

UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING
JUNE 21, 2010

Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Council members James R. Gatto, Gibson Anthony, Mabel Mumford-Pautz and Mauritz Stetson, Robert Sipes, Utilities Manager, Jennifer Mulligan, Stenographer, and guests.

Mayor Bailey asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Utilities Commission meeting of May 17, 2010. **Mrs. Mumford-Pautz moved to approve the minutes as presented, was seconded by Mr. Stetson and carried unanimously.**

Mayor Bailey stated that cash on hand and in banks was \$392,745.01.

Mr. Sipes stated that there was a bad impeller at the Cannon Street pump station which was replaced. He added that the check valve was also not working so they ordered and installed a Mueller check valve. He said that if the Council noticed a big ticket items in the bills it was because of the replacement parts required.

Mr. Sipes stated that the Volunteer Fire Company was called to assist a former member to wash out leaves out of the gutters at his home. He said that as a result of the fire company using the fire hydrant to wash out the gutters a main burst.

Mr. Sipes stated that he would like to send a letter to the Volunteer Fire Department relaying the message that fire hydrants are used to fight fires not to hose down people's downspouts for filling pools.

Mr. Sipes stated that in order to fix the main it cost three (3) man days with the entire crew, not including the equipment. He said that it cost upwards of \$15,000.00 to fix the problem.

Mr. Sipes stated that he was asked by the Council to gather some information that would provide costs of operating washing machines and whether or not, or how much of a conversion, it would take to see a decrease in water. He said that there was a suggestion of using rebates and incentives to lessen the demand on the Town wells.

Mr. Sipes stated that each of the Council members received a print out of information. Mr. Sipes stated that the numbers he used for his costs were the numbers that he found available both through the Town and U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Star Program.

Mr. Sipes stated that the Town had two thousand forty-seven (2,047) residential accounts and the national average was four hundred (400) loads of laundry each year. Mr. Sipes stated that Chestertown charged \$4.32 per one thousand (1,000) gallons of water.

Mr. Sipes stated that a new standard washing machine used 32.5-gallons of water per load, which came to 13,000 gallons of water each year with a water cost of \$56.16, energy cost of \$40.00 and total operating costs of \$96.16.

Mr. Sipes stated that an energy star washing machine used 20.5-gallons per load, which came to 8,200 gallons of water each year with a water cost of \$35.42, energy cost of \$17.00 and total operating costs of \$52.42.

Mr. Sipes stated that the difference between using a standard washing machine and energy star washing machine came to 12-gallons per load, 4,800 gallons per year, water costs of \$20.74, energy costs of \$23.00 and total operating costs of \$43.74.

Mr. Sipes stated that energy costs factored in spin speed because the faster the spin, the more water was removed from the clothes before they went into the dryer, so they factored in what was saved on the dryer as well.

Mr. Sipes stated that he found that 35% of the washing machines in homes in the United States are already energy star rated. He said that figure would increase as everything is becoming energy star rated.

Mr. Sipes stated that there were programs in local municipalities to try to increase the percentage of energy star rated appliances. He said that the State of California had a goal to raise their percentage from 35% to 38% but it has not been met to date.

Mr. Sipes stated that if the Town of Chestertown was to set a 5% increase it would mean one hundred two (102) additional homes, which made it difficult because many people interested in energy star appliances already have them. Mr. Sipes said in order to implement a program they would have to have residents who were not already using energy star appliance to qualify for a program.

Mr. Stetson asked if washing machines were sold that were not energy efficient. Mr. Sipes stated that standard washing machines were sold and used 32.5-gallons per load. He said that all washing machines had to meet a 9.5-gallon per cubic foot as specified by the U.S. Department of Energy, which would drop to 8.5-gallons in 2011.

Mr. Sipes stated that based on the figures he found, if 5% of households would be new participants in a program where they would go to an energy star or high efficiency washing machine the Town would save 489,600-gallons. He said that came out to 1,341.37-gallons per day.

Mr. Sipes stated that in addition to using energy efficient washers other tips to save on water would be to use cold water when washing, use the correct load size setting, use the correct soap amount and type and to purchase Water Sense approved fixtures.

Mr. Sipes stated that the EPA has a "Water Sense Program" and rates water fixtures for consumption. He said that Water Sense fixtures saved a great deal on water use.

Mr. Sipes stated that the phosphate and nitrogen levels were a major source of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Mayor Bailey stated that there were a number of

products available such as 7th Generation or Palmolive Eco-Products that were good for the environment and easy to find.

Mr. Sipes stated that on the side of a washing machine was information as to how much it should cost to operate per year.

Mr. Sipes stated that in reviewing the figures it would take a great amount of participation to change the numbers enough to save money. Mr. Sipes stated that the figures he had were 200-gallons per household or 100-gallons per day per person (through a community).

Mr. Gatto stated that this would more likely wind up being a capacity savings in water treatment and water supply if a rebate program was used in Town. He said what brought about the questions was setting aside funding for rebates for homeowners who purchased water saving appliances.

Mayor Bailey stated that she would like to see the information on the State and Federal rebates. She said that it would be helpful to get that information to the community.

Mr. Sipes stated many communities have implemented a "Cash for Junkers" program rather than a rebate program as that gave the homeowner a reason to upgrade their older washing machine.

Mayor Bailey stated that she received a question from a homeowner in the first ward that Mr. Sipes might be able to answer. She said that people using their hoses for watering were being charged both water and sewer fees and asked if there was a way to forgive part of the bill.

Mr. Sipes stated that he understood the reason why a homeowner would want part of the bill forgiven if they could separate water used for gardening and water used for the household. He said that in order to do that the Town would have to provide a separate meter on a separate connection and then apply a water only account that could be used for billing purposes. He said that the cost of equipment and installation would hover around \$3,000.00. Mr. Sipes stated that the Town's billing program did not allow for an extra metering device on one system.

Mr. Sipes stated that the Town would sell water in bulk at a commercial rate to anyone that requested to buy it in Town limits. He said that sewer rates were not added to bulk water sales.

Mr. Briggs Cunningham was present and stated that people could also look at waterless garden or rain barrels and said that information was available on the Chestertown Goes Green Website.

Mr. Sipes stated that over watering was an issue as sprinklers used a lot of water. He said that people could invest in a soil moisture detector to determine when watering was needed.

Mayor Bailey stated that rain barrels were a terrific way to save water.

There being no further business, **Mrs. Mumford-Pautz moved to pay the bills as presented, was seconded by Mr. Gatto and carried unanimously.**

Mrs. Mumford-Pautz moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m., was seconded by Mr. Anthony and carried unanimously.

Submitted by:


Jennifer Mulligan
Stenographer

Approved by:

Margo G. Bailey
Mayor

