

June 27, 2024

County of Greene, Virginia

THE GREENE COUNTY WATER & SEWER CAPITAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE MET ON THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2024, BEGINNING AT 6:30 P.M. IN PERSON IN THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING MEETING ROOM

Present were: David Hundelt, Chair
Cathy Schafrik, Member
Davis Lamb, Member
Francis McGuigan, Member
Dan Chipman, Member
Melissa Meador, Member

Staff present: Terry Beigie, Grant Writer
Jim Frydl, Director of Planning & Zoning

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RE: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Hundelt discussed the purpose of the newly formed committee and introduced the members present, discussing that the Board of Supervisors may appoint citizen members or other stakeholder group members to sit on the committee in the future. Meetings will be open to the public except if closed meetings need to be held according to the State Code of Virginia.

RE: HISTORY/STUDIES/PLANNING EFFORTS

Mr. Hundelt said a significant level of planning for projects has taken place over the past two decades. The Town of Stanardsville water infrastructure was put in during the Great Depression. The sewer system was as well but was improved upon with the lagoons at the Stanardsville Wastewater Treatment Plant in the 1950s. In the 1980s a water treatment plant was built on the Rapidan River and some of the wells were decommissioned in the Stanardsville area. Mr. Hundelt said the County is behind the pace of growth for the improvements needed for the water system. The Rapidan Wastewater Treatment Plant in Ruckersville was built with the possibility of doubling in size. There is a consent order from DEQ stating the permit for the Stanardsville Wastewater Treatment Plant permit will not be renewed as it's outdated technology for dealing with wastewater. Mr. Hundelt said the County does not have many historical documents about the system since it took over operations from Rapidan Service Authority in June 2023. He said the records that were transferred to the County were not in good form. He said the County isn't privy to the exact layout of the infrastructure underground. He said the department intends to utilize some of the surveying for the upcoming projects into the ability to make useable

mapping of the system. He outlined the years of studies regarding the water and sewer projects needed to be completed for the County going forward.

Mr. Lamb asked whether the County had considered taking over the private Mountain Lakes Water system that services the Twin Lakes and Greene Mountain Lake neighborhoods. Mr. Hundelt said the County has not been approached regarding that and how to fund that is a concern and the liability that the County department would take on regarding the infrastructure, which is also aging.

Mr. Hundelt said the County has not looked too closely at aligning with any authority south of the County, but that would require significant infrastructure improvements before that could begin.

RE: MANDATORY PROJECTS

Mr. Hundelt said due to the permit not being renewed, the County must reroute the wastewater from Stanardsville to Ruckersville. He estimated the cost at \$5 million and noted the County has received a loan offer from DEQ VRLF program.

He discussed the Town of Stanardsville new water tower and upgraded water main pipes that are needed due to the aging infrastructure in the Town. The water tank has an estimated cost of \$4 million and infrastructure projects have an estimated cost of \$4 million. He said he was originally unsure if the tank was necessary for the Town but believes it is needed for fire flow protection. The current main that feeds the Town is 6-inch diameter, which limits capacity. Ms. Beigie said Senator Kaine and Senator Warner submitted to Congress \$5.3 million in community project funding for the water tower and Congresswoman Spanberger submitted to Congress \$4.8 million for the piping infrastructure improvements. Both will require a 20% match from the County and we'll hear if they are approved when Congress passes FY25 budget.

The Rapidan Wastewater Treatment Plant needs improvements at an estimated cost of \$500,000.00. Additionally, the Lead Service Line Inventory is mandated and must be completed. The County received a grant for \$200,000.00 to do the initial survey.

RE: OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Hundelt said the County should consider limiting cul de sacs due to the lack of redundancy and looping that occurs with through roads. Mr. Hundelt told the committee the possibility for a reservoir was deemed the best option for increased capacity. Mr. Hundelt said he believes personnel at the water & sewer department needs to increase as well.

Mr. McGuigan asked additional questions about funding the projects seeing as only a portion of the County's population receives water from the department. He suggested looking

further into the user fees for water and ensuring they cover the costs of the operation of the department, especially if additional staff are necessary.

Mr. Hundelt said the goal is to have a self-funded water and sewer system that is funded by user fees and availability fees so that customers ultimately pay, saying however it's unrealistic to expect that to happen immediately. Mr. McGuigan asked about the availability fees that were collected previously and how they were spent. Mr. Chipman said the auditors continue to look into that and funding was used to pay off previous capital investments into the system. Mr. Hundelt said it's not realistic to expect rates to cover the year-to-year spikes and valleys of the large projects on the budget, but instead using bonds to float the costs out 20–30-year period is more common. Mr. McGuigan asked whether adding a capital buy-in fee to availability fees was something the County could do. He asked whether the projects needed to be reconfigured because they were based on outdated growth estimates. Mr. Hundelt said the County is out of water and does not have the capacity to operate without significant improvements to the volume of water. He said he believes the County has grown at a significant increase over the estimates within the water and sewer service area.

Mr. McGuigan said he believes the County pulled out of RSA without the understanding of the implications of running its own water and sewer department and wonders if the projects have been thought out well enough to move forward at this time if it's not yet critical. Mr. Hundelt said a delay in the building of the reservoir would be dangerous to the community and to the citizens. He said the community has decided not to go forward with the project for the past 20 years and it's putting itself at risk.

Mr. McGuigan asked if using any of the neighborhood lakes, such as Greene Mountain Lake, would be an option for additional water sources during times of drought using a portable temporary water treatment plant that could be set up at the neighborhood. Mr. Hundelt said he does not believe it is feasible as it's on land the County does not own and is not connected to the water system so significant infrastructure would need to take place to get the water into the system.

Ms. Schafrik said she will announce the next meeting of the committee as soon as possible.