



Agenda

Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

7:00 PM December 05, 2024

Board Meeting Room, Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.

Public Charge

The Town of Hillsborough's Water and Sewer Advisory Committee pledges to the citizens of Hillsborough its respect. The committee asks citizens to conduct themselves in a respectful, courteous manner with the committee and with fellow citizens. At any time should any member of the committee or any citizen fail to observe this public charge, the chairperson or the chairperson's designee will ask the offending person to leave the meeting until that individual regains personal control. Should decorum fail to be restored, the chairperson or the chairperson's designee will recess the meeting until such time that a genuine commitment to this public charge is observed.

1. **Call to order and welcome of guests**
2. **Agenda changes and approval**
3. **Minutes review and approval**
 - A. Draft October minutes
4. **Updates**
 - A. Utilities status report
 - B. Rate model and financing-Raftelis to analyze the rate structure
 - C. CIP Updates
5. **Discussion**
 - A. Vote on Ad Hoc Committee
 - B. Fluoride/Lead
6. **Reports from Board of Commissioners meetings**
 - A. Meeting Oct. 14 (Beeler/Robinson)
 - B. Meeting Oct. 17 (Sykes/Rawlins)
 - C. Meeting Oct. 28 (Robinson/Rasheed)
 - D. Meeting Nov. 12 (Rawlins/Weston)
 - E. Meeting Nov. 25 (Rasheed/Beeler)
7. **Assignments for Board of Commissioners meetings**
 - A. Meeting Oct. 14 (Beeler/Robinson)
 - B. Meeting Oct. 17 (Sykes/Rawlins)
 - C. Meeting Oct. 28 (Robinson/Rasheed)

101 E. Orange St., PO Box 429, Hillsborough, NC 27278
 919-732-1270 | www.hillsboroughnc.gov | @HillsboroughGov

8. Future agenda items

9. Adjournment

Interpreter services or special sound equipment for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act is available on request. If you are disabled and need assistance with reasonable accommodations, call the Town Clerk's Office at 919-296-9443 a minimum of one business day in advance of the meeting.

Minutes

WATER AND SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular meeting

7 p.m. Oct. 3, 2024

Board Meeting Room of Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.



Present: Chair Jenn Sykes, Vice Chair Daniel Rawlins, Members Grace Beeler, Mo Rasheed, Steed Robinson and Barry Weston, and Commissioner Robb English

Staff: Environmental Engineering Supervisor Bryant Green and Town Manager Eric Peterson

1. Call to order and welcome of guests

Chair Jenn Sykes called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. She took roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

2. Agenda changes and approval

There were no changes to the agenda.

Motion: Member Steed Robinson moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Member Barry Weston seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

3. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on Aug. 1, 2024.

Motion: Member Grace Beeler moved to approve the Aug. 1, 2024, minutes as submitted. Weston seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

4. Updates

A. Utilities status report

Environmental Engineering Supervisor Bryant Green presented the utilities status report. Discussion on presented topics included:

- The town has over 1600 housing units in development right now and 500-600 active applications that could come online but who are not committed yet. The river outfall stations are at critical capacity, and once Waterstone South and all committed projects are done, the Cates Creek station will be at capacity. There will be a meeting soon to figure out a plan for future capacity.
- The Utilities Department has an accepted offer for an administrative assistant position.
- There was discussion about the town's plan for mitigation after disasters, given aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Green reported that there has been an internal effort to review emergency action plans.

B. Rate model and financing

This item was discussed after Item 5A.

Green gave an update on the rate study from last year and reported that the town is looking into the possibility of implementing alternative structures in place of the current minimum charge based on

consumption. Town Manager Eric Peterson provided some background on the process of working with Raftelis to develop alternative models. Green presented the current model to the committee. There was discussion of a potential conservation wall where customers start conserving water more because of the rate they have to pay.

There was discussion among committee members about whether this could be a topic for an ad hoc committee or a task force, as discussed in Item 5A. There was agreement to wait until the Board of Commissioners makes a decision about the ad hoc committee structure. The data will be presented to town staff by Raftelis in 2025, and then the Board of Commissioners can decide whether they would like to convene a committee to review the model options.

5. Discussion

A. Proposal to Board of Commissioners Sept. 20

There was discussion of the future structure and meeting frequency of the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee and of the conversation that took place on that topic at the joint Board of Commissioners meeting on September 20.

The committee referenced Town Manager Eric Peterson's email outlining some potential options for the future of the committee.

There was discussion of the difference between the Board of Commissioner's goals and priorities compared to the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee's perspective.

