

Burke Cooperative Water Board Meeting

April 19, 2016 – 9:00 AM at Rutherford College Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ralph Johnson.

PRESENT

Max Chapman, Brentwood
Gary McClure, Rutherford College, Mayor
Ralph Johnson, Brentwood
John Leger, Rutherford College
David Wortman, Rhodhiss
Robert Turner, Brentwood
Troy Houser, Brentwood
Jason Green, Morganton
Cathy Dockery, Burke County
Chris Hollifield, Burke County
Kevin Clark, Brentwood
Roger Lowery, Brentwood
Bill Satterwhite, Rutherford College
Jon Pons, Icard Water
Wayne Annas, Rutherford College Council
Kevin Greer, Hickory

ABSENT

Jim Gorsuch, Icard Water
Shawn Pennell, Hickory
Johnnie Carswell, Burke County Commissioner
Jarrett Guy, Morganton
Arthur Delaney, Rhodhiss
Kenneth Geathers, Rutherford College
David Perkins, Brentwood
Jerry Conley, Valdese
Keith Farris, Burke County
Drew Foy, Morganton
Alan Wood, Burke Development, Inc.
Hope Hopkins, Burke Development, Inc.
Shannon Caudill, Valdese
Seth Eckard, Valdese

Chairman Johnson welcomed attendees to the Burke Cooperative Water Board meeting and asked Robert Turner to open the meeting in prayer. The Minutes of the March 15, 2016 meeting were reviewed and approved as submitted..

Old Business: Chairman Johnson asked if there was any old business. Chairman Johnson asked for information from any water purveyors attending if they knew of contractors available to put pipe in the ground. This was a continuing matter from the previous Water Board meeting that addressed the shortage of qualified, insured and properly licensed contractors who can put pipe in the ground for small and large projects. Several companies and individuals were mentioned: Iron Mountain Contractors of eastern Tennessee, Davis Grading Co. of Shelby, NC, Clint Caldwell, Shawn Abee, Ronnie Franklin, Keith Avery of Oak Hill (Morganton), Bell Contractors of Statesville, Eggers of Banner Elk, and pump station contractor James C. Harris of between Statesville and Winston-Salem.. Chairman Johnson said his reason for bringing up the problem is the inability of water providers such as Brentwood to get more than one or two bids per project. Bill Satterwhite brought to the attention of the Water Board a newspaper article on water contaminants and decisions related to contaminant levels. He said the legislative powers heard about the problem and introduced a bill to establish acceptable levels of specific contaminants. Jason Green pointed out that the article was addressing contaminants in well water and not in surface water. He stated there is a great difference between ground water and surface water. He also stated that the state cannot legislate standards below the standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He said the EPA is the “floor” of standards and states cannot legislate standards below that “floor.” Kevin Greer stated that the bill in the legislature is “getting the cart before the horse” and its provisions were added by people who were not informed on the standards already in place. He said he does not think the bill is going anywhere. Bill Satterwhite said it appears a lot of what is happening as a direct result of the water fiasco that took place in Flint, Michigan. He suggested that local water providers should let local consumers know just how good our water system is. He noted that the people need to know that.

New Business: Chairman Johnson asked if there was any new business. No new business was brought up.

Round Table Discussion: Chairman Johnson asked for participation in the Round Table discussions.

John Leger of Rutherford College reported that nothing is going on with Rutherford College water, no leaks and no new taps installed.

Chris Hollifield, Burke County Engineer/General Services Director introduced Cathy Dockery who was brought on board to “dig Burke County out of some administrative holes.” He noted that she has been successful in doing that. He said as a result of her success in that area, her responsibilities are being expanded to the title of operational manager. She came to Burke County after 35 years with Leviton in Morganton. In the Burke County water system, Chris Hollifield reported that addition of a lot of residential and small user customers coming onto the system.

Jason Green of announced that Morganton has started its demolition of clear wells that are scheduled for replacement. He also pointed to a problem with “unaccounted-for” water used by Volunteer Fire Departments and pointed to a problem of fire departments not knowing how to use hydrants in extinguishing fires and in training sessions. He said one VFD was pulling four lines off a six-inch waterline, which can damage waterlines and create water pressure issues with water customers in the vicinity. He also noted the potential for damaging fire hydrants by the way they are activated and deactivated. He said he believes the state will address the problems caused by unaccounted-for water and pressure and damage issues arising from VFDs improper use of water and hydrants. He said he is drafting a letter to volunteer fire departments and the mailing will contain a spreadsheet that will make it easy to report the amount of water fire departments are using in fighting fires and in training operations. Getting VFDs to properly use hydrants and to report the amount of water used will be a benefit to all of us.

Jon Pons of Icard Township Water stated that Icard has installed a lot of taps and replacing some taps. He said regular maintenance is ongoing and they’re trying to stay busy.

David Wortman of the Rhodhiss water system said not much is going on with that system. He said he feels it would be good to get someone to come in, at no cost, to provide training in areas where training is needed. It was mentioned that the North Carolina Rural Water Association can provide training at little or no cost in most areas where a training need is indicated.

Kevin Greer of Hickory reported that installation of taps in Hickory is up, probably because of the improving economy. He said the city installed 160 taps last month, mostly around Lake Hickory, and that the city has installed 172 taps already in this month. He projects that our region will end up in drought again this year and there will be a need to get the word out to the people. He said Hickory is proposing a 1.8 percent increase to the city’s water rate, which will add about 78 cents per month to customers’ water bills. He said also that Hickory is replacing 7,000 feet of 18-inch waterline.

Kevin Clark of Brentwood Water, reported doing regular maintenance, fixing leaks, and finishing a line extension in the Lake James area. He said the system’s Propst Road project has been delayed, but that a part of that project including Stroupe Street, is being done. He also said there is a need to develop a system of locating all underground waterlines, especially where road beds have been changed and sometimes even putting waterlines on opposite sides of the road from what the maps show. Jason Green of Morganton agreed on the need to adequately locate all lines along roadways and suggested that the Water Board members consider going in together in acquiring a ground-penetrating radar unit which would be shared among Water Board members. He said training on the use of ground-penetrating radar is available through the companies providing the units as well as help from NCRWA. Kevin Clark said a less costly but also a less effective way to locate underground lines would be acquiring a listening device. This matter will be brought up at a later date.

The Water Board meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m. **The next meeting of the Water Board will be May 17, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. at Rutherford College Town Hall.**

Minutes by Troy Houser, Water Board Secretary.