Hart County Board of Commissioners

Called Meeting

October 23, 2012

Following the regular meeting of October 23, 2012 the Hart County Board of Commissioners and the Hart County Water & Sewer Authority met at the Administrative office.

1. Discussion on Hart County Water and Sewer Authority

Chairman Oglesby called the meeting to order to give the authority an opportunity to discuss the Hart County Water and Sewer Authority (HCWSA) system.

Chairman Oglesby asked County Administrator Caime if there has been a request from the authority to allocate extra money, borrowing funds or issuing bonds for county water. Administrator Caime responded that the issue has been talked about but no formal request has come forward.

County Administrator Caime noted that from at least 2002 the County supplemented the HCWSA with $740,205 in operational funding from County tax funds not including SPLOST capital funds. Commissioner Dorsey noted that the cash on the balance sheet reported by the HCWSA audits has accumulated over the years

Administrator Caime noted that over $120,000,000 in new industrial development and over 500 jobs have been created by Industries at the Gateway Industrial park since 2004. Administrator Caime stated that the BOC put the first sewer system in Northern Hart County ins 2004 to serve Gateway 1. In 2008 the BOC extended the sewer lines to Gateway II.

He noted that in 2006 there were no plans for sewer from the HCWSA so the BOC hired a consultant to develop a sewer management plan, identifying long term needs of 800,000 gallons per day sewer capacity for the northern section of the county. The plan was presented to the HCWSA through Director Pat Goran. In 2007 the HCWSA hired their own consultant to conduct a study that resulted in similar results as the same one that was performed for the county.

CA Caime stated that he has continued to press his opinion that the HCWSA needs to plan for the future of sewer in Northern Hart County. He stated that in 2011 with no action by the HCWSA for sewer planning, the county then conducted a further study on a previously proposed northern route for sewer expansion. In 2012 with still no action by the HCWSA the county hired a consultant to determine what options the county has on sewer expansion which resulted in 4 options being evaluated. 1. Pump to City of Lavonia, 2. Pump to City of Hartwell, 3. New Gateway Water Treatment Plant and 4. New WWTP and land application system.

The City of Lavonia currently will only treat 100,000 gpd and may not be able to allocate additional treatment capacity to Hart County. In addition the existing system pumping sewer on a Southern I-85 route to Lavonia cannot handle more than the current 100,000 gpd and may not be able to handle that capacity. Treatment options for sewer for Hart County take many years to permit and construct and will cost many millions of dollars. CA Caime stressed that in order for the County to continue to grow in Nothern Hart County the HCWSA must start planning for sewer expansion.

Pat Goran stated that he didn’t come prepared to talk about sewer; he has met with CA Caime and the City of Lavonia. He stated that the current sewer usage is 15,000 gpd; the City of Lavonia treats 300,000 gpd and will be willing to work with the HCWSA. The HCWSA is aware of the need for a sewer plan but CA Caime has taken on the lead on this subject. He stated the city’s treatment plant is not an issue but Hart County has to be realistic on what it can expect from Lavonia.

Commissioner Johnson noted that as the City of Lavonia grows we could be crowded out from a capacity stand point.

Commissioner Dorsey noted that the amount of sewer capacity needed would depend on the type of industry.

Pat Goran responded that they understand the value of sewer; the City of Lavonia has been a good partner to provide sewer and they should be willing to work with the county.

City of Royston Manager Greg Scott reported that the City of Royston has a capacity to provide 200,000 gpd in the western area of the county.

Commissioner Myers stated that the purpose of the meeting is to hear what the HCWSA plan is to provide water and sewer.

Commissioner Dorsey questioned Manager Scott on how much sewer capacity they are using. Manager Scott responded 250,000 gpd. He also noted that the City of Royston wants to have representation in the western portion of the county for future expansion.

Jerry Canady commented on sewer issues.

Commissioner Johnson questioned Pat Goran in regards to the studies and information provided by the consultants. Mr. Goran responded that he has seen the 2007 study and not much has happened in regards to it. He thinks the authority members are aware of it but since 2007 most of the board members have changed. He did not recall the August 2011 and November 2011 study.

Commissioner Johnson stated that economic development and the future of this community is important and it involves water and sewer which are two components of the HCWSA. He questioned how Hart County moving forward will to be able to provide water at a faster rate and provide sewer in Northern Hart County.

Chairman Oglesby stated that sewer will mean growth and jobs to Hart County.

Commissioner Dorsey stated that installing water lines is all about funding and the authority does not have the available funds to run more lines.

Commissioner Reyen noted that the authority has the power to incur debt through GEFA loans, issue revenue, and other sources to fund installation of water/sewer lines.

HCWSA member Larry Haley reported they have been installing water lines through a pay as you go system and are getting tremendous construction prices for installation. He agreed that they need to pursue sewer however, doesn’t see a need to be in a hurry on addressing sewer. He commented that the authority is not supposed to provide fire protection; ISO fire ratings are based on response time not the location of fire hydrants from a residence. He also stated that the authority wants to buy more water from Hartwell.

Commissioner Johnson noted that he did not want to allow sewer problems in the northern section of the county to stifle growth. The two boards are going to have to work together as a team to move forward.

HCWSA chairman Michael Partlow presented a list of projects the authority has completed since 2008. He agrees there is a need to work on sewer, but doesn’t agree with the decision to dissolve the water authority.

Commissioner Reyen moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnson provided a second to the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

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R C Oglesby, Chairman Lawana Kahn, County Clerk