

MINUTES, MEETING BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL & SEWER COMMISSION

The Oconee County Council and the Oconee County Sewer Commission met Tuesday, February 20, 1990 at 5:00 PM in Council Chambers. They had also invited representatives from Walhalla, Westminster, West Union and Seneca to the meeting.

Members of the press notified (by mail): Seneca Journal, Keowee Courier, Westminster News, Anderson independent, Greenville News, WGOG Radio, WSNW Radio, WYFF TV & WLOS TV.

Press

Members of the press present: Robin Boyle - Seneca Journal.

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor-Chairman Crain who welcomed the guests and media.

Call to Order

Mr. Crain informed the representatives that in the mid 1970's Walhalla, Westminster and Seneca were not in compliance with DHEC requirements concerning sewage treatment. The federal government required improvements, but there were no grant funds available to the towns, only to the county.

There was a referendum held April 13, 1976 authorizing Oconee County to construct and operate a sewer system with the stipulation that only grants, revenue generated from the facility, and revenue bonds be used for the sewer.

When the plant became operational the cities continued to own the collector lines. A study in 1978/79 had indicated that these lines allowed excessive inflow and infiltration (I & I) into the system. That problem has not been adequately addressed.

The system is designed to treat 5,000,000 gallons of flow per day, but during a heavy ran as much as 12,000,000 gallons of flow per day enters the system which results in an illegal discharge.

February 15, 1990 county officials had to attend a show cause hearing at DHEC and show cause why an administrative order should not be issued requiring compliance with the pollution control act.

During 1989 DHEC had a record of twenty one (21) unauthorized discharges and there are two (2) possible causes for these discharges:

- (1) malfunction of the lift stations
- (2) I & I

A representative of DHEC indicated that only 20% of the I & I problems have been corrected.

DHEC is going to require five (5) things from Oconee County:

- (1) Submit flow data from each town for past two (2) yrs.
- (2) Document that the lift stations are performing up to designed capacity
- (3) Locate the pump stations on a map as well as show the lines to the pump stations

- (4) Address how we are going to correct the problems on private property
- (5) Submit a plan to address and correct the I & I problem

This will have to include how long it will take to formulate the plan and how long it will take to implement the plan.

DHEC is also going to place a moratorium on additional hook-ups until the problem is solved. The only exceptions are:

- (1) Single family dwellings
- (2) A hook-up that has already been approved on established lines

This means there can be no more industry or development that is contingent to a sewer hook-up until the problems are solved.

DHEC could have fined Oconee County \$10,000 per illegal discharge, they do not usually charge the maximum fine, they usually charge \$4,000 per violation unless there is an extenuating circumstance in your favor. Oconee County has two (2) such circumstances:

- (1) The county voluntarily reported each incident
- (2) All but one illegal discharge occurred due to rain and has resulted in no known environmental problems

In 1985 the problem with Martin Creek was addressed, but it still spills and they are considering that a second offense. The fine will be based upon the five (5) unauthorized discharges during 1989 for a total of \$20,000.

If we agree to the consent order, this will cover all unauthorized discharges that have happened within the system up through the time the problem is solved.

If we do not agree the next step will be an administrative hearing.

DHEC did inform those who attended the hearing they are negotiable on the time table as long as our proposal is reasonable.

The moratoriums will be lifted per pump station as they are repaired. It will be necessary for each town to submit a plan with a time schedule for repairing their collector lines.

After discussion and recess in which time the Sewer Commission met together to consider their recommendation to Council, at their recommendation, Dr. Earle made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dyar, approved 5 - 0 that the county, on behalf of the Sewer Commission enter into a consent order with DHEC.

Adjourn