

ORANGE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

Meeting Date: November 5, 2009

Action Agenda

Item No. 3-a

SUBJECT: OWASA's Draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan Update

DEPARTMENT: County Manager

PUBLIC HEARING: (Y/N)

ATTACHMENT(S):

9/3/09 Letter with Executive Summary of
OWASA's Draft Long-Range Water
Supply Plan

INFORMATION CONTACT:

Frank Clifton, 245-2300

PURPOSE: To receive a presentation from representatives of the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) on a Draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan.

BACKGROUND: In a September 3, 2009 letter (attached), OWASA Board Chair Randy Kabrick expressed OWASA's interest in providing a presentation to the Board of Commissioners on OWASA's Draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan. An Executive Summary of the Draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan is also provided. As part of OWASA's presentation, the key recommendations for meeting the expected water needs for OWASA customers through 2060, as identified in the report, will be discussed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: There is no financial impact associated with receiving the presentation.

RECOMMENDATION(S): The Manager recommends that the Board receive the presentation and provide questions and feedback as necessary.



ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

*A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services
to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.*

September 3, 2009

Valerie Foushee, Chair
Orange County Board of
Commissioners
Post Office Box 8181
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Mark Chilton, Mayor
Town of Carrboro
301 West Main Street
Carrboro, NC 27510

Kevin Foy, Mayor
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

SUBJECT: UPDATE OF OWASA'S LONG-RANGE WATER SUPPLY PLAN

Dear Chair Foushee, Mayor Chilton and Mayor Foy:

I'm writing to follow up on my letter of July 29th regarding our draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan Update. We understand that it was not possible to provide time for an OWASA presentation at the September 24th Assembly of Governments meeting.

We would therefore like to present the highlights and recommendations of the draft Water Supply Plan Update to each of your governing boards and receive your feedback before the end of the calendar year. We estimate that our presentation would take about 20 minutes, with additional time for questions and discussion.

Ed Kerwin will contact your respective Managers to discuss scheduling our presentations.

Effective long-range planning for an adequate, high quality water supply is one of OWASA's highest priorities and obligations to the community. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss our analysis of these issues and to receiving your comments and questions.

For your information, we are planning to hold a community meeting on November 11th at 7 PM in the Chapel Hill Town Hall to present the draft Water Supply Plan Update and receive feedback from customers and the general public.

Best regards,

Randy Kabrick, P.E., Chair

Enclosure

c: Mr. Frank Clifton, Interim Manager, Orange County
Mr. Roger L. Stancil, Manager, Town of Chapel Hill
Mr. Steven Stewart, Manager, Town of Carrboro
OWASA Board of Directors
Ed Kerwin, Executive Director



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Draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan Update Executive Summary July 17, 2009

OWASA's draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan Update report identifies key recommendations for meeting the expected water needs of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) through 2060. The draft report includes two principal findings:

1. Expansion of OWASA's Quarry Reservoir west of Carrboro continues to offer the most cost-effective increment of additional supply and will provide full control of a substantial amount of high quality water with minimal capital investment. An expanded Quarry Reservoir is expected to meet most anticipated water supply needs for the 50-year planning period.
2. OWASA should develop agreements with neighboring utilities to secure the permanent ability to purchase or sell water under appropriate conditions of supply and demand. Except for the expanded Quarry Reservoir, temporary purchases offer the most cost-effective option evaluated, especially for the infrequent times and limited amounts of water that may be needed during the next 25 years or more. Purchase agreements also provide important mutual support when critical facilities are out of service due to maintenance, equipment failure, severe weather, or other emergency conditions. Continued participation in the recently established Jordan Lake Partnership will provide important opportunities to develop such arrangements and to gain cost-effective access to OWASA's Jordan Lake water supply storage allocation.

In developing this report, OWASA conducted a thorough review of the underlying assumptions, including demand projections, supply/demand-side alternatives that were evaluated in its last comprehensive water supply report, *Water Supply: A 50-Year Vision for Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Southern Orange County (March 2000)*, and other alternatives that have been identified since that time. Highlights of the update include:

- All customer groups – residential, commercial, and UNC – have significantly reduced their drinking water consumption in recent years. During the same time, OWASA implemented permanent process water recycling at its Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant, began operating a new reclaimed wastewater system serving UNC, and aggressively promoted conservation through seasonal and tiered rates and an ongoing customer education program. New residential, commercial, and UNC development projects are increasingly relying on non-potable and advanced water use efficiency technologies to reduce their drinking water needs.

- OWASA’s existing Cane Creek/University Lake/Quarry Reservoir supply system can meet the community’s water supply needs substantially further into the future than previously thought, even when reservoir levels are significantly lower than “normal.”
- Investing in an expansion of OWASA’s reclaimed water system or establishing financial incentive programs, such as plumbing fixture rebates, to promote additional water conservation is substantially less cost-effective than other options evaluated. OWASA-funded support for such programs is not recommended at this time.

The Long-Range Water Supply Plan Update report presents a very positive future for OWASA and the communities it serves. Through aggressive, proactive conservation-focused actions, future generations living and working in OWASA’s service area will be able to enjoy a reliable supply of high quality drinking water with far less capital investment than predicted nine years ago.

The complete *Draft Long-Range Water Supply Plan Update* report and *Appendices*, which include the technical memoranda on which the report is based, is posted on the OWASA website at www.owasa.org.

We Welcome Your Comments

If you have questions or would like to provide comments, please send an email to webmaster@owasa.org, or contact Ed Holland, OWASA Planning Director, at 919-537-4215.