


# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Albemarle County Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Gary O'Connell, Executive Director   
**Date:** July 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

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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. **Adoption of FY '24 Budget and Rates** – The new Budget and Rates have been Board approved and go into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>. Nearly two-thirds of the ACSA Budget and Rates go to pay the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) for treatment and capital costs (bond funded annual debt service). RWSA's wholesale rate to the ACSA has a 13.59% increase, primarily driven by major water system projects and upgrades:

- Observatory and South Rivanna Water Treatment Plant Renovation and Expansion;
- Beaver Creek Reservoir and Dam rebuilt and new water conveyance piping, pump stations, etc.
- Central Water Line;
- Reservoirs Pipeline and others.

The ACSA Budget and Rates were summarized in the attached newsletter to our customers in May. We have not received any public comments.

FY 2024 ACSA Budget and Rates:

- 8.9% average customer rate increase or \$5.30 per month, or \$0.18 a day.

We still see good value in Albemarle Water and still offer nearly two gallons of safe, reliable water for one penny.

2. **Strategic Plan** – We recently adopted a new multi-year Strategic Plan to focus on important future forward initiatives that are improvements in the services we provide to our customers. We have identified four strategic focus areas to act upon:

- Data Optimization (data management initiatives);
- Business Resilience (continuity of business and environmental sustainability);
- Customer Experience (improving the customer experience with the ACSA);
- Employee Experience (work force initiatives).

3. **ACSA Capital Projects Update** - The approved FY 2024 Capital Improvement Program totals more than \$11.5 million. Highlights and current major projects are detailed below:

- **Madison Park Pump Station Upgrade** - This project replaces the current pump station that was constructed nearly 40 years ago by a private developer. The original equipment is wearing down and the building is undersized to handle SCADA monitoring equipment. A construction contract has been awarded, but field activities have been delayed by long lead times for some critical pump station items.
- **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 of construction is underway.
- **Crozet Phase 4 Water Main Replacement** - This project replaces aging and undersized asbestos-cement and PVC water mains along Rockfish Gap Turnpike, Crozet Avenue, Hillsboro Lane, and the neighborhood streets of the Park View subdivision. The final easement was recently acquired, and we are working to secure plan approval from Albemarle County before bidding the project later this summer.
- **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 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. Easement acquisition efforts are also underway for this project.

- **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. Our current design coordinates the water main replacement work with VDOT's Morey Creek Bridge Replacement Project. Due to the uncertainty in VDOT's plans to replace this existing bridge, the ACSA is exploring alternative options to cross Morey Creek and will be performing follow-up geotechnical investigations this summer to aid in those decisions.
- **Northfields Water Main Replacement** - This project replaces asbestos cement water mains that were part of the original well system that dates to the 1960's. Our design consultant is working towards the 90% design phase, and we anticipate easement acquisition efforts beginning in late 2023.
- **Scottsville Phase 4 Water Main Replacement** - This project will replace aging and undersized water mains along James River Road, Warren Street, Hardware Street, and several other roads in Downtown Scottsville. We are at the 90% design phase and anticipate beginning easement acquisition efforts later this summer.
- **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 efforts are nearing completion and advertisement for construction could occur later in 2023.
- **Raintree and Fieldbrook Water Main Replacement** - This project will 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 phase.
- **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 needs 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 efforts continue 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 90% design phase, with easement acquisition expected this fall.
- **Townwood Water Main Replacement** - This project continues our systematic program to replace PVC water mains that have been in service since the early 1980's and have recently experienced several water main breaks causing water service disruptions. Field survey efforts have been completed and our consultant has begun development of the 50% Design Documents.

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:

- Customer FY 2024 Budget and Rates Newsletter
- ACSA Strategic Plan
- Customer Summer Newsletter



# FY'24 Budget & Rates

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

## Investing in Our Water Future

### Dear Customer,

The ACSA's mission is to provide safe and reliable water for a good value. To achieve that mission, the ACSA must support the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA), our wholesale treatment provider, as they heavily invest in their water and wastewater systems. The projected cost for all the needed improvements is \$326 million over the next five years.

Once again, the ACSA will use our available financial tools to help reduce the burden on your budget. However, RWSA's work requires increased funding beyond the help our reserves can provide; they must charge the ACSA a 13.59% increase for the next budget year in order to fund their upgrades.

The ACSA is responsible for 62% of the RWSA's annual debt service charges for large capital projects, and those charges make up about 62% of our operating budget. As a result, we must raise our rates in Fiscal Year 2024 (starting July 1) and beyond to ensure proper funding for all this important work.

We at the ACSA are mindful of the inflationary times we are in that impact us all. That's why we are once again applying cash reserves to lower this year's proposed rate increase to you. The RWSA's cost increase to the ACSA is 13.59%, while our proposed average rate increase is 8.9% for our customers. ***The average residential customer will see a \$5.30 a month increase equaling 18 cents a day.***

We continue to work hard each day to reliably provide you with high-quality water. The investments we're making will ensure our success.



