

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON  
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2011 - 5:00 P.M.  
MINUTES**

The Town Council of the Town of Weddington, North Carolina, met in a Special Session at the Weddington Town Hall, 1924 Weddington Road, Weddington, NC 28104 on July 20, 2011, with Mayor Nancy D. Anderson presiding.

Present: Mayor Nancy D. Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Barry, Councilmembers Werner Thomisser and Jerry McKee, Town Attorney Anthony Fox and Town Planner Jordan Cook

Absent: Councilmember Robert Gilmartin

Visitors: Barbara Harrison and Judy Johnston

**Item No. 1. Open the Meeting.** Mayor Nancy D. Anderson called the July 20, 2011 Special Town Council Meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. There was a quorum.

**Item No. 2. Work Session with Union County Public Works Officials Regarding the Proposed Water Tower in Weddington.** Mayor Anderson – I asked Public Works Director Ed Goscicki to come and discuss with us some other options with the water tower. Union County Public Works has put in an application for a water tower on Providence Road past Rea Road where the staging area for NCDOT was when they were working on Providence Road. Two public meetings have been held and the Planning Board has reviewed the application and we have called for the public hearing. The application that was put in was for a tower. After hearing input from the citizens about the aesthetics of the tower, I wanted to discuss with UCPW what a ground tank with pumps would look like. I need to get a sense from the Town Council if the ground tank would be something that they would be interested in.

Mr. Goscicki – We have submitted twice now for zoning approval for an elevated water tank within the Weddington area. A year ago, we were requesting permission for the site across the street from here. That was not approved by this board. We have now come back with an alternate site which the Mayor discussed. In the previous discussions when we were before this board, the issue of a ground storage tank alternative was raised. We did a very preliminary analysis with our consultants at that time to look at what would be the feasibility of a ground storage tank on the site and they came up with an alternative from an engineering perspective that they did not recommend, staff had concerns and ultimately the Board of Commissioners did not authorize us to go forward. That alternative was a million plus more in construction dollars than the elevated storage tank. Based on discussions that we heard, we have looked at what it would take if we put a ground storage tank in this area on Providence Road. That has not gone before the Board of County Commissioners, it has not gone before the County Manager and I am not authorized in any way to suggest that we would be willing to move forward with that as a consideration but we did look at it. The challenge with the ground storage tank is it changes the way that we operate the system. The way the water distribution system operates now is we pump from various pump stations throughout our system up into these tanks. From these tanks, we feed by gravity into the distribution system that serves our customers. The elevation that we pump to and hold into this tank and floats in that tank creates the pressure that is in your homes. We have five different pressure zones in the County running off these various elevated storage tanks.

Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Barry – There was an elevation that you had to have at ground level. The tank height is going to change based on sea level.

Mr. Goscicki – We need to be 807 feet above sea level. That was part of the challenge when it moved from the previous site to the Providence Road site. The height of the tank increased to maintain that same pressure. If you change to a ground storage scenario, it reverses the way that you operate the system. Instead of pumping into the tank to maintain pressure, the tank is nothing more than storage. It is a reservoir on your system and your pressure is created by pumping out of that tank and keeping your tank pressurized. The operation changes dramatically from one filling a tank and trying to keep that level full and only running the pumps based upon the level of the tank versus putting pressure sensors in the system and keeping those pumps running on a continuous basis to keep the pressure in the system. The pumps run intermittently to keep the tank full. As the tank drains down the pumps will come on to keep it full. We have an operating range that it operates in. With a ground storage tank, the pumps run continuously because you constantly have to pressure the system. In doing that we also have to isolate that pressure zone that we are operating off of from that ground storage tank because we are now operating at a different pressure than the rest of the elevated storage systems. To make this work we would have to isolate a piece of the system. (Mr. Goscicki referred to a map of the area.) If we put a ground storage tank here, we would essentially isolate this part of the county which is a good chunk of Weddington and a little bit of Stallings. There would be a pressure reducing valve that we would have to put where that connects in. The most significant part of doing this is all these pipe lines become internal to this and cannot be used in our major distribution system. This line is a big part of our major distribution system so we would have to build a new pipe across here to connect water coming in this way. We would have to put a \$2 million pipeline in the ground to make this work. That is where the big expense comes in. I have to build a pump station that I was not going to build and I have to build 1 ½ miles of pipeline.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - Aren't they planning to put a pipeline in there anyway?

Mr. Goscicki – We are not. The developer would need to run some kind of service line to develop that area. It would need to be a 24 inch pipe line. If we put a ground storage tank, we would create this as a new pressure zone isolated from this area to make it work. Our estimate shows us that alternative is about \$1.5 million more than the proposal that is before you. It includes an additional \$200,000 in operating and maintenance costs for the power of having the pump. Anything else is too difficult to estimate now. Most of the additional cost is the additional piping.