There was discussion of transitioning the committee into an ad hoc committee to address issues as they arise and as the Board of Commissioners sees necessity to engage a committee to review certain topics in depth.

Quarterly or bi-annual meetings were raised as possibilities, giving the committee more regularity and providing them with the opportunity to give feedback on rates and the budget. It was noted that meeting regularly could allow committee members to stay up to date with pertinent issues.

Some committee members suggested that reading the utilities report gives a good enough summary of what is going on, and that a regular meeting might not be necessary. It was suggested that committee members could call a meeting if the utilities update warranted further discussion or if there were a major issue to address.

There was discussion of the Finance Department's calendar for setting the budget each year and the public's access to the budget process.

Committee members generally agreed that an ad hoc meeting makes the most sense, given the low frequency of action items and the limited resources of staff. It was noted that meetings can be more frequent once the Board of Commissioners has determined it would like the committee to reconvene.

There was discussion of the committee consisting of a pool of people who are interested in participating, and that meetings would take place with whomever could attend, but that a quorum would not be required. Green noted that the committee rules would need to be adjusted by the Board of Commissioners in that case.

The policing task force convened by Mayor Jen Weaver was raised as an example ad hoc committee.

Green said he would put together a proposal for the committee to review and approve at the December meeting, to then be brought before the Board of Commissioners next year.

There was discussion of the history of the committee's review of rate modeling and the Board of Commissioners' decision to take the rate model in a different direction from the committee's recommendations.

6. Reports from Meetings

A. Meeting August 12

Sykes reported that the Board of Commissioners used this meeting to plan for the joint meeting on August 26.

B. Meeting August 15

Robinson reported that this meeting included a public hearing on annexation and zoning requests for Waterstone South, which is moving forward. He said there was negotiation with the developer about whether or not to upgrade and/or replace the Elizabeth Brady pump station. Green added that the developer agreed to offer \$250,000 for interim upgrades. The replacement is already in the budget, and this agreement will help with filling the gap between when the developer wants the pump to come online and when it was initially planned for.

C. Meeting August 26

This meeting was discussed in Item 5A.

D. Meeting September 9

Member Mo Rasheed reported that there was discussion in this meeting about Waterstone South providing some additional funding for adding variable frequency drives to the system so the inline flow meters can communicate with the programmable logic controller devices to allow the pump to speed up and down as necessary in relation to the flow. The developer also agreed to pay system development fees earlier in the process, which can help get that project online sooner.

E. Meeting September 23

Green gave an update on the lead and copper mitigation project. A website is now online for property owners to report the material of their service line. He said that the town has 7,000 service connections. There are 900 unknown lines on the town side, and on the customer side, 3,000 are unknown. Letters will go out to customers in November. The town will soon start sampling at schools and daycare centers.

7. Assignments for Board of Commissioners meetings

- A. Meeting Oct. 14 (Beeler/Robinson)
- B. Meeting Oct. 17 (Sykes/Rawlins)
- C. Meeting Oct. 28 (Robinson/Rasheed)
- D. Meeting Nov. 12 (Rawlins/Weston)
- E. Meeting Nov. 25 (Rasheed/Beeler)

8. Future agenda items

No future agenda items were discussed.

9. Adjournment

Motion: Vice Chair Daniel Rawlins moved to adjourn the meeting. Weston seconded.

Sykes adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m. without a vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Freeman
Civil Engineering Technician
Staff support to the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

Approved: Month X, 202X

DRAFT



TOWN OF
HILLSBOROUGH

Utilities Department Status Report for Dec. 2024 (covering Nov. 2024)

