


MEMORANDUM

To: Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
From: Gary O'Connell, Executive Director 
Date: April 19, 2023
Re: Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) Quarterly Briefing
cc: Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive; Mr. Lance Stewart, Director of Facilities, ACSA Board of Directors; ACSA Leadership Team and Operations Council

We do thank you for the continuing opportunity to share with the Board of Supervisors and the broader community what is happening at your water agency, the Albemarle County Service Authority. We pride ourselves on safe, clean, and reliable Albemarle water. Here are some recent updates from the ACSA:

1. **FY '24 Budget** – We will present our proposed budget, rates, and capital improvements. Our budget schedule is as follows:
 - April 20th – present the proposed Operation Budget and Rates; Capital Improvement Program;
 - May – Board Budget Workshop;
 - May – Customer Budget Newsletter;
 - June – Public Hearing and Board consideration and adoption.

Since over 60% of our budget is in RWSA treatment costs and capital projects, we work closely with their budget and rate setting process. RWSA is proposing a 13.5% increase to ACSA customers. Our budget will focus on implementing the strategic initiatives in our new Strategic Plan.

2. **Strategic Plan** – Attached is the newly adopted 2023-25 ACSA Strategic Plan (see attached Plan summary in the Spring Customer Newsletter). The Plan focuses on four major strategies as we go forward:
 - Data Optimization – comprehensive review and utilization;
 - Business Resilience – business continuity including environmental sustainability and climate action goals;
 - Customer Experience – exceed customer expectations;
 - Employee Experience – being a great place to work.

3. **AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure)** - With the recent delivery of meters, following a nearly 2-year global supply delay, we have restarted our replacement program. These new radio-read meters allow us and our customers to see daily use and identify any leaks. Our pilot of 2,500 (out of 22,000) meters have identified a number of water savings, good for water conservation and avoids the costs of wasted water. Letters and postcards proceed the installation, and a door hanger notes the change. This is going very smoothly with little to no customer disruption.
4. **Fall Customer Survey** - Results summary from our survey: 70% of our customers pay their bills electronically; 87% believe the ACSA provides safe and reliable water service; 85% are satisfied with the service from the ACSA; 85% rate highly the “ease of doing business” with the ACSA.
5. **ACSA Capital Projects Update** - The approved FY 2023 Capital Improvements Program totals \$8 million. Highlights and current major projects are detailed below:
 - **Madison Park Pump Station Upgrade** - Constructed nearly 40 years ago by a private development, and the original equipment is wearing down, building is undersized, and we are not able to install SCADA (computerized monitor). The project construction phase is underway, but delayed by long lead times for some critical pump station parts.
 - **Jefferson Village Water Main Replacement** - Replacing older (49 years) water mains made of inferior pipe product. Since originally part of a former well system, many of the mains are undersized. Project is essentially complete with all roadways having been repaved.
 - **SCADA (computerized monitoring)** - A three phased project is nearing completion for over 40 water and wastewater facilities in the ACSA system. This is another of our projects to provide emergency alerting and monitoring to assure reliable water and wastewater service. The third phase construction is underway.
 - **Crozet Phase 4 Water Main Replacement** - Our Strategic Plan calls for the eventual replacement of all asbestos-cement water mains in our system, as they are older and made of a weaker material than the current industry norm. This project continues our systematic program to replace the aging and undersized water mains in the Crozet Water System. This is the fourth of five phases that have been defined to carry out these improvements. Easement acquisition is nearly complete. Planned late spring bid for construction.
 - **Risk Assessment Improvements** – As part of an on-going emergency preparedness program, the ACSA is in a multi-phase effort to reduce risk and increase resilience. Projects include additional security measures, fencing and access gate enhancements, cybersecurity measures, and additional tank protection. Work is focused on our tanks and pump station locations.