Councilmember Werner Thomisser – Is there any other place in Union County where you have ground storage tanks?

Mr. Goscicki – The only ground tanks we have are on Sims Road which is the water that comes in from the Catawba Water Treatment Plant. All of our water comes in from Catawba Treatment Plant, goes to those ground storage tanks that act as our reservoir and then from there we pump everything and pressurize it. There are three tanks on that site.

Mayor Anderson – He has not had any authority to go before the County to talk about this. I did not want him to do that until we talk about this among ourselves to see if the Town Council would be interested in that concept.

Councilmember McKee - Interested in from what standpoint? I am interested in him doing it.

Mayor Anderson – The standard tower is what we are being offered on that site. We got a lot of feedback from people who live close by there. Everyone agreed that they wanted water and needed water but very few people wanted to see it out of their back yard. When these discussions first started, I was looking for places on the farm that you could put it but residents from Highgate were very upset. Then it was going on Cox Road – people in that area did not want it. Then it was going at the school site at Rea View and

people at Walden at Providence did not want it. No one wants to be in the shadow of the tank. We are looking at alternatives. What can we do to provide the service but also to mitigate what people perceive as a negative on their property values? In the long run not having water is far more negative than having to look at a water tower.

Mr. Goscicki – This affects the pressure - not quantity. But if you are less than 30 lbs. of pressure you are in violation of State regulations and if you have nominal pressure in your system your fire departments are not that happy in their ability to fight fires.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - I have a water hose in my backyard and I open that up wide open and I have a sprinkler on it and it works fine but if you use those couplings where you put two sprinklers on it then you have half as much volume. Same amount of volume but it is not coming out at the same pressure level. We are not adding capacity to the system we are just showing that there is less pressure coming out. Ultimately you do want to include distribution as you have another neighborhood come on.

Councilmember McKee – The County allocates the gallons that are pumped. The neighborhood cannot get water until the County approves them for water.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - If you do not have capacity- you cannot push the water down the system in the first place.

Mr. Goscicki – The pressure is not in the system. The pressure may be at your house. On the higher ridge that runs all along the northern boundary of the Town of Weddington and running into Stallings are some of the highest elevations in the County and those residents and neighbors are complaining to us about pressure problems. What we have shown you in the previous meetings is if we do not do something, that water pressure problem will get larger and larger in scope.

Councilmember Thomisser – We have approximately 71 subdivisions in Weddington and only 11 of them have water.

Mr. Goscicki – About 33% of your population is on County water and over 1,000 customers are on our water system today.

Mayor Anderson – The County cannot approve water for subdivisions if we do not have water tanks or a tower to maintain the pressure. It is not about the amount of the water but it is about the pressure of getting it there.

Councilmember McKee – What is the problem of adding more pumps?

Mr. Goscicki – The way the system operates now is all of our water that serves the area gets pumped through the tank that we have in Stallings and back feeds from Stallings to here. You are losing pressure going there and then you are losing pressure going back. The closest storage tank to this area is Stallings. The next closest one is Indian Trail.

Councilmember Thomisser - Do we have a water problem or a pressure problem?

Mr. Goscicki – You have a pressure problem right now in this area. We know where the problems are. They are in the high elevations right now. The problem is not universal right now. The problem will get worse. The Rosehill Subdivision is the poster child. We are on a first name basis with people in Rosehill.

Councilmember McKee – During the last public hearing, we had one person speak to low water pressure.

Mr. Goscicki – If this Council wants to wait until you get 100 people in here complaining about water pressure five years from now - that is not the way I run a utility. I am paid to look into the future and make sure that the facilities are in place and to make sure those citizens do not show up.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - If we approved everything that you wanted to have approved, there is a build out time. How long does it take to have these engineered and constructed and on line?

Mr. Goscicki – It is probably nine months to one year. The engineering is 75% done. Each time around costs me about \$75,000 in engineering and permit and review fees to get to this point. We are ready to go.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry – Mayor, your question is whether we want the Union County version of the water tower or for us to pay the difference for the storage tanks.

Mayor Anderson – It seems to me that was going to be my discussion. It seems to me that two people at this table are not convinced that we need a water tower.

Councilmember McKee – I am just asking questions. How can you read my conclusion? Don't come to a conclusion that you know how I feel about any issue until it comes time to vote.

Councilmember Thomisser – I have not made any statement regarding how I feel. You are assuming that and that is incorrect.

