



Stafford County Utilities Commission
October 8, 2024

- I. Call to Order– Mr. Edwards, Utilities Director, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.
- II. Roll Call – Those present at the meeting were; Mr. Greg Cox; Ms. Tiffany Epple; Mr. Alan Glazman; Mr. Nathan Reese; Ms. Nancy Sullivan; Mr. Greg Cox; Mr. Floyd Bundrant; and Mr. Ben Litchfield. Staff members present were Mr. Chris Edwards, Utilities Director; Jon Brindle, Environmental Compliance Manager; and Ms. Tyler Girsham, Administrative Specialist.
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes—Ms. Epple motioned, seconded by Mr. Glazman, to approve the meeting minutes from May 14th, 2024, as presented. The motion passed 7 – 0.
- IV. Presentations by the Public – Ms. Kristen Maxon from 1816 Richmond Highway was present. Ms. Maxon asked what does it mean with the Utilities Commission announcing that they are going undisclosed with operations? She asked about the impact of the Stafford public not being informed. She says January 2025, November, and December meetings have been canceled. She mentioned that document 8 of R24-187, Utility Impact Assessment, was not found in Stafford documents, at least to the public. She says number 3 impacts public facilities and services from project A236 to decommission the Stafford Middle School pump station and construct a gravity main to Old Potomac Church Rd. What is the impact on the neighborhoods? Memorandum May 22, 2024, number 4: repurposing water for data centers is reconfiguring utilities' expensive footprint and the taxpayer's questionable affordability at this cost. She says it states that there are no negative impacts with the comp plan amendment to the data center, and water demand is not quantified in the application. May 14th Utilities Commission, minutes, page 6 of today's packet, item C; The Potomac Church rezoning amendment with Amazon data service agreement; is this agreement defined for the board of supervisors and the public? She states that we, the public, have not seen it, and the board has claimed it has not come forth. The new wrinkle concerns clean water reuse and insurability for the safety of Stafford County. She says on page 35 of 2595 of the capital projects of public construction center service facility study, the study defines utilities as having to be relocated due to the utility demands, which has a huge impact on the Stafford Community.

Mr. Cox asked if anyone would like to comment on any of the items Ms. Maxon addressed. Ms. Girsham addressed Ms. Maxon's concerns about the “canceled” meetings. She explained that as of February 2024, the Utilities Commission adopted revised bylaws to hold quarterly instead of monthly meetings. The next tentatively scheduled meeting is Tuesday, February 11th. Next, Mr. Edwards addressed some topics Ms. Maxon brought up. The first was about the reuse facility; he explained that the Board approved the water services agreement with Amazon and the County in July. He also explained the infrastructure needed for this reuse facility and what portions Amazon will provide funding to construct. The second item Mr. Edwards addressed was relocating the Stafford County Middle School pump station. He explained that there is about a 2000-foot line of gravity sewer that can be constructed to replace the pump station, and with the construction of elementary school number eighteen, the schools are going to take on that project. He mentioned



that this replacement would help lower operating costs for the department. The last item that Mr. Edwards addressed was the relocation of the Utilities facility. He explained that our current facility is located on Coal Landing Rd, built in the 1990s, and some buildings even in the 1970s. He said this relocation has been a part of our CIP plan for the last two to three years, and we need to either find a different building or a building location for the department to relocate to and build a much larger facility to keep pace with growing needs. He further explained that this is relocation includes our admin building, warehouse space and field operations.

Mr. Glazman asked what the plan is if the data centers use more water than they planned. What is the risk if their projections are too conservative? Mr. Edwards replied that they are currently budgeting each building to use about a quarter million gallons daily. He explained that there is roughly a ten-year build from start to finish, and over those ten years, we should be able to see if they will go over their allotments of water, but he also believes that data centers will become more efficient over those ten years. He further explained how the data centers are always looking to improve efficiency, how the reuse will function, how it will become a new water source for the County, and a new source of revenue for the department.

Mr. Cox asked if he had missed a piece of information. He remembered one data center but not twenty-six. Mr. Edwards said yes and explained where these data centers are proposed to be in the County, if and when the rezoning was redone and how much reuse water they will use.

Mr. Bundrant stated that he saw a comment where AWS pointed out that Stafford County was kind of deficient in some areas and asked Mr. Edwards if he could explain some of those deficiencies. Mr. Edwards said he believes that deficiencies were the systems that the department does not have in place yet, but AWS is willing to help build these. He explained what needed to be built, the time and funding needed to complete these and how they will need to use potable water for a short period of time. He mentioned that the Stafford Technology campus will transition from potable water to reuse through a phasing plan that we have requested. He said there would be proffers and rezoning, and we plan to reach a water services agreement.

