



# RIVANNA WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY

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## RWSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS Minutes of Special Meeting July 23, 2007

A special meeting of the Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority (RWSA) Board of Directors was held on Monday, July 23, 2007 at 2:00 p.m., in the Conference Room, Administration Building, 695 Moores Creek Lane, Charlottesville, Virginia.

**Board Members Present:** Mr. Gary Fern, Mr. Michael Gaffney – Presiding, Ms. Judith Mueller, Mr. Gary O’Connell, and Mr. Robert Tucker.

**Authority Staff Present:** Mr. Bruce Edmonds, Mr. Tom Frederick, Ms. Mary Knowles, Ms. Jennifer Whitaker, Dr. Robert Wichser, and Mr. Lonnie Wood.

**Also Present:** Mr. Kurt Krueger – RWSA Attorney, members of the public, and media representatives.

### **1.0 Call To Order**

The special meeting of the RWSA Board of Directors was called to order by Mr. Michael Gaffney on Monday, July 23, 2007 at 2:00 p.m., and he noted that a quorum was present. He stated that a **Request for Declaration of Drought Watch** was the only item on today’s agenda and then recognized Mr. Frederick who would present the report.

### **2.0 Request for Declaration of Drought Watch**

Mr. Frederick stated that during his brief summary of the information contained in the Board report, which was also posted to RWSA’s website in advance of today’s meeting, updated figures would be provided to reflect the most current information to date.

Mr. Frederick then stated that RWSA was following the *Drought Response and Contingency Plan* that was adopted by this Board last September after significant public input and a public meeting. The basis for today’s proposed action is consistent with the terms detailed in that plan. Some of the findings that lead to today’s recommendation to declare a Drought Watch include the following:

- Stream flows in the Rivanna watershed are now less than 19% of seasonally adjusted normal levels, which is significantly below normal. He noted that July is usually a dry month in comparison to the other months of the year. Six weeks ago, the figure was at about 50% to 60% of seasonally adjusted normal levels.
- Very limited rainfall has occurred on a wide scale throughout the region in the past thirty days. There have been some scattered thunderstorms, which do not contribute significantly to increases in stream flows.

- Reservoir storage has dropped to 93% of full as of today, and according to the OASIS® hydrologic computer model, there is a greater than 20% risk that the reservoir storage would fall below 80% (equal to 75% of useable storage) within the next 12 weeks, which is the statistical “trigger” detailed in the *Drought Response and Contingency Plan* for the issuance of a Drought Watch.
- The Ragged Mountain Reservoir as of today is at -3.8 feet. The storage level at this reservoir remains steady as the Sugar Hollow Reservoir is now being used to supply the Observatory Water Treatment Plant. The Sugar Hollow Reservoir is now at -1.6 feet as compared to -0.6 feet five days ago, which equates to a drop in that reservoir level of about 2 ½ inches per day. RWSA expected that if current trends continue, water at the South Fork Reservoir will stop going over the spillway within the next 24 to 72 hours. The South Fork Hydro Plant has already been shut down due to low stream flow.
- The Climate Prediction Center, which provides statistical probabilities on future weather forecasting, shows that Virginia has a higher than average chance of being drier and warmer than normal during the upcoming fall and winter months. The shorter-term forecast does show the possibility of some relief based on the potential for hurricane activity along the Eastern seaboard.

Although there is no “crystal ball” when it comes to weather forecasting, RWSA felt that proactive actions need to be taken to ensure the prudent use of the water supply in the event that the dry weather pattern continues.

Mr. Frederick further reported that according to the ordinances of the City of Charlottesville and the policy of the Albemarle County Service Authority, a declaration of a Drought Watch comes with a strong call to the public for voluntary conservation measures to be taken. If this declaration is made, those agencies are prepared to intensify public education efforts to provide tips and opportunities for citizens to develop good water conservation habits. During the Drought Watch phase, and according to the *Drought Response and Contingency Plan*, those measures would be voluntary. If it should become necessary in the coming weeks to declare a Drought Warning, the declaration could be accompanied by a request to the elected officials to invoke mandatory water restrictions at that time.

Mr. Frederick next stated that the specific action being requested today is to declare a Drought Watch to be in effect as of now within the Albemarle-Charlottesville area and to authorize Chairman Gaffney, in consultation with the Executive Director, to take further measures between now and the August 27, 2007 Board meeting should they become necessary in accordance with the guidelines of the *Drought Response and Contingency Plan* and as described in the Board report.

**Mr. Tucker moved that the Board of Directors declare a Drought Watch to be in effect for the Albemarle-Charlottesville area, and authorize the Chairman of the Board of Directors, following consultation with the RWSA Executive Director, to take further measures prior to the scheduled August 27, 2007 Board of Directors meeting should they be needed in accordance with the guidelines of the *Drought Response and Contingency Plan*, to include:**

**(1) declaring a Drought Warning if conditions are met as confirmed by the OASIS® model; and (2) authorizing the Executive Director in coordination with the City Manager and County Executive to seek authorization from elected officials for mandatory water restrictions; or (3) declaring an end to Drought Watch if future wet weather sufficiently mitigates the current risk, seconded by Mr. O'Connell. The motion was approved by a 5 – 0 vote.**

### **3.0 Adjournment**

**There being no further business, Ms. Mueller moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. O'Connell. All members voted aye, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:08 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Mr. Robert W. Tucker, Jr.  
Secretary-Treasurer