

TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Office of The Town Clerk

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MAY 12, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Public Works Committee meeting was called to order at 1:45 p.m. by Chairman Samuel C. McLendon in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, Chairman McLendon and Committee Member Allen S. Wyett were present. Elected Officials, Town Council President William J. Brooks and Town Council President Pro-Tem Norman P. Goldblum were present. Also attending the meeting were: Town Manager Peter B. Elwell, Public Works Director Albert P. Dusey, Assistant Public Works Director Paul Brazil, Town Attorney John C. Randolph, and Town Clerk Mary A. Pollitt.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

III. DISCUSSION OF EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM OPTIONS

Chairman McLendon said the primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the pros and cons of the safety of the drinking water supply and emergency planning. He mentioned his handout on Considerations for Safe Drinking Water that he distributed at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. McLendon recognized the City of West Palm Beach's Director of Utilities, Ken Rearden.

Mr. Rearden reported the City of West Palm Beach has been under a high surveillance risk assessment on the water supply system since September 11, 2001, including purchasing a helicopter that surveys the system four times per day. He continued that high-tech monitoring equipment has been purchased including inter-connects with all neighboring cities allowing transfers to areas that may be affected by an emergency. He added that the City of West Palm Beach has a Homeland Security Task Force that meets monthly, and the City of West Palm Beach is 'on top' of situations and will help any affected neighboring community during emergencies.

Mr. McLendon, referring to an emergency reverse osmosis water system in conjunction with local golf clubs, said bottled water stocked by the Town's residents would be preferable to a limited r-o distribution system.

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Mr. Reardon, responding to Mr. Wyett's concerns regarding terrorists actions pertaining to the water system, said the water is sampled on a daily basis, not only at the water plant but in remote areas of the system, and the intention is to isolate the area where the contaminants are introduced into the system. He continued the contaminated water would be pumped out of the system, and new transmission lines would be installed if necessary. He added that the employees have been trained to deal with these methods, and a large quantity, truckloads, of contaminant would be required to compromise a system the size of West Palm Beach's.

Mr. Reardon said the system has a 10 million gallon/day standby well ^{for} ~~for~~ that would be activated and pumped into the "M" Canal system with an additional alternative of an 8 million/gallon/day aquifer storage-recovery well located on the Water Plant site. He explained that in an emergency if the lakes are contaminated, water could be drawn directly from the aquifer to the water treatment plant plus the inter-connect systems with Palm Beach County, Riviera Beach, Lake Worth, and Royal Palm Beach would allow transfer of water between communities.

Mr. Wyett asked what the average water usage was currently?

Mr. Reardon responded it was between 26 and 28 MGD depending on the day and the weather.

Mr. Wyett noted that the system had approximately a 1/3 reserve without considering the neighbors plus 8 million in an emergency situation.

Mr. Reardon said in an emergency situation, residents would not be without water but would be on a restricted basis with irrigation needs being reduced significantly. He said the system has seven re-pump stations and everyone needs to be aware of any unusual activities; however, those stations are manned 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and have surveillance cameras and intrusion alarms on them.

Public Works Director Dusey asked Mr. Reardon if the plant were no longer able to treat water, could the plant be isolated from the rest of the system sufficiently to allow pass-through of water?

Mr. Reardon responded that is possible because each of the transmission mains have isolation valves at the plant boundaries, and the plant can be isolated if necessary.

Town Manager Elwell reported that the Strategic Planning Board recommended that the water issue be addressed with the intention that the Town be properly protected in the future for the worse case scenario that might come to pass. He reported the consideration of the issue has been expedited because of the sense of urgency that all actions that can prudently be taken related to homeland security are being taken.

Mr. Elwell explained the proposal was meant to be a case of learning everything the Town needed to know to position the Town to be able to rapidly implement a system which may or may not require some infrastructure to be built. He continued the Board's recommendation

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was intended to have the three existing reverse osmosis systems at the local private golf courses modified to provide a drinking quality water that could be distributed through the pipes on the Island to provide a minimum supply of water on an emergency basis. He added the Committee members provided additional input, resulting in the scope of issues being considered at this meeting.

After commenting on the possibilities and costs of the Town installing its own reverse osmosis system, Councilman Wyett said he was satisfied with the City of West Palm Beach's actions to protect the water supply for Town residents. He added temporary reverse osmosis facilities could be located in the Town; however, sites with huge underground storage facilities are not easy to find in the Town.