- **Avon Street Operations Center** - The Avon Street property has long been held as a future location to build additional facilities in a central location, as needed. The current Maintenance Yard at our Pantops Operations Center is becoming overcrowded with equipment and materials. This project will develop the ACSA owned Avon Street property into a satellite facility for larger vehicle and materials storage. This site creates the opportunity for some sustainable and conservation-oriented applications including solar energy and electric vehicle charging stations. A Site Plan has been submitted to Albemarle County for review.
- **Ragged Mountain Phase 1 Water Main Replacement** - This project will replace the oldest active water main remaining in our system, which was part of the water main that served customers on Reservoir Road. This cast iron pipe is over 90 years old and is severely tuberculated, which greatly reduces the flow capacity in this section. Design work is 90% complete. We are coordinating with VDOT where their bridge replacement project overlaps with ours.
- **Northfields Water Main Replacement** - The existing water mains are approximately 54 years old and have reached the end of their useful life. As a former well system that was connected to public water, most of the mains are also undersized. Field surveying is complete, with design under way at the 50% stage.
- **Scottsville Phase 4 Water Main Replacement** - Continues our systematic program to replace undersized and deteriorating water mains in the ACSA system. At the 90% design stage of the replacement water mains.
- **Briarwood Water Main Replacement** – Our Strategic Plan calls for the eventual replacement of PVC (pre-1990) water mains in our system, as they are older and made of weaker material than the current industry norm. This project will replace the PVC water mains that have been in service since the early 1980's. The field surveying work has been completed. Design work is nearing the 50% stage.
- **Broadway Street Water Main Replacement** – This project will replace the ductile iron water main that was installed in the early 1970's and has been found to be in deteriorating condition based upon recent excavations. With the redevelopment of the Woolen Mills Factory and Albemarle County's increased attention on economic revitalization of this corridor, replacement of this water main is crucial to transforming this area. Design work is at the 90% stage.
- **Raintree and Fieldbrook Water Main Replacement** – This project replace the PVC water mains that have been in service since the 1980s and will eliminate pipe saddles at the water service connections that have been failing due to corrosion. Project is at the 50% design stage.
- **Airport Trunk Sewer Upgrade** – With the continued growth in the Hollymead Town Center area, the existing sewer collector serving the airport and the area west of Route 29 is in need of upgrading to handle full build-out. A study of the drainage basin was completed in 2016, with the recommendation the sewer main be increased in size by replacing it in place. Easement acquisition underway for this project. Design work is at the 90% stage.

- **Bellair – Liberty Hills Sewer** – Over the past several years there has been an increase in residents of the Bellair Subdivision seeking to connect to public sanitary sewer service, since most residents are currently served by private septic fields. We are at the 50% design phase for this project.
- **Barracks West Water Main Replacement** – This project will replace the undersized and aging cast-iron and galvanized water mains that were installed in the late 1960s. These water mains are original to the Old Salem Apartments development, now called Barracks West. This project is at the 50% design phase, with identification of boring and test hole locations underway.

Let us know if you have further questions or comments. We are more than glad to meet with you or hold a virtual meeting to talk about any of our projects, or facilities, or provide a tour if that would be useful.

Attachments: Spring Customer Newsletter

news & updates

Joining Together to Keep Our Systems Strong

Dear Customer,

The mission of the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) is to provide clean safe water, exemplary wastewater services, and fire protection infrastructure. Together with our community partners, the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA), and the City of Charlottesville, we maintain and improve our utility system in a timely, cooperative, and financially responsible manner.

Throughout our decades of service, the ACSA has been able to meet the many challenges we faced because of the willingness of our customers to invest in our systems when other communities across the country have been hesitant. It is because of your commitment that our systems remain resilient and prepared for the future.

It is not only our responsibility to deliver efficient, reliable services now, but we also must leave behind strong systems for future generations. Because continued investment is the proven path to fulfill this duty, we will need to increase our rates to fund the RWSA's necessary upgrades, including significant infrastructure improvements at key facilities, and the economic impacts of inflation.

We do not make these asks of you without fully considering the financial impacts, and we will continue our record of responsibility with the funds we request from you. The ACSA is continuing our practice from recent years of applying reserves to minimize the full rate increase we face.

We recently unveiled our 2023 through 2025 Strategic Plan, which uses input from our customers and our employees to prioritize our short and long-term organizational work as we strengthen our infrastructure. You can find more details about our new Plan at www.serviceauthority.org.



Gary O'Connell, Executive Director



The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) is the ACSA's wholesale provider of water and wastewater services. They also provide these services to the City of Charlottesville.

The RWSA's work to improve and maintain their systems must be supported with hundreds of millions of dollars in funding, so they pass down their necessary cost increases to the ACSA & Charlottesville.

The ACSA is responsible for approximately 60% of the RWSA's annual debt service, and charges from Rivanna make up more than 60% of our annual operating budget.

This is why our rates simply must increase when Rivanna's budgets and costs increase; we must pay for the important work they must complete on behalf of everyone in our region.

ACSA Adopts 2023 through 2025 Strategic Plan



Like every other water and wastewater utility across the country, the Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) is facing opportunities and challenges that require a focused vision for the future, achieved through a careful consideration of priorities and proper planning.

Using a similar process to the one used to construct previous successful strategic plans, our Board of Directors last month approved the ACSA's 2023 through 2025 Strategic Plan. The process included reviewing the results of customer surveys and employee interviews; the recommendation of our Best Practices Review Panel; the consideration of Board input; and the results of Leadership Team workshops. We also evaluated the results of our 2020-2022 Strategic Plan, which found the ACSA achieved a significant level of success despite the pandemic.

As the graphic above shows, the ACSA is focusing on four key areas to improve our services in the coming years: Data Optimization, Business Resilience, Customer Experience, and Employee Experience. For a full graphic rundown of the Plan, visit serviceauthority.org.