

COMMON COUNCIL

Special Meeting

Joint meeting of the Water Board and Common Council

March 14, 1995

A special meeting of the Water Board and Common Council was held at 7:30 pm on March 14, 1995, at the Waste Water Administration Building, Route 12 South.

Present:

Chairman Albert Sullivan
Comm. David Wagoner
Comm. James Dunne
Comm. Bartolo Natoli
Comm. Winfield McIntyre
Comm. and Ald. George Carnrike
Comm. and Ald. Robert Rabinowitz

Mayor Joseph Biviano
Ald. Patrick McNeil
Ald. Barbara Schermerhorn
Ald. David (Sam) Symonds
Ald. Charles Angelino

Also:

Water Supt. Carl Ivarson
Asst. Water Supt. Fred Gray
Chief Deputy Chamberlain Gary Clark
Deputy CD Director Casey Jones
Deputy Clerk Donna Russell

Water Board Chairman Sullivan opened the meeting at 7:30 pm and explained that a week ago the Mayor asked for a joint-meeting of the Water Board and the Common Council to discuss where the water filtration project stands.

He explained that Jim Suozzo has been involved in every step along the way, attending nine of the 11 technical meetings held with Clough Harbour. Chairman Sullivan noted that Mr. Suozzo was in New York City this evening and unable to attend. He stated that when the last joint Water Board/Common Council meeting was held, one of the things agreed upon was that Mr. Suozzo would keep the Council informed of the progress. Also agreed upon was that when a final design was in hand, the Water Board would submit it to the Common Council for approval. He noted the Water Board does not have a final design at this time, it is still in the detail design stage.

Chairman Sullivan reviewed the steps leading to this evening including the joint meeting held between the Water Board and Common Council in April of 1994 when it was agreed to solicit proposals for a preliminary design on the cost of a dual system with infrastructure and the submission of an application for funding through the Farmers Home Administration (FHA). Mr. Sullivan noted the application was approved subject to the final submission.

Ald. Angelino asked what the estimate for the project is at this time. Chairman Sullivan stated that a conservative figure for the project is \$4,886,000 which would include a \$3,386,000 loan and a \$1,500,000 grant and noted that any reduction in the total cost would reduce the amount of the grant, not the loan.

Ald. Angelino asked how this would effect a resident's water bill. Mr. Sullivan explained that based on the estimate, the increase would be approximately \$.90 per 100 cubic feet. Chief Deputy Chamberlain Clark noted the additional cost, an average of \$97 per household, would be a gradual increase over a three year period. Ald. Symonds expressed concern that the increase could be up to three times greater per year for a household.

There was discussion relative to the filtration of the current system as well as a groundwater system. Ald. McNeil asked where the new wells would be located. Mr. Sullivan stated presently wells One and Two are at

the filter plant, well Three is located at Borden Avenue and proposed well Four will be approximately 400 feet from well Three in the same aquifer. He cautioned on the danger of relying on just a well source.

Ald. Angelino questioned the estimated cost of the dual system and noted cost comparisons were made of nearby municipalities that are in compliance which show their costs to be much lower than ours.

Mayor Biviano stated that what the Council must do is have Mr. Suozzo review the whole project and report back in 10 days. He said the Council wants to be fully informed before spending \$5,000,000. Ald. Symonds stated the Council would like Mr. Suozzo to give them an estimated cost for a total groundwater system. He noted that if such a system would save the City \$2,000,000 on the project, it should be considered.

Comm. Dunne stated that going with only a groundwater system would obviously cost less, but emphasized the advantages of having two sources. He noted that the anticipated cost per customer does not reflect the potential cost savings that may be realized with an increase in users. Chairman Sullivan noted that a dual system would be more attractive to industry coming in.

Ald. Rabinowitz stated that a lot of effort was made to get the EDZ designation from the State to build up the area and we would not want to, with a sole source system, have bad water and have to bring in bottled drinking water. He noted that the users are paying the cost and the more users we extend the service to, the more dilute the impact will be.

Comm. McIntyre stated that we are at the same place we were a year ago. Ald. Angelino said if we are going to double or triple peoples water bill, these questions must be asked.

Chairman Sullivan stated when the Council met with the Water Board one year ago, it was agreed that we would go ahead and design this dual system, that Mr. Suozzo would monitor the project as it went along and keep the Council advised. The Water Board was assuming that things were moving along as was agreed to last year. Ald. Carnrike said the minutes have been printed, the reports have been done and unless information was being held back, nothing is different.

The infrastructure was discussed. Ald. McNeil asked if there is an indication of how much water could be saved by replacing old mains. Chairman Sullivan said the mains that will be replaced are necessary to maintain a proper flow in the system and noted they will continue to replace some of the 100 year old mains which are leaking. Ald. Rabinowitz noted when a narrow main is replaced, the cost savings of pumping water through a clean main would cut down on the energy demand. Chairman Sullivan said there are savings that will accrue with a new system that cannot be predicted. He noted that thousands of dollars have been trimmed to make this project as "bare bones" as possible.

Comm. Wagoner said he feels we are at a check point in the project now. He noted that as Zone Coordinator, he is required to submit an annual work plan and one thing that was included was infrastructure and supporting projects that would enhance the area. It was not stated that the project was a dual system or sole system, only that a system upgrade was being planned for the area.

Chairman Sullivan stated that a decision can be made to stop everything. Mayor Biviano stated that the Council does not want to stop the project, but merely put things on hold until March 24 to evaluate the situation with Jim Suozzo. Ald. Angelino stated that the Council wants to know where the project stands financially. The Council recommended the Water Board attend the meeting in Albany as planned.

Ald. Angelino reiterated he wants to give the Water Board all the money they need but not one nickel more than they need for the project. Comm. Natoli noted the Water Board does not want to spend any more than they have to.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.