

**CARROLL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
MINUTES OF UTILITIES ADVISORY COUNCIL**

May 10, 2012

**Carroll County Government Office Building
225 N. Center Street, Rm. 003
Westminster, Maryland 21157-5194
7 p.m.**

Attendees: *Council:* Michael Wilmore, Chair; Ellen Dix, Kevin Hann, Matt Candland

County Staff: Tom Rio, Jeff Topper, Joe Barrington, Penny Gist, Jenny Hobbs, Robin Hooper

Absent: County Staff: Rob Burk, Tom Devilbiss, (Sheree Lima-no longer in Public Works)

Reports

Minutes from meeting of 1/11/12: The minutes of the 1/11/12 meeting were approved as distributed by electronic mail on April 18, 2012. The Council, on motion of Mr. Hann, seconded by Mr. Candland, and carried, (Mr. Wilmore and Mrs. Dix voted “Aye”) approved the minutes of the 1/11/12 meeting.

- a. Discussion on approval procedures:** Mr. Topper stated the State of Maryland Open Meetings Compliance Board made a ruling on 2/10/12 that the Utilities Advisory Council implement a process by which minutes can be approved by mail when a future meeting is not scheduled. He introduced for the Council’s consideration the following procedure for the approval of minutes: Draft minutes will be prepared and electronically mailed to Council members within 15 business days after the meeting date. The Council will respond within 7 business days with either their approval or comments. Any comments will be incorporated and e-mailed back to Council members within 15 business days. The Council will respond within 7 days with either their approval or comments. Process will repeat until all members approve the minutes. Minutes will then be posted on the Council’s website. Members will formally approve the minutes at the next Utilities Advisory Council meeting so that the approval is recorded in the minutes of that meeting. This procedure was approved on motion of Mr. Hann, seconded by Mrs. Dix, and carried (Mr. Candland and Mr. Wilmore voted “Aye”).

Master Plan Updates/Revisions: *Bramble Hills service area and well* – Background: A future change for the Westminster water service area regards an area known as Bramble Hills involving about 13 residences. An agreement was reached between the County and the City of Westminster where the County will transfer ownership of a well on the Gesell property, located off of Maryland Route 27, including the adjacent Bramble Hills system to the City of Westminster. The easement area was surveyed and an easement transfer is being prepared. At the January, 2012 meeting Mr. Barrington noted recently speaking with Jeff Glass, Director of Public Works, City of Westminster. The volume of water that can be pumped from the well was established at 3,000 gallons per day maximum. This withdrawal from the well will be restricted to times when not withdrawing water from the nearby stream. Written petitions to the Maryland Department of the Environment and approval will be required for every time they want to use well. **No change.**

Old Business

Citizen Concerns:

a. Water Theft: No new incidents of water theft or hydrant damage have been reported. The Bureau of Utilities continues to place fire hydrant rings when the hydrants are flushed, which should be done by the end of summer. County staff continues work on a bulk water sales implementation plan to make it easier for companies to legally obtain water. *See “bulk water sales” for more information.*

b. Contractor/County Compliance Issues: Ms. Dix asked if the County could hold the contractor’s bond for 2 years. This would allow enough time for any problems with new homes to be brought to the contractor’s and County’s attention. Mr. Rio will explore this idea.

Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhanced Nutrient Removal Upgrade and Effluent Temperature Limits Status: It was clarified to the council by Mr. Barrington that the Hampstead Wastewater Treatment Plant continues to operate under the same permit and consent order; no revisions made. **No change.**

Freedom District Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade Status: Previously, Mr. Topper, along with the technical committee selected five design engineering firms to give presentations. GMB Associates has been chosen to begin the upgrade to enhanced nutrient removal (ENR). GMB presented a carousel design. This type of design is proven and simple; it may be higher in cost than the design originally given to the Maryland Department of the Environment. The one time capital cost to upgrade may be higher, but the on-going operating cost will be much lower over time, which will lead to net savings. The design needs approval from them. A decision should be made within a few months.

Customer Billing: Mr. Topper stated that the website on water and sewer bills will be changed to reflect the Collections Office - <http://ccgovernment.carr.org/PayBill>. The email address of UtilityBilling@ccg.carr.org will be included. The new bill format will be in use by the end of May.