Councilman Goldblum commented on the possibility of buying Army surplus units, bladders, that could be located on flat bed trucks that would provide an emergency water supply in various areas of Town as an option until a permanent water supply could be established and also suggested inquiries should be made regarding the costs of utilizing the three existing reverse osmosis systems in Town.

Mr. Elwell, responding to Mr. Goldblum's comments, said those questions would be or could have been analyzed through a \$21,000 study that would provide cost estimates of changes necessary to the present system. He suggested the Committee could reasonably decide to consider the issue over the next several years as recommended by the Strategic Planning Board; however, staff was prepared to move as quickly as deemed necessary by the Committee and the Town Council.

Mr. McLendon said the Committee lacked sufficient secret information regarding West Palm Beach's plans, and that lack made it difficult to form a recommendation by the Committee.

Mr. Wyett, citing two different scenarios, said the back up water supply system in West Palm Beach could supply sufficient water to Palm Beach in an emergency, but a contaminated distribution system would be a different story.

Mr. Reardon said if there were a terrorist attack and water contamination occurred, the Department of Defense would actually come to the area and take over the operation of the water system utilizing a mobile command system. He added that he would expect bladder systems, tank trucks, and different types of water plant systems would be brought into the area.

Alec Flamm, resident, said he agreed with Town Manager Elwell's comments and pointed out the system is working as it is intended to work. Mr. Flamm encouraged the Committee to consider the Strategic Plan section on water issues as follows:

1. The Town examine closely the need for any emergency water supply in the event that something does happen;

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2. If the possibility is fairly remote of a terrorist incident, low capital investment should be made and a rapid reaction program should be in effect;
3. In the event of an emergency, the three plants at the various country clubs could be upgraded to provide drinking water.

Mr. Wyett said the issue could be reviewed again in six months with West Palm Beach as the City updates the system. He suggested tabling the issue for six months within the scope of the Strategic Plan and to provide some comfort, perhaps, contacting one of five companies for quotes on an emergency reverse osmosis pallet system. He said 40 foot trailers would have pipes extending into the lake or ocean with reverse osmosis facilities, and as much water could be generated as the Town would want to pay for.

Mr. Goldblum said the Town Council should take a prudent stand; investigate what is available; go forward and not wait, because the citizens demand more than that. He added the cost should be determined and see what happens at that point.

Mr. McLendon asked if Mr. Goldblum was in favor of going ahead with the proposed study at a cost of \$21,000?

Mr. Goldblum responded the \$21,000 would identify the real problems and would remove the guess work from the issue.

Mr. Wyett commented anyone of the five firms who do business on a national basis would give the Town a figure, without charge, of what the costs would be, and no consultant is needed. He added the Town has five crossings from West Palm Beach that serve the residents, and the key for the three local sources, the country clubs, is the distribution system; with a potential source of bladders coming from the federal government.

Mr. Rearden said water pressure would be a problem using the country club systems and auxiliary pumps would probably be needed.

Mr. Elwell, summarizing the comments of Mr. Flamm, Mr. Wyett, and Mr. Goldblum, said the study would provide the technically determined answers to some of the questions providing the Council information to proceed with a prudent, reasonable approach to protect Town residents on this issue. He suggested if the Committee wanted to proceed with something immediately, the recommendation to the Town Council would be to go ahead with the study. He explained the study includes all of the elements discussed at this meeting with the exception of the bladder trucks with the staff providing information concurrently while the study was undertaken.

Mr. Elwell continued that if the Committee is comfortable that the City of West Palm Beach has taken the necessary steps and is doing everything that can reasonably be done at this moment and wants to revisit the issue in six months or another period of time knowing that staff will remain vigilant and bring forward any information to the Council viewed as critical and needing action sooner than a six month period, then the responsible decision would be a

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recommendation to the Town Council to continue to monitor the issue, learn what can be learned in six months, and review the issue in November or at another time.

Mr. Wyett said he concurred with the idea of being vigilant, observant, and deferring the issue for six months with a Committee meeting in November or sooner if the information indicates a need for that.

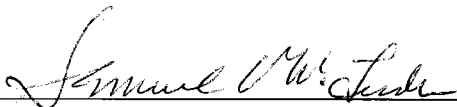
Mr. McLendon said he was not prepared to proceed with the study at this time and the recommendation to the Town Council, made and seconded, was: **RECOMMEND TO THE TOWN COUNCIL THAT A PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING BE HELD IN SIX MONTHS TO REVIEW THE ISSUE OF EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY OPTIONS OR SOONER IF INFORMATION DICTATES.**

IV. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.



Samuel C. McLendon, Chairman



Allen S. Wyett, Committee Member