

Special Meeting

Special meeting of the Hoke County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of the Sheriff's Office.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

James A. Leach, Chairman
Tony Hunt, Vice Chairman
Robert Wright
Ellen McNeill

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mike Wood, County Manager
William Fields, County Attorney
Letitia Edens, Acting Clerk

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jean Powell

Chairman Leach called the meeting to order. Vice Chairman Hunt gave the invocation.

Mike Dean Utilities Director, Gwen McGougan, Utilities Office Manager, and Garvin Ferguson, Interim Finance Officer were present also.

Chairman Leach stated that Mike Dean was present to address the Board on the water crisis. Mike Dean stated that he wanted to speak on the drought and the concern of growth that the county faces. They have exceeded the 12 hours for pumping of the wells in the eastern part of the county. Because of conservation, usage has been cut significantly by about 20 percent. We need to consider more stringent restrictions. We are in stage 2 which still allows outside watering on the odd/even days. We are not restricted to how many days. For customers in the eastern end of the county that are on PWC, we have to abide by their regulations which they are going to require no watering for 3 days a week, with the other four still being the odd/even system. With the citizens in the Rockfish areas following these restrictions, we should at least have them countywide or be more stringent. The Governor is asking for a 50 percent reduction. In order to comply with this request, we will have to stop outside watering altogether. We are in a dormant season now. We are looking for additional well sites. A test well site has already been done in the Arabia area. They are talking with some property owners. Phase five calls for five (5) additional elevated tanks. We need to keep the conservation measures that are implemented through the winter. It will take several months to get the wells on line. The county also needs to look for an additional water source. There are different options for conservation measures. Some measures are to restrict the use, stop outside use, and the more water used, the higher the cost. It will impact residential and commercial use. The rate for residential could be higher to encourage cutbacks. Ellen McNeill asked what was his recommendations? Mr. Dean recommended going with PWC restrictions at the very least. Mike Wood asked if preferred the odd/even or three days per week with anyone watering. PWC is using the odd/even which may be

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more complex. Mike Dean stated that the days would be easier to follow. Sheriff Peterkin has also offered his assistance in issuing citations which will be a great help. Robert Wright asked if we are going to cutback, what days does he prefer. Mr. Wright stated that he thought we needed one per day, such as one weekday and one weekend day. Chairman Leach stated that the 2 days could be Saturday and Wednesday. Mr. Hunt asked Mr. Dean if his suggestion was for the two days for everyone to water and not do the odd/even? Mr. Dean stated yes. Mike Wood stated that the citizens could be informed as to which two days they could water and the days that they could not. Chairman Leach asked about the Saturday and Wednesday. Wednesday may be a slow day for residents. Robert Wright stated whatever was good for the water department. Mike Dean stated Saturday and Wednesday was fine. Chairman Leach asked if the two days would put us in a water crises? Mr. Dean stated no. After Board approval, they can do inserts in the bills regarding conservation measures. This will be a good step in cutting watering to two days. They will continue to work on the two wells in. It is going fairly well. Chairman Leach asked if we would be able to put the tank at the new Don Steed because the pump is there already. Are they still going to let us have the one acre of land? Mike Dean stated that they have not ruled the site out, but because of the elevation it will not help them out on 401. It would have to be extremely tall. If it is built there, it will help more with the Arabia and Rockfish tanks. That area is starting to develop. Chairman Leach asked if we were still going to ask the school for that acre? Mike Dean stated that it depends; they have another site on 401 that they may be able to work something out with the property owners and it would be a better site. Chairman Leach stated that at some time regarding subdivisions they are going to have to ask developers to donate land for tanks or wells. Mike Dean stated that one developer has donated land for a test well site. Robert Wright asked if after the completion of phase five we would have three tanks and 11 wells? Mr. Dean stated that he thought that was correct. Mr. Wright asked if we would be self sufficient and not purchase from PWC unless we have to? Mr. Dean stated that the option will allow us to still purchase in the Rockfish area like we are now. It will depend on where we put the wells. The system is designed to send water to the 401 Rockfish area. We would have to look at expanding our system. We need a way to monitor the system centrally instead of having the guys drive by several times a day. The system will have to be automated. We need to look at surface water options for the future of water supply. Robert Wright stated that now may be a best time and opportunity to ask the government, especially with BRAC. We could direct the attorney to write a letter and ask. Mike Dean stated that they are looking to run a 12 inch line through Plank road and Wayside road. Chairman Leach asked what will be the concerns once we get out of the drought because of building? Mike Dean stated that the highest demand is in the eastern end at the 401 corridor. Wells have been pumping in excess of 16 hours. It is down a tremendous amount. Getting wells and tanks in is still a concern. Chairman Leach stated that we want to be sure that we have enough water to service every customer on the Hoke County water system. Mike Dean stated that additional wells will be a tremendous help. Now is a good time to put wells in.

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Chairman Leach stated that if we put these measures in place, it will help us save water and have enough to supply the citizens. Mr. Dean stated that this will be a good measuring tool and it will let them see what effect it will have on the system and see how much it will reduce the usage. This may be all we need to do. If not we may have to go for stricter measures. This is a good start. Ellen McNeill asked how long does it take to get a new well on line? Mike Dean stated several months being about 4 to 6. This will be a tool to help monitor water in the wells. Underground water is not as directly affected by the drought, because it is replenished by rain. Our problem is mainly over-pumping. They can now start monitoring. This is a start. Chairman Leach stated that if Mr. Dean is satisfied with the recommendations for the changes, he asked what are the wishes of the Board?

Motion: Robert Wright made a motion to approve the recommendations that were sent to the Board on the new water restrictions with the following changes: The beginning date is November 1st with the first two statements to read 1. Use of automatic irrigation systems and sprinklers will not be allowed on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday. 2. All residents will be allowed to use irrigation systems and sprinklers on Wednesday and Saturday, seconded by Tony Hunt.

Action: The motion was unanimously carried.

Mike Dean stated that they were getting ready to go live on the new system and will be changing the bills with more information on them. They would like to change the wording for water being turned off from reconnect fee to disconnect fee. It makes a difference in the service being performed. Attorney Fields asked if this could be put on the agenda the first meeting in November? Chairman Leach stated yes.

There being no further business to come before the Hoke County Board of Commissioners, Robert Wright made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Tony Hunt, unanimously carried.

James A. Leach, Chairman

Linda Revels, Clerk (Attest)