital reserves to continue to invest in technology, reinvest, and have some contingency funds to react to a natural emergency.

### **Charlotte Water Accounts Update**

Steve Miller (Utilities Manager) provided an update on customer billing (in relation to delinquency) and the following key points were noted:

- The delinquency process resumed on October 4, 2021 for around 16,000 accounts and would focus on accounts with the highest balances. 13,011 delinquency accounts were residential (which was a major reduction of 5,000 accounts over the last two months) and customer accounts had significantly decreased recently to 303; 42 accounts were multi-family. The current average debtor balance had also significantly decreased from \$644 in October to \$396.
- There are 17 billing cycles each month which means turn-offs would occur regularly between 8am to 12noon Monday to Thursday; no turn-offs would occur on Fridays and near holidays.
- The operational goals were to complete delinquent turn-ons within 24 hours of payment and for the volume of delinquent accounts to return to pre-Covid levels by May 1, 2022.

- There were a variety of community agencies supporting customers to get their water services restored. The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) would be supported by a national fund of \$38m from December 1, 2021 operated by NCDHHS for prioritized eligible customers. LIHWAP funds would be used to prioritize cut-offs and support customers in danger of being disconnected.

### **After Action Report – Remount Road 36” Water Main Break**

Angela Charles (Director) introduced the item and provided the background to the water main break Scott Clark (Utilities Manager) and Micah Burgess provided a presentation on the Remount Road 36” Transmission Repair project, and the following key points were noted:

- The original point of failure was pipe erosion with the spigot and a 17-degree bend located at Irwin Creek. The bridge constructed over the pipe had created additional stress.
- The calendar of events for the project were outlined which had started from 10/19 to 11/15 with the contractor laying the new 36” DIP. A key challenge was bypassing Irwin Creek which was overcome with new construction work beyond the bridge and the installation of prestressed concrete cylinder piping.
- The next steps of construction were highlighted with forecasted completion of all works by January 5, 2022. New forms of technology, such as pipedriver and smartball, were being used to detect future leaks.

### **Water / Wastewater Pipeline Rehabilitation Program**

Keith Shirley (Program Manager) updated members on the water/wastewater pipeline rehabilitation programs:

- The water program covered c4.5m ft of water pipe, 18,000 fire hydrants and over 315,000 residential water meters.
- The replacement program commenced in 1995 with the rehabilitation program starting in 1999. 226 miles of pipe had been replaced to date.
- Some key water main replacement projects were outlined including the projects on Park Road and Poindexter Drive, Commonwealth Avenue, East Boulevard/Scott Avenue, Providence Road/Wendover Road and Queens Road West.
- Three Water Service Renewal projects were also highlighted which included over 200 work orders being completed in the Farmwood area.
- Wastewater system statistics were highlighted with Charlotte Water covering 4,500 miles of wastewater pipe, and maintaining 115,000 manholes, and 80 lift stations. The sanitary sewer rehabilitation program started in 1993 and had been extended to include root/grease control and sewer cleaning, amongst other activities. The current trend since 2003 was a significant reduction of spills as highlighted in the five-year moving average. Root control was becoming a key program activity to help reduce cracks and pipe leaks alongside easement clearing where the goal was to clear up to 100 miles a year. There was a brief discussion about the types and trials of herbicides used to control and treat roots and how the chemicals were absorbed by tree roots.
- Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Surveys (SSES) were regularly undertaken to inspect and combat hundreds of smoke leaks and manhole/cleanout leaks. A summary of work undertaken last year and the plans for next year were highlighted.
- The McAlpine Creek 54’ Sanitary Phases 1 to 3 were highlighted as an existing major project with the final phase 4 work forecasted to be completed during 2024-25.

- The largest project currently being undertaken was also highlighted: the 78' Sewer Rehab was running from Carolina Place Parkway to Carolina Place Mall, and the \$6m project was 2,700 feet in length and had started in Fall 2021.
- There was a general discussion concerning the local labor market and how Charlotte Water proactively used technology to help identify leaks; Charlotte Water was also offering bonuses to help attract and retain staff in a very competitive labor market to help fill up to 130 job vacancies.

### **Open Discussion**

The motions (proposed by Barbara Bleiweis and seconded by William Cornett) to cancel the December meeting, and all were in favor. The motion passed and December 2021 meeting was canceled.

### **Meeting Adjourned** –

Barbara Bleiweis moved to adjourn the meeting. William Cornett seconded, and all were in favor. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

**LAL**