Mr. Litchfield asked how many more data centers we could realistically take on. Mr. Edward stated that it was not the most straightforward answer but went on to explain the two wastewater facilities, their capacities and the two types of data centers. He said that with our current demands and capacities, we could support double the number of water-cooled data centers that we currently have. After that capacity is taken up, they must go to air-cooled configurations.

- V. Public Hearing – Proposed Ordinance O24-22: Mr. Edwards gave this presentation on O24-22. He explained how traditional drain fields work and the types of alternative drain fields commonly used today. He stated that we would focus on an alternative discharging sewage treatment system and explain how the treatment process works with that system. He mentioned that these systems are currently prohibited in the County unless you apply for a waiver after meeting certain requirements. He explained that the County currently has a project in the works, but the site cannot be developed unless it has one of these systems. This project is Fire Station Number Eight, and we are looking to amend the code to allow county facilities to use alternative sewer systems



if there is no alternative site to put the facilities in or if the site is sensitive. For Fire Station Number Eight, this location would be considered sensitive to ensure that the county has proper response times for the area in which it would service the county. Mr. Edwards also mentioned that the two big provisions would be that the project would be outside the urban services area and that soil conditions do not support the facility.

Ms. Eppler asked how the County plans to maintain these systems, especially for commercial usage. She knows that they need to be maintained, which can be costly. Mr. Edwards replied that he believes that the maintenance will be contracted out to a vendor specializing in the maintenance of these systems and that there is a lot of upfront education and signage of proper usage at the facility to ensure they are following recommended procedures for maintaining and upkeeping these alternative systems. He did mention that we already have fire stations that run successfully on a drain field. Ms. Eppler asked how the maintenance cost of these systems would be factored in. Mr. Edwards explained that it would be factored in during their annual operating budget discussions.

Mr. Reece asked what type of maintenance is required for these systems and how you know when the system fails. Mr. Edwards explained that maintenance is monthly and what is completed during the monthly visit. Mr. Cox asked if we were talking about Pureflow systems. Mr. Edwards replied yes; he believes they are one of the manufacturers of these systems.

Mr. Bundrant asked if we were asking to do an alternative system for this project. Mr. Edwards explained that we are asking for a Code change and how that code change would affect this project and other potential county projects/facilities in the next fifteen to twenty years.

- VI. Public Comment on O24-22—Ms. Maxon came up and said there are 30,000 drain fields in Stafford County, and the urban services area is quite large within the center. The public is concerned that if these restrictions continue, they will need to know about this ahead of time so they can plan.

Mr. Edwards stated that drain fields are currently not allowed in the urban services area, and anyone in that area must connect to public water and sewer. He highlighted that this code change is for facilities outside the urban services area.

Ms. Eppler asked how many current county facilities operate off this system. She assumed that Hartwood Elementary does. Mr. Edwards said he believes Hartwood Elementary operates off a conventional drain field. Mr. Brindle said that Hartwood has a package plant and a discharge permit. Mr. Brindle stated that Hartwood Elementary is the only county facility he knows of operating off that type of system.

Mr. Cox asked if the County Attorney had reviewed these changes. Mr. Edwards confirmed that the County Attorney has reviewed and given a thumbs up on all three code changes being brought before the Commission tonight.



Ms. Eppler motioned, seconded by Ms. Sullivan, to send the recommendation to the Board. The motion passed 7-0.

- VII. Public Hearing—Proposed Ordinance O24-26: Mr. Brindle introduced himself and explained that he would present the next two public hearing items. The first one concerns a change to our reservoir protection ordinance. He explained that our reservoirs provide 100% water in Stafford County; we withdraw and treat about 10 million gallons daily or about 3.7 billion gallons annually. The Smith Lake reservoir is supplied by Aquia Creek, Beaverdam Creek and others. The Lake Mooney Reservoir is filled from a pumping station on the Rappahannock. Abel Lake is no longer used, but water will be transferred in future plans. The water plants filter and disinfect the source water but cannot remove heavy chemicals. Mr. Brindle explained all the changes to the County Code that were being proposed to the Commission for recommendation to take to the Board.