PROJECT/ CATEGORY	STATUS
WTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both rebuilt raw water pumps are installed. The Hasell St booster pump is running on one pump due to the other pump's shaft breaking. A standby system has been placed in case of issues with the remaining pump. This station is responsible for pushing water to our north pressure zone and storage tank. The rebuilt pump is not due back until late November.
WWTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 2 of the wastewater plant master plan is kicking off. The site is hosting a pilot project for failing septic systems. See social media post of 12/4/24. Jeff is participating in a workgroup for the UNRBA next steps for Falls Lake rule revisions.
West Fork of the Eno Reservoir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reservoir is approximately 1 foot below normal.
Developments/ Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees for Persimmon at Cates Creek have not yet been paid sans engineering review fees. The lead service line inventory has been submitted to the state but evaluations remain underway. The Adron F. Thompson facility was granted a variance for setbacks from the Board of Adjustment. Field work is underway for both River and Starfield pumping stations. Negotiations with the property owner for Starfield booster station has been started. Report comments were provided to the consultant for Hasell St. water tank and US70 water main. A recent ruling on fluoride will have EPA reassessing acceptable recommended levels. The town will review any new recommendations and present to the board, if necessary, at that time, any suggested changes to its protocol. Currently, we are compliant with the limits and recommendations for fluoridation from the NC DHHS and dental industry and have included fluoride in our treatment process for decades as well as report annually on levels as required.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kim Copeland has joined us in the new administrative position. The Utilities Director is on intermittent FMLA to assist her husband with a new cancer diagnosis. During times of extended absence, she will designate key contacts in her stead, but generally will be on E-mail, regardless. At least two utilities staff members have assisted in western NC to assist in restoration efforts two separate times. Troy Miller is going to assist Asheville with backflow assembly assessments in December and January. Terry Rich returned to his former utility inspector position.
Water and Sewer Advisory Committee (WSAC) Activities	Two out of town vacancies are open and there have been no applicants in the past several months. WSAC is scheduled for 12/5 and generally will receive general updates. WSAC's routine work has generally been accomplished and there are discussions underway whether to transition to an ad hoc committee.

Memorandum

To: Mayor Mark Bell and
Board of Commissioners

From: Chair Jenn Sykes and
Water and Sewer Advisory Board Members

Date: Aug. 19, 2024

Subject: Joint WSAC/BOC Meeting Agenda Thoughts



The joint meeting of the Board of Commissioners and the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee is scheduled for Aug. 26, 2024, at your regularly scheduled workshop. The only agenda meeting topic we wish to discuss is the benefit and potential discontinuation of the Water and Sewer Advisory Committee.

The Water and Sewer Advisory Committee (WSAC) was born in 2003 from a task group formed in 2001 to help figure out what to do when Flint Fabrics suddenly closed, taking at least a third of the water revenue from the utility enterprise fund. For 24 years, with a mix of committee members having various perspectives from the entire service area, WSAC has tackled an amazing number of issues related to the utility's enterprise fund. These include policies about leak adjustments, disconnections, billing deposits, billing systems, irrigation, energy use/savings opportunities, water quality, drought and conservation policies, code changes and other initiatives. We have assisted routinely with outreach ideas and efforts, the utility assistance program, input on the budget, and -- most critical to the customer base -- rates (minimum volume, differential, structure, etc.).

However, all the above and more have essentially been established and settled and even revisited several times over the 24 years of the committee's existence. We are proud of all that WSAC has accomplished. As only an advisory committee, there is no decision-making authority; recommendations only may be made by the committee. We appreciate the consideration the Board of Commissioners has given to such when offered or requested.

As of late, WSAC has struggled with its purpose and wonders about its benefit to the town. We understand the board has been thinking about this as well. It may be the time to consider whether to continue as an advisory committee who meets routinely, a committee that only meets to tackle significant matters, or a disbanded committee with new task forces formed when relevant. Below are some thoughts and perspectives for discussion at our joint meeting on Aug. 26.

- All major matters have been resolved through code or policy.
- Some WSAC recommendations have not been adopted. Some topics have been taken up by WSAC multiple times under different membership with essentially the same outcome.

- It has been difficult to get participation in WSAC. We have had two out of town vacancies for several months and no applicants. This is not the first time we have gone months with a vacancy.
- No citizenry routinely attends the meetings, and WSAC cannot resolve their concerns at the meeting, regardless.
- Attendance by some (past members) was sporadic. Member attendance has ebbed and flowed many times and sometimes a quorum is lacking. The interest level has seemed to decline, likely due to a lack of new topics to address.
- We want to be respectful of staff time to prepare agendas, information, and topics for the meetings. While the information shared by staff at WSAC meetings is always helpful, recently, little or no action is required by WSAC.
- WSAC advises on the utilities enterprise fund which spans multiple departments beyond utilities. It has been increasingly difficult to get outside departmental attendance to hear directly from them about the budget, rates, or financial policies as in the past. The burden has fallen on utilities staff to prepare information that we would want to hear from others.

While we believe the biggest asset of WSAC is that all members are wonderful ambassadors of the utility to the community (who is often woefully uninformed about certain aspects of operations) the committee desires to discuss how WSAC could be either more useful to the BOC and town or whether it's time to suspend WSAC and only call upon members for brainstorming and input when a large issue arises.

We look forward to this discussion and are prepared for whatever outcome arises from it. If it is determined to pause or cease WSAC, a vote of such is requested from the Board after the discussion.

Cc: Town Manager Eric Peterson
Civil Engineer Tyler Freeman (staff liaison to WSAC)