

TANEYTOWN WATER AND SEWER COMMITTEE

MINUTES – Tuesday, September 1, 2015

Committee Members In Attendance:

Barbara Cook

Diane Foster, Mayor Pro Tem, Committee Chair

Jackie Jones

Joe Vigliotti, Councilman, Recording Secretary

Absent:

Gail Wilson

Meeting convened at 10:01 AM in City Council Chambers Conference Room.

Mayor Pro Tem Diane Foster called to order the meeting and began by relaying new information to the committee. She reported that Dee Wilson met with Rick Weaver at the town's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP). Wilson was generally pleased with the Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) upgrades. Wilson will be sending along an assortment of information pertaining to cost efficiency tips for electric, as well as information on grant opportunities for a future committee meeting. Foster noted that a general tour of the WTP and the wells in town would be a good idea for the committee, and agreed to try to arrange such a tour.

Foster noted that as of September 1, there are 40 water meter batteries left to be replaced. Fifteen of these are multi-read MXUs on backorder. Thirteen outstanding batteries remain to be replaced because the owners have not responded to the first notices; second notices have been administered to these homes. Foster also noted that the committee's interim report, the *Initial Actions Project*, has been submitted for introduction at the September 9 Mayor and Council Workshop Meeting.

Committee member reports were then presented. Barbara Cook noted that her meeting with Bobbi-Jo Fout remains slated for later in September and that she looks forward to moving onto new tasks.

Councilman Don Frazier related that City Manager Henry Heine has responded with answers to some of the questions posed relating to the strategic outline for reduction of water rates. Frazier thanked Heine for these answers. He reported that; A permitted well has the ability to pump

600,000 gallons of water per day. At the present time, the existing WWTP does not have the ability to dispense clean water or wastewater to tanker-trucks. Jackie Jones noted that she is seeking information from the county regarding graywater. Jones questioned whether graywater was clean enough to sell. Frazier noted that if the water being pumped into Piney Creek –the City of Frederick’s recharge zone –then it is clean enough to sell. Foster noted that if any company was to obtain graywater from the WTTP, they must have a vehicle dedicated to that, and only that, kind of cargo. A tanker used for graywater cannot be used for clean water. Cook noted that it should be left up to interested companies to provide transportation and pickup for the water.

Councilman Joe Vigliotti then spoke to the *Initial Actions Project*, noting that two minor changes had been made in the report’s Introduction owing to decisions taken at the last meeting. The first change was to note the number of suggestions contained in the report was now four rather than three; and that the wording had been changed to include a reference to “mid-range” as well as long-term actions. Jones noted that she did not agree with everything in the report. Vigliotti explained that he was aware that not everyone agreed on everything in the report, but that it was important that the committee offered its ideas to the Mayor and Council. Vigliotti expressed the importance of, and thanked each of the members of the committee for their contributions so far. He pointed out that it was important work being done on behalf of citizens.

Jones then moved into her report. She expressed concerns about why citizens couldn’t be asked why they couldn’t pay their water bills. Foster noted that such queries constituted an invasion of privacy. Jones also noted that she believed that micro grid systems were a different subject than the parameters of the committee, and that the committee should not be pursuing research into micro grid systems. This point was generally agreed upon.

General discussion followed. Cook stated that she believed a 10% late fee was too high to levy on late-payers. She noted that among the things she will be discussing with Bobbi-Jo will be the fee system. Foster stated that perhaps a one-time-per-year waiver for fees would be a good idea. Cook added that such once-a-year-waivers should be granted only to those not habitually late paying their water and sewer bills. Cook and others also wondered if a fifty-dollar reconnection fee for cut-off water services relating to nonpayment was necessary.

Comments were then heard from the public. Carl Ebaugh stated that the formation of a committee to look into the water and sewer bills was a big fuss over nothing. He noted that while the committee had good thoughts, nothing would be accomplished. He noted that ideas being

discussed by the committee had already been considered in the past. Ebaugh and Jones contended the issue of water rates had merely become political, especially through the most recent election. Vigliotti responded that he knows Frazier is genuinely concerned in his heart about helping people. Vigliotti explained that he himself does not approach the issue from politicking, but from a genuine desire to help people as well. He stated that he respectfully, but strongly disagrees that the issue is being approached politically.

Councilman Brad Wantz, also in the audience, noted that it would be dangerous to consider removing fines and reconnection fees. He stated that such consequences were necessary in order to encourage payment of water and sewer bills. Foster added that fines and fees are common place practices in all cities and towns.

With no further business, the committee meeting was adjourned at 10:41 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Vigliotti
Taneytown Water and Sewer Committee Recording Secretary
Taneytown City Councilman