Mr. Cox asked if we have lifted any restrictions from Abel Lake or if they are all still in place. Mr. Brindle confirmed that all restrictions are still in place and apply to Abel Lake. He explained that the 200-foot barrier applies around the lake or reservoir. Mr. Edwards said our goal is to preserve the buffers, especially on some of our newer reservoirs.

Mr. Edwards asked how many of these are already covered in the ENS Code and rules through Parks and Rec. Mr. Brindle explained that park rules overlap some regarding water sports and swimming. The ENS controls will overlap a little bit regarding tree and vegetation removal. Mr. Edwards also stated that no swimming in drinking water reservoirs is a state regulation as well. Mr. Bundrant asked if this action is preventative or more of a direct action in response to what we have observed at the reservoirs. Mr. Brindle explained that it is a mixture of the two. Mr. Bundrant then asked who these would be enforced and how they would be enforced. Mr. Brindle explained that the Utilities and Sheriff's departments can enforce it. Ms. Sullivan mentioned that for Smith Lake, the Quantico Marine Military police could also respond on their side. Mr. Cox asked if a proposal could be made to notify the people of the rules. Mr. Edwards said that we could work with our Development Services Department and create a one-page rule sheet that could be given out. He mentioned we could also do social media campaigns as well to notify the public. Ms. Eppler asked if there were larger penalties for builders or entities violating these rules. Mr. Edwards explained that most of that would be covered under stormwater and erosion control, but if this code change goes through, we would have some grounds to apply an additional penalty.

Mr. Bundrant asked how we came up with the one hundred dollars a day per violation. Mr. Brindle explained that that amount has become a standard for low-level violations. Mr. Bundrant asked if this was a local standard, and Mr. Brindle said yes, it is more of a local standard.

Mr. Glazman asked how we address potential cyber-attacks on our water systems and what Stafford County is doing regarding protection. Mr. Edwards explained that the Department helps fund a Cyber Security position in the IT department. He also explained the SCADA system that is in place at the water and wastewater facilities and what metrics we can see with it. He said that the department works with IT to make sure all cyber protocols are being followed, and we try to



keep the network offline as much as possible to prevent attacks, but we cannot always keep it offline.

- VIII. Public Comment on O24-26 – Ms. Maxon came up to represent the people. She said she just heard that there's a quarter million gallons a day in each building, supposedly 26 and maybe more because there are others across 95. However, they will probably be air-cooled. She asked to what degree Aquia Creek will be pumped and whether people will lose their creeks and streams in their back yard. She states she knows that RPA is 100 feet but we are talking about 200 that's specific terminal areas when the intake of the water is taken, she would imagine. She asked if there was a fence so people knew they might be violating a law or a sign. She mentioned that Lake Mooney has parcels under the lake in the GIS for 10K per acre; she was wondering if this means the County owns the lake.

Mr. Edwards explained how the 200 foot buffer came about and his previous experience with this when he worked at Spotsylvania; for example, how their planning and zoning department would make builders and homeowners aware of these additional buffers.

Mr. Reece asked if we will add signage to the reservoirs for public notice. Mr. Brindle said there are already signs up at the reservoirs with any public access discussing the boating and swimming restrictions. He also mentions that there are buoys in the water around the intakes that tell you when you are getting too close. Mr. Litchfield asked if we knew of any homeowners within that buffer area. Mr. Brindle said there are some areas where it is county-owned property, but some people currently have a property and a property to be developed within that buffer area. Mr. Litchfield said he would highly encourage notifying the public of these buffers. Mr. Edwards stated that we will work with all departments to ensure these buffers are communicated to the public in various ways. Mr. Brindle stated that we will work very hard on communication to ensure the public is educated about these changes.

Ms. Eppe motioned, seconded by Ms. Sullivan, to send the recommendation to the Board. The motion passed 7-0.

- IX. Public Hearing – Proposed O24-23: Mr. Edwards mentioned to the Commission that although the paper advertisement was for the septage rates and policy changes, we will only hear the septic policy changes tonight.

Mr. Brindle started his presentation by giving some background information about septage in Stafford County. He explained that no other jurisdictions accept septage from outside their area and that sixty percent of the septage received at the Little Falls Run Plant is from outside Stafford County. Mr. Brindle went over the upcoming projects planned for both wastewater plants. Br. Brindle also went over some of the issues the plants are dealing with and concerns that the department has regarding safety and compliance once construction begins at both plants. Mr. Brindle briefly summarized the code changes that we are presenting, mainly highlighting the County to not allow outside county septage moving forward.



