

December 13, 2002

Before the meeting began Chairman Skinner stated that since the three (3) Commissioners are present that this work session has to be done in an open meeting according to State Law. He will call the meeting to order then turn the meeting over to Brent Clark.

The special scheduled meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was called to order this 13th day of December, 2002, in the conference room of the County Office Building by Chairman George Skinner. Roll was called by Dorinda Harvey, County Clerk/Secretary and those present were:

George Skinner, Chairman
Leroy Krohmer, Vice-Chairman
Bill Graves, Member
Dorinda Harvey, Secretary

Others present were: Kerrie Hudson, Mike McDanel, Randall Turk, Lindsay Bailey, Brent Clark, Bill Nations, Cal Hopson, Charles Rainbolt, David Parker, Brad Gambill, Rev. David Stewart, Susan Hendon, Walt Allen, Bob McGrew, John Robinson, Ken Jones, James Lee Edwards, David Hinkle, Kris Marek, and Bob Hendricks.

Chairman Skinner began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Skinner called for the Work Session regarding the Cleveland County Rural Water Initiative; scope of need for potable water and service area; sources of potable water; engineering and construction issues; project costs; sources of grants to fund project; borrowing and ownership options; timeframe for construction; next meeting.

Brent Clark stated that he was glad so many were present with a long history of concern about providing safe water for the residence of Cleveland County. Mr. Clark stated that this matter came to his attention over a year ago and there were some preliminary meetings over a year ago.

Bob Hendricks told of the people that were interested in this project, some of them being the Park Personnel Department of Tourism, the Superintendent of Little Axe Schools, Thunderbird Casino, and the Absentee Shawnees. Brent Clark has a list of potentially interested people and sources of funding. Mr. Hendricks stated that the line would come out of the Draper Treatment Plant go east to dodge Lake Thunderbird and then south on 156th. This is the proposed route so far without knowing the total needs for water.

They are looking at two phases the first one ending at Highway 9 costing approximately three million dollars plus and the second phase will be around two million dollars depending upon the needs and that one ends on Highway 39 and this is preliminary.

Kris Marek, representative from Tourism, stated what the needs were for the parks. Susan Hendon with Lake Thunderbird stated that there are sixteen (16) active wells and at times it does present problems and it is pretty costly with the testing and other stuff.

Rev. David Stewart wants to know if everyone has to attach to the line.

Brad Gambill with the City of Norman stated that he believes that the law prohibits water districts inside of municipalities unless it's small enough with ten thousand or less population. If the people of Norman have water problems they need to be addressed to the City.

Brent Clark stated that this is the first exploratory meeting to try to determine the need, the desire, and potential solutions and if anyone now or in the future has any reservations about whether this is a good idea they want to hear from them.

Walt Allen, City Manager of Lexington, stated that the line is definitely needed and that Lexington is very interested in looking at phase two. Mr. Allen stated that the only concern he has is that some interactions between rural water districts and cities have not been good. A lot has to do with the way Federal Legislation is written, once a district is formed it comes right up to a city's limits and the city can't expand into it and it creates hard feelings, even though the rural water is not serving it or is never going to serve it. Water is Oklahoma's economic growth and future.

Brent Clark stated that some of the concerns that are expressed have to do with jurisdiction and control, but the formation of a rural water district while a viable option is not really what has been envisioned taking place because you do run into jurisdictional concerns. What is being suggested is preliminarily is the creation of a new County Beneficiaries Utilities Authority where the Commissioners would be the trustees. That would be the entity, we would create it, they would borrow the money, they would own the system, and when it comes on line they would manage it.

Walt Allen gave Mr. Clark the name Danny George, with the Oklahoma Municipal League, as he might be able to help.

John Robinson who helped put a rural water district in Pottawatomie County addressed the meeting telling what was done in Pottawatomie County. You have to not only have a need but you need to have a desire and forming a water district is real simple, you establish the boundaries and find two land owners in that area and you have your water district formed, provided the Commissioners approve it. They were fortunate with funding they were able to tap into five federal and state sources most of them in the form of grants. John Robinson continued explaining Pottawatomie County's Rural Water District #3 and told Rev. Stewart that he can keep his well but he can't hook up to the rural water system, it has to be kept separate.

Bob Hendricks stated that since the bulk of this is in Oklahoma City for right-of-way purposes they will have to deal with Oklahoma City and Oklahoma City is willing to do a lot of different arrangements and he gave some examples.

Charles Rainbolt gave the meeting some options as to where funding might come from, Rural Development which used to be called Farmer Home Administration, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Rural Development Organization, and with the Absentee Shawnee being

involved and are interested the Indian Health Service sometimes has funding available for this type of program.

Brent Clark stated that there are two other potential financial partners one is tourism and the other is corrections. The name of the game is to maximize grant money and minimize how much has to be borrowed. It is envisioned that this Authority can issue bonds, but of course it is revenue bonds secured by a pledge of the revenues from the ratepayers.

With the right-of-way acquisition and getting an agreement from the communities Mr. Hendricks thinks that for the lines and making of the bores it could be less than a year for phase one and the second phase would require a re-lift station and there to probably less than a year.

Leroy Krohmer wanted to know if by the next meeting if Mr. Clark would know how many people were interested.

Mr. Clark doesn't think much can get done over the next few weeks because of the holidays. He thinks meetings are going to have to be held at schoolhouses and churches and have people tell what their desires are.

John Robinson stated that they sent out a questionnaire to all of the box holders in that rural area asking if they were interested in attending a meeting about getting rural water to their homes.

It was discussed that there would be a lot of land owners that will be involved in getting the right-of-way.

Mr. Clark stated that he would get with the Commissioners and see when another meeting would be held, probably the later part of January.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Leroy Krohmer moved that the meeting be adjourned. Bill Graves seconded the motion.

The vote was: George Skinner, yes; Leroy Krohmer, yes; Bill Graves, yes.

Motion carried.