Asset Management – Geographic Information System (GIS) Status: Mr. Rio reported the gathering of information from the Bureaus of Roads and Engineering is continuing and that Utilities is next. The Board of County Commissioners has been briefed about the system. Funding needs will be brought before the Board.

Springfield Water Tower Leaks: Mr. Barrington noted that the tower is not leaking at this time. A fire flow test is scheduled to be performed on May 11, 2012. The tower, which belongs to the Town of Sykesville, is no longer needed for fire emergencies. A decision needs to be made whether or not to keep the tower and if the Town of Sykesville wants to transfer ownership.

Bulk Water Sales: The public hearing on the Proposed Amendment to the Code of Public Local Laws, Chapter 179, Sewer and Water - § 179-7D - bulk water rates; and the draft ordinance was held 1/19/12. The proposed amendment would revise the rate structure and process for obtaining bulk water at County facilities. Amending the ordinance is required in order to put a bulk water sales implementation plan in place. Ordinance No. 2012-01 was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on 1/31/12. The Board can adjust the price through resolution rather than having to change the ordinance. A resolution will be prepared and presented to the Board in the near future.

Take-Home Vehicles: At the January meeting, Mr. Hann asked why County trucks are being parked at pumping stations and plants. It was stated that employees are not allowed to

take home vehicles due to cost-saving measures and the County Maintenance Facility lot cannot accommodate them. Mr. Wilmore had asked how much money is being saved. At this meeting, Mr. Topper reported that information is being gathered on cost savings and that how timely emergencies are being handled will be considered.

Bureau of Utilities Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Community Investment Project (CIP) Budget

Status: Ms. Hooper distributed an information sheet to the council. She reported that the Board of County Commissioners was presented with the recommended CIP and operating budgets. A public hearing will be held on 5/14/12. The scheduled adoption date is 5/29/12. There are not many changes since the Utilities Advisory Council meeting in January.

Bureau of Utilities Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Operating Budget Status:

Ms. Hooper distributed the “Utilities Operating Summary” report to the council. Changes since the January Utilities Advisory Council meeting relate to capital outlay (vehicle replacement and pumps), personnel (turnover and salary), City of Baltimore water purchases, and Maryland Environmental Service charges. Mr. Candland noted that other options for obtaining water can be explored. Mr. Wilmore asked what to expect for next year’s budget. Increased costs for electricity, chemicals, fuel, and repairs are possible. Ms. Dix asked how foreclosures are dealt with. Any unpaid bills are collected before the tax sale.

New Business

Rates: Ms. Hobbs distributed and explained an information sheet to the council: “Residential Meters – 5/8” (1 EDU) based on March 8, 2012 Budget (FY13)”. The average increase for residential customers for water and sewer will be 5.89%. There was no rate increase last year. The last time rates increased was 2010. Information about the rate increase was advertised to the public on 4/30/12 and 5/7/12 and is on the County’s website as of today, 5/10/12.

Memberships to Associations: Mr. Wilmore previously asked if the County would be interested in joining the Maryland Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies, Inc. Mr. Barrington stated that the membership fee is more expensive and is not much different than the other memberships the County currently holds.

Restaurants-Low Water Volume: Mr. Wilmore asked why some restaurant restrooms in the Freedom area provide a low volume of water at the sinks. Mr. Rio will check see if the County regulates that.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for August 23, 2012.

Note: Originally scheduled meeting for April 26, 2012 was moved to May 10, 2012 due to only two council members being available.

cc: *Council Members*
Thomas J. Rio, Director of Public Works
Jeffrey Topper, Deputy Director of Public Works
Joe Barrington, Chief, Bureau of Utilities
Robert Burk, Comptroller
Thomas S. Devillbiss, Acting Director, Land Use, Planning & Development
Robin Hooper, Budget Analyst, Department of Management & Budget
Jenny Hobbs, Financial Analyst, Department of the Comptroller
Steve Powell, Chief of Staff, Board of County Commissioners
Utilities Advisory Council File

Handouts: Bureau of Utilities Operating Budget Summary for Fiscal Year 2013
Community Investment Plan for Fiscal Year 2013 to 2018 (proposed)
Residential Meters (Rates by gallons based on 3/8/12 budget)
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