Mayor Anderson – I am going to adjourn this work session. Clearly the people here do not want to participate in maintaining decorum. We have another meeting that we need to go to.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry – The amount you are asking is \$1.6 million?

Mr. Goscicki - These are planning level figures for this level of discussion. There is no design that has been done for ground level storage tanks.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - If we get this done - is that it for Weddington? Is Union County going to come back on the other side of Weddington near Wesley Chapel 20 years from now?

Mr. Goscicki - There is additional storage that would be needed in the system. We know over the 20 year planning horizon that we are going to need to allocate additional storage throughout the system. We have not gotten to the point to identify where that storage needs to be. I cannot promise that we will not be back again in the next 20 years.

Councilmember Thomisser – Is the water pressure something you can correct with a pump station for the subdivisions that have issues?

Mr. Goscicki - There are band aid solutions. We would tell the neighbors that they would have to put individual pumps at each individual lot. We could put a mini pump station that would serve an individual community. This problem will continue to grow. We need to move beyond the band aid solutions. The challenge here is that as this community grows and as this county grows you can't just keep putting more and more booster pump stations.

Councilmember Thomisser - How high is the ground level storage tank? When you go to the proposed site for the water tower, it will be 600 feet from Providence Road. There is a line of trees. Is the proposed location of the water tower in front of the trees or behind the trees?

Mr. Goscicki – You are probably looking at a 40 foot tall structure. It is right at the tree line. We have to cut in and take some trees to site the water tank and the tank will sit at the tree line. The challenge on that site is that it slopes away. It slopes down as you go away from the road. We originally thought we would put it further back on the site but there is a stream that runs off of the farmer’s pond that is up on the adjacent parcel and it creates a little wetland.

Councilmember Thomisser – The ground level storage tank would be placed where the tank is going to be or behind the tree line.

Mr. Goscicki – It would be closer to the road. It would be more visible from the road. I am not sure if the County Commissioners would approve going to a ground storage tank.

Mayor Anderson – If you want to go to a ground storage tank, then I believe the Town of Weddington would be required to pay the difference. If we want an upgrade, the County would not approve that unless we agreed to pay the difference.

Mr. Goscicki – I could not say that the County would require that. That would be a Board of County Commissioner decision as to whether they are going to say that we are going to something different for this community because this community wants it and does not want an elevated tank and if there is an additional cost you pay for the additional cost. I would take that to them.

Councilmember Thomisser – I thought that UCPW was a separate entity.

Mr. Goscicki – Public Works is a department within Union County government. I answer to the County Manager who answers to the Commissioners. Water and wastewater is funded as a separate enterprise fund so County taxes do not in any way support the public works operations. Those are 100% funded through the water and sewer fees that we charge. The County is a holding company and public works is a separately funded company within that holding company. They do have complete authority over the department but the money gets funded through user fees. Monies that we bring in through enterprise funds cannot be used for other activities. It can only be used for water and sewer. We do not use any tax supported revenue to supplement the water and sewer. We issue our own debt through revenue bonds pledged by the revenue that we are going to generate through customers versus general obligation bonds.

Councilmember McKee – Would either of these scenarios cause the water fees to go up?

Mr. Goscicki – It would probably not cause me to up the water and sewer rates. We are in the middle of doing a rate study right now.

Councilmember McKee - Do you need anything from us to go to the County regarding the ground storage tanks?

Mr. Goscicki – Right now we have an action before this board and hope that you will prefer our petition. I prefer the option that is in front of you for the public hearing on August 8.

Councilmember McKee – What would happen if this is not approved on August 8? Would you go back to a ground storage tank?

Town Planner Jordan Cook - They would have to wait 12 months to reapply. The prohibition is 12 months unless there is a substantial difference between a new application.

Attorney Fox - The County is saying before you is what they are recommending.

Mr. Goscicki - Another option is another design. If this board were to tell us tonight the flavor of the board leans towards a ground storage tank – I could not come to you next month with a plan. That is a whole new process that we would need to go with.

Councilmember McKee – I think the Council should look at the lesser of two evils. How do we get him to the County Commissioners to see if they will approve it?

Attorney Fox - That decision is on the County. They could withdraw their application. This is a legislative process.

Mr. Goscicki - I am not walking out of here tonight with any confidence if I came back with a ground storage tank that it would be approved. We have a petition in front of you. The challenge for someone on this side of this table is to read this board.

**Item No. 3. Adjournment.** Mayor Pro Tem Barry moved to adjourn the July 20, 2011 Special Town Council Meeting. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES:	Councilmembers Thomisser, McKee and Mayor Pro Tem Barry
NAYS:	None

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

---

Nancy D. Anderson, Mayor

Attest:

---

Amy S. McCollum, Town Clerk