

**City of Aberdeen
Council Work Session
August 3, 2009**

Present: Mayor Bennett, Council President Hiob, Councilwoman Elliott, Councilman Kupferman, Councilwoman Young

Absent: None

Also Present: City of Aberdeen

Douglas Miller, City Manager

Matthew Lapinsky, Director of Public Works

Randy Rudy, Chief of Police

Monica Correll, City Clerk

Doris Manner, Recording Secretary

Maryland Environmental Service (MES)

Ellen Frketic, Chief of Engineering, Water/Waste Water

Jerry Wheeler, Executive Director of Water/Waste Water

Duane Wilding, Senior Engineer

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Bennett in Council Chambers at 4:30 p.m.

MES Presentation on Water Options

Mr. Miller introduced the MES representatives and said he called on their expertise and experience with these issues. The presentation did not describe a ground-up study.

Mr. Wilding's presentation outlined these previous studies: Aberdeen and APG Joint Water Use Agreement, Aberdeen Preliminary Design Study Bldg. 250 Water Treatment Plant APG, and the COPT Final Report – Water Treatment Facility for Harford County/Aberdeen. The additional supply needed for the City and APG is 5.0 and 8.0. Mr. Wilding also included studies on the Well Supply, Chapel Hill Water Treatment Plant. Other alternatives were addressed including Chapel Hill with Susquehanna Intake and the Big Inch.

Council President Hiob asked about blending well water. Ms. Frketic said the City source involves salinity, and pumping could result in MTBE. Mr. Wheeler said the Havre de Grace Plant is near the throat of the Susquehanna that opens to the flats and salinity levels are lower.

Councilwoman Young mentioned that currently water is being treated for perchlorate.

Mr. Lapinsky said these wells are off-line and being rehabbed because levels were rising.

Councilwoman Young asked the time frame if a Waste Water Treatment Plant was approved.

Ms. Frketic stated that permits could take a year or longer, one year for the design, and 1 ½ - 2 years for construction. Councilwoman Young noted that the BRAC deadline would have passed.

Ms. Frketic indicated that multiple water sources are excellent for the City.

Councilwoman Elliott noted that Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) only allows water for APG. Mr. Lapinsky replied that APG is a separate issue. Mr. Miller agreed with the concerns; however, at APG some uses will disappear and others will be needed.

Councilman Kupferman referred to the proposal from the County for 300,000 GPD now and 600,000 GPD at a later date. He asked if the City could insert a Buy-Back Clause. Ms. Frketic said the County water is being guaranteed. Councilman Kupferman was looking ahead for a long range solution because building a plant will not require additional County water. Mr. Miller said the 300,000 GPD now is for BRAC. Even if the City builds a surface plant, the City should have a diversified source. Councilman Kupferman asked where APG figures into the financing. Mr. Miller replied that this was only a City issue. Councilman Kupferman noted two needs now which are 0 – 4 years and a long term solution. Projects were approved and water allocations were made. Water should be made available for these things. The City and County proposal seems to be a “good deal”.

Mr. Miller stated that the 6th Amendment Preamble mentions 4 figures, 300,000 and 600,000 GPD, the Abingdon Plant, and a 1,100,000 ultimate need. Now, the City will only be obligated for 300,000 GPD.

Councilwoman Elliott was concerned with years from now if development does not happen. She asked if taxpayers would have to make up this loss because there is no guarantee this won't happen. Mr. Miller said the debt service would be paid through connection fees. The 300,000 would require \$5,000,000 – 64 EDU's are needed to finance this. The cost for a surface water plant is frightening.

Councilwoman Elliott would like to know a final figure. Mr. Lapinsky and Mr. Miller said the variables could change. The Enterprise Fund fees change and the \$5,000,000 is a onetime charge.

Councilman Kupferman asked the time length of the APG contract. Mr. Miller said it was for 10 years and this time frame ends this year. Mr. Wheeler said 10 years is usually the time frame for this type of project. Councilman Kupferman asked if it would be unreasonable for APG to share in the costs. Mayor Bennett stated that APG is aware of this possibility.

Councilwoman Elliott asked if any water had been held back for BRAC projects. Mr. Miller stated that a few final plat subdivisions had water allocations and others do not. Mr. Lapinsky said the Health Department stops forward progress without capacity being identified.

Council President Hiob said the Hogg Robinson Group (HRG) study has a 3 ½ year time line which includes building a plant. He agreed that multiple sources are good for everyone. A Buy-Back clause is important for the City and it could be a “deal breaker for this issue”. Harford County has a debt service and a Buy-Back clause can be bad for them but good for the City. He indicated that he may vote for the 300,000 GPD at \$5,000,000 with a Buy-Back clause.

Mr. Lapinsky said the Council should see a copy of a Buy-Back clause. Council President Hiob said the City could set its own requirements.

Council President Hiob said the FY 2010 budget has an estimated decrease of \$4,000,000 from last year because of the lack of water. The City has to facilitate new construction. Mr. Miller replied that there cannot be construction without water.

Mr. Wheeler said the County may not want an open-ended Buy-Back Clause because of their debt service. Council President Hiob said \$5,000,000 is more to the City than it is to the County.

Councilman Kupferman said connection fees in Harford County are \$20,000 and \$18,000 in Havre de Grace. Mr. Miller said Aberdeen connection fees are \$14,400 now and could be recalculated to \$15,100 or \$15,300. Councilman Kupferman said the amount should be higher to help the debt service for a new plant.

Councilwoman Elliott said the agreement should be in the best interest of the City and its residents. She wanted to examine all possible loopholes and consider the City not the County.

Council President Hiob agreed that 300,000 GPD can jump start projects for tax revenues, etc. for the City.

Mayor Bennett thanked MES for their report which was obtained at a “minimal cost”.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.