

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, September 9, 2003

6:30 P.M.

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time in the Economic Development Conference Room in the Administration Building located on 111 Washington Street, Whiteville, North Carolina to conduct a **Workshop** to discuss the **Uniform Rules for the Columbus County Water Districts**.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

C.E. "Gene" Wilson, **Chairman**
 Bill Memory, **Vice Chairman**
 David L. Dutton, Jr.
 Kipling Godwin
 Sammie Jacobs
 Amon E. McKenzie
 Lynwood Norris

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Billy Joe Farmer, **County Administrator**
 James E. Hill, Jr., **County Attorney**
 Darren L. Currie, **Assistant County Administrator**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**
 Gayle B. Godwin, **Finance Officer**

ALSO in ATTENDANCE:

Debra White, Water Office Manager

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 6:30 P.M., Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of this called workshop was to discuss the revisions that needed to be made to the Uniform Rules and Regulations for the Columbus County water districts. The invocation was delivered by Commissioner McKenzie.

RECOMMENDED REVISIONS:

1. **Mandatory Connection:** Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, stated the Water Advisory Commission had their first meeting and recommended the following for households that are situated a long distance from the road:

At least three hundred (300') feet from the highway right-of-way, or at least one eighth (1/8) of the road frontage on lot, whichever is greater.

2. **Medical Exemption:** Commissioner Memory requested a clause to be included in the Uniform Rules and Regulations to allow exemption for citizens who has a medical problem with chlorinated water stating they do not have to hook onto the water system.

James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, informed the Board it was needful for a sworn statement from the doctor to be submitted for the purpose of the medical exemption.

After in-depth discussion was conducted regarding this medical exemption among the Board members, it was the general consensus of the Board to not include a clause for medical exemption and handle each situation on a case-by-case basis to eliminate the possibility of falsified information being submitted.

3. **Allowance for citizens who cannot afford water bills:** Commissioner Wilson asked what, if anything, the Board could do to accommodate the citizens who could not afford to pay a monthly water bill.

James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, informed the Board, in accordance with N.C.G.S. §160A-314, this is not allowed due to the fact you would be displaying discrimination to the citizens that can pay, and you could not legally provide accommodation for the citizens who could not afford to pay a monthly water bill. If you are providing the same type of service to all, no special provisions can be made, but, if you are providing different types of services, then you can provide special provisions.

Commissioner Godwin stated the citizens who could not pay a monthly water bill could include this amount as part of their public assistance. The water bill is not taxable and we can advise them to seek assistance from the Department of Social Services.

Commissioner Memory stated the citizens who could not afford a water bill could also seek assistance from the Department of Aging.

5. **Change in Procedure of Water Billing:** Chairman Wilson asked how much trouble it would be for the water billing procedure to be changed to include actual gallons of water used in lieu of billing to the nearest thousand gallons of usage. He stated that some monthly bills are high and some are low using the method the water office is practicing.

Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, replied stating it could be changed, but it would be a lot of trouble doing so.

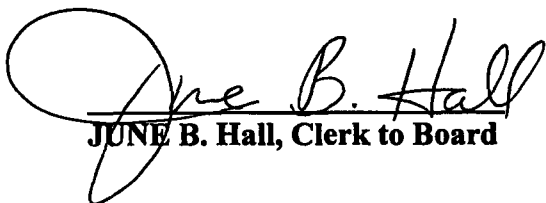
After discussion was held among the Board members, it was the general consensus of the Board to leave the billing procedure as it is now.


6. **Procedure for Reading Meters Documentation:** Commissioner Godwin stated we needed the procedure for reading meters on paper for the citizens to read and to be able to understand the bills being submitted to them.
7. **Mandatory Connection Letter:** Chairman Wilson stated letters regarding the mandatory connection needed to be mailed to the citizens who were being affected previous to the installation of the meters.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:17 P.M., the Workshop was adjourned.

APPROVED:


JUNE B. Hall, Clerk to Board


C.E. WILSON, Chairman