

Hart County Water and Sewer Authority

Board of Directors Meeting January 23, 2025

The Hart County Water and Sewer Authority met on January 23, 2025, in the Hart County Cooperative Extension Service Building. Chairman Wade Carlton called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Present were Board Members Larry Haley, Bennie Harper, Marvin Justice and Patti York as well as Legal Counsel Kim Higginbotham, Director Pat Goran, Office Manager Karen Neal and many community residents.

Welcome

Approval of Agenda

Ms. York made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Residents from Holly Hills Drive were present to request Authority water service. Ms. Julia Ripley spoke first and on behalf of the group as a whole. Ms. Ripley stated the street is one mile long with twenty-six homes. She stated that thirteen of those homes are definitely interested in Authority water while another six are considering the option. Finally, she said that the other seven homes are not currently interested, but at least a couple of those are for sale so perhaps the new owners will be interested. Ms. Ripley spoke of water quality and water pressure issues plaguing the entire neighborhood and requested the Board considering expanding down the length of Holly Hills Drive. Mr. Goran explained HCWSA would send out commitment letters the following week to determine interest and explain what is required of potential customers.

Approval of January 23, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. York made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Haley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Mr. Goran stated tonight's financial report would be abbreviated. A brief discussion was held regarding bank account balances and current construction costs versus reimbursement from SPLOST funds that will create significant but temporary fluctuations over the next few months. Mr. Goran stated that the bottom line is that account balances are trending upward. Mr. Goran stated there are no major changes to the master meter readings with respect to flushing water for water quality and chlorine residual purposes. Mr. Haley inquired as to the funds set aside for the Milford Road project and Mr. Goran explained the reasoning for doing so.

Old Business

Request for Water Service – 4011 Elberton Highway poultry operation

The operators of this poultry operation were present again to request Authority water. Mr. Goran confirmed the owners had completed bacteriological testing that showed there are no concerns about water quality from their wells. Mr. Goran pointed out to the Board that there are significant levels of iron and manganese in these wells but said that the owners could invest in a removal system that would reduce those levels. The Board confirmed the cost to bring water to this poultry operation is approximately \$145,000. Mr. Justice commented that this was a lot of money to spend on only two chicken houses when we have to spend much more money on water system improvements in the next few years.

The Board inquired about how many gallons per minute the wells currently produce. The owners were told that whoever drilled the wells should have that information.

Ms. York stated that while the Board previously committed to voting on this request tonight that even a positive vote would require another one to two years to complete this project. Ms. York said she would like to see the due diligence done to determine how much these wells produce before the Board decides whether or not to do this project. Ms. York stated that if the Board could save \$150,000 and help the owners find someone to assist them in fixing their wells saving them money and time would be the responsible path forward. Mr. Goran suggested that Hawkins would be a good company for the owners to reach out to for assistance with an iron and manganese removal system for their wells.

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority Loan for Expansion into Reed Creek Area

Mr. Goran stated EMI should have drawings to review in the next month or so.

Will Bailey Road – Morris Road – Beacon Light Road – Mount Olivet Road Project

Mr. Goran stated that the contractor is currently working on Beacon Light Road and Morris Road. Mr. Goran asked if the Board would like HCWSA to send out commitment letters to all the side streets in and around this project that were not included in the original scope of the project and the Board agreed. Finally, Mr. Goran stated he wanted to make the Board aware of a recent accident between a motorist and one of the contractor's front-end loaders. No serious injuries were reported, and the motorist was found to be at fault.

Discussion of Authority's Wholesale Water Agreements

Mr. Carlton said that he was scheduling a meeting with representatives of the City of Hartwell. The Authority will be represented by two Board Members and a staff member.

Damaged fire hydrant repair discussion

Mr. Goran stated he is still waiting on a list of issues from the volunteer firemen.

New Business – None

Request for water service – Tree Farm Road

Mr. Beck stated his desire for five new taps on his land for mobile homes he leases out. It was made clear to Mr. Beck that if a tenant were to move out, Mr. Beck would be responsible for honoring the commitment to use water. Mr. Goran stated that the EPD rules state that each home must have its own meter. Mr. Goran also stated the meters could be placed on Airline School Road and Mr. Beck would be responsible for running service lines to each home or a 2" line could be run down Tree Farm Road and meters placed on that line. Mr. Carlton stated the Board would take the information under consideration, but that no action would be taken tonight. Ms. Higginbotham asked if this does not reach the level of developer status and Mr. Goran stated this project is slightly different than a standard developer project. Following discussion after Mr. Beck left, the consensus of the Board was if Mr. Beck wants the line on Tree Farm Road, he would be responsible for paying the cost. Mr. Goran stated that since the Authority would own the line, he would insist that a contractor approved by the Authority install the line even if Mr. Beck pays for it.

Request for water service – Ellis Drive

Following some discussion, Ms. York made a motion that if the owner pays the entire cost of construction, the owner can have access to Authority water. Mr. Harper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Director's Comments

Mr. Goran stated that HCWSA has been struggling with the completion of the audit as we have not received the kind of assistance we expected from the former office manager. Ms. Higginbotham asked if the auditor was able to assist and Ms. Neal said to some degree but they must remain independent.

Members' Comments

Mr. Haley stated that two oak trees had fallen on the HCWSA property on Reed Creek Highway, and he would like to see someone remove that wood to make use of it. Mr. Carlton stated that while he understood, he was concerned about someone being hurt on Authority property while removing the wood. Ms. Higginbotham stated we could have someone sign a release. No action was taken.

Mr. Haley asked who installed the water line off Jane Road and Mr. Goran replied that it was paid for by the developer building the subdivision.

Mr. Justice stated that the Board should think really hard about spending \$145,000 on getting water to just two chicken houses.

Mr. Harper asked for clarification on the issues with the Elberton Highway poultry operation wells. Mr. Carlton and Ms. York stated the owners need to find out what the wells are capable of producing and whether the iron and manganese issues can be handled with a proper removal system.

Upcoming Meetings

After some discussion about Board Member availability, it was agreed to move the meeting to February 24th.

Adjournment

Mr. Justice made a motion to adjourn. Ms. York seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Wade Carlton, Chairman

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