Mr. Glazman asked how much outside waste is hauled into the county. Mr. Edwards explained that about 10 loads of outside waste go to our LFR plant daily and that math shows that it doubles the amount of monthly waste LFR handles. He also explains how hard it is to remove the solids from that type of waste and its overall effect on the plant's operating abilities and longevity.

Ms. Epple stated that she asked several questions. She asked why we are accepting waste from outside of the county. Does the county receive some profit from this? What is the benefit of doing this? Mr. Brindle explained that we charge a fee for bringing it in and mentioned that the fees are from 1996. He stated that since the fees have not been changed since 1996, we are nowhere near recouping the expenses it costs us to treat the waste we charge. He said that as to why we are doing it, it has been this way since he started with the County, and it seems to have been done since it was established in 1996. Mr. Edwards said that he believes it might have started due to haulers having mixed loads from multiple counties back in the day. Ms. Epple asked how that was reinforced and if they had to show tickets for all the houses they went to that made up their load. Mr. Brindle said that we are working on the best enforcement measures, such as random spot checks and continue to provide us with the addresses of the houses they pumped along with contact information should it be requested.

Next, Ms. Epple asked, when talking about rates, will we one day accept outside waste again and will the residents of Stafford help pay for some of this, too? Mr. Edwards explained that the way it is currently worded if accepted, has a strong potential that we will never return to accepting outside waste. He explained that since the fees we charge the haulers do not fully cover the expenses to treat the waste, residents in the urban services area pay a little to help treat this waste. He stated this is one of the reasons we are slowly increasing those fees for the hauled waste over time to help offset those expenses fully. He mentioned that the safety concerns are a big driving factor and help justify this change to not accept outside county waste. Mr. Brindle mentioned that if we did decide to accept outside county waste again, we would have to hold a public hearing and bring it back to the Commission and Board for approval.

Mr. Cox stated that the current system is arduous at best. He asked if we could adopt code changes to make the enforcement process easier. Mr. Edward explained how future asset management could help us track that and work with other departments in the county to ensure compliance. He mentioned that this would be a long-term process that would take a few years to implement. Ms. Epple asked if there is a fine in place if a hauler comes in and tries to dump a load from outside the county. Mr. Brindle said no fines are in place, but we could withdraw their authorization to dump waste at our facilities. Mr. Cox stated that he would support digitizing the system. Ms. Sullivan agreed with Mr. Cox. Mr. Reece asked how often we look at sewer rates. Mr. Edwards explained the last multi-year rate increase that applies to fiscal years 2024 through 2026 and that we intend to bring back around multiple-year increases for fiscal years 2027 through 2029. Mr. Cox asked for an example of a septage rate from another locality. Mr. Brindle said King George was seventy-five dollars per one thousand gallons when they accepted waste compared to our eighteen dollars per one thousand gallons.



X. Public Comment on O24-23: No public comment

Ms. Eppler motioned, seconded by Ms. Sullivan, to send the recommendation to the Board. The motion passed 7-0.

XI. Director's Report – Mr. Edwards started by highlighting some of the major items that went to the Board of Supervisors from June to the present day, including the AWS Water Services Agreement approved in July. Next, Mr. Edwards went over a few 3R updates, including the Ferry Farm and Chatham Drive Water Main Replacements, Duff Park Line extension, Smith Lake – Phase 2, planning updates for the Water and Sewer Master Plan and addition of the Reuse Master Plan. Ms. Eppler asked if Duff Park was on septic, and Mr. Edwards confirmed it was.

Mr. Edwards handed over the remaining portion to Ms. Girsham to discuss upcoming items. Ms. Girsham informed the Commission members that their annual BACC holiday gifts would be mailed out in December and asked them to update their addresses if needed. Ms. Girsham also informed them that, at the moment, the next tentative scheduled meeting is for Tuesday, February 11th, 2025, at 7 pm. She said if things change, she will inform the Commission members immediately. She explained that the meeting would be their organizational meeting, and we would nominate a new chair and vice chair.

Mr. Edwards then asked the Commission if there were any topics about which they would like to hear more information. No one responded. Mr. Edwards mentioned that we could discuss more cyber security and SCADA information at one of the meetings next year.

XII. Unfinished Business – there was no Unfinished Business Discussed

XIII. New Business – there was no New Business Discussed

XIV. Adjournment – Mr. Glazman motioned, seconded by Ms. Eppler and approved unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m.