Gary O'Connell  
 Executive Director, Albemarle County Service Authority

**MyWater**  
 Provided by ACSA

### Proposed ACSA FY '24 Water & Sewer Monthly User Rates

Rates and Charges	FY '23	FY'24
Service Charge	\$9.45	\$10.40
Volume Charge: Single-Family Residential (per 1,000 gallons)		
Level 1: Up to 3,000 gallons	\$5.05	\$5.56
Level 2: 3,001 to 6,000 gallons	\$10.14	\$11.15
Level 3: 6,001 to 9,000 gallons	\$15.19	\$16.71
Level 4: More than 9,000 gallons	\$20.27	\$22.30
Multi-Family/Non-Residential (per 1,000 gallons)	\$10.14	\$11.15
Sewer: All Users (per 1,000 gallons)	\$10.24	\$11.06

### Combined Monthly Bill Comparison Single-Family Residential, 3,200 Gallons



# FY'24 Budget Facts & Figures

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

## ACSA System Obligations

The ACSA is obligated to provide our wholesale service provider, Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority, with funding for essential infrastructure upgrades totaling \$326 million.

Below are the costs for RWSA's upgrades, which must be paid for by rate increases charged by the ACSA and other regional partners.



**South & North  
Fork Rivanna  
Treatment Plants**  
**\$25 Million**



**Crozet Water  
System**  
**\$51 Million**



**Observatory Water  
Treatment Plant, Piping,  
Water Storage, and  
Central Water Line**  
**\$96 Million**



**Moores Creek  
Advanced Water  
Resource Recovery  
Facility (Wastewater)**  
**\$58 Million**



**New Reservoir  
Raw Water  
Pipeline**  
**\$88 Million**

FY'24 RWSA cost increase  
charged to ACSA

**13.59%**

ACSA's Use  
of Fund  
Reserves



FY '24 ACSA  
Residential Rate Increase

**8.9%**

Average residential customer increase:  
\$5.30 a month. 18¢ a day.

## ACSA Obligations



**62%**

% of ACSA's Operating Budget  
allocated to RWSA's charges



**62%**

% of RWSA debt service  
paid for by the ACSA

ACSA Proposed Budget & Rates  
Public Hearing. Also Virtual.  
Thursday, June 15 @ 9am  
168 Spotnap Road, Charlottesville, VA  
[www.serviceauthority.org](http://www.serviceauthority.org)



2023  
-through-  
2025

# THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SERVICE AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PLAN



## Data Optimization

Conduct a comprehensive review of all data and their sources to ensure proper access, classification, and utilization.

### COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SYSTEMS

Conduct a thorough data mapping and analysis of all existing software and integrations to determine opportunities for improved efficiency.

### DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Perform classification of data to ensure proper management, and the procurement and implementation of a new Document Management System.

### SYSTEM MONITORING AND REPORTING

Review, maintain, and secure the data that we collect and share with users through dashboards or other reporting methods.



## Business Continuity

Ensure the ability to operate effectively and efficiently in the event of manmade or natural disaster and disruption with minimal interruption of service.

### DEVELOP BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Develop a Business Continuity plan to ensure the continual operations during emergencies.

### FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED POLICY

Formalize a longstanding practice in which new development receives water and sewer service in the order by which they apply for service, and capacity is not reserved.

### OPTIMIZATION OF RESOURCES

Perform an audit of the current space, assess staffing levels, and explore opportunities to leverage consulting services in support of staff.



## Customer Experience

Provide best-in-class service ensuring the needs of our customers are exceeded.

### CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE VISION

Perform a comprehensive analysis of services and interactions as experienced through the eyes of our customers.

### CUSTOMER INFORMATION SYSTEMS (CIS)

Develop a modern and integrated CIS platform that provides clear, concise information to customers.

### CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Enhance customer outreach to include community events, new customer orientations, and other important information through a variety of communication tools.



## Employee Experience

Retain and recruit a highly-skilled workforce and provide employees with resources and opportunities for professional growth.

### RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Explore strategies to ensure that we are attracting highly qualified candidates and ensure our workforce remains motivated and satisfied.

### EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Perform a comprehensive analysis of current practices and create new opportunities to ensure the ACSA is a great place to work.

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Review current learning opportunities to ensure quality, cost-effective training that increases employee and organizational productivity and enrichment.

# news & updates

## Protecting Your Health & Your Money

### Dear Customer,

I often use my newsletter messages to talk about our mission at the Albemarle County Service Authority and how the men and women of our organization maintain and improve our utility in a timely, cooperative, and financially responsible manner. Their work ensures you receive safe, clean services that protect your health, home, and business.

One way we detail our efforts on your behalf is through our Water Quality reports, our yearly breakdowns of what we deliver to your taps every day. The ACSA goes well beyond what we are required to say to detail how our work with the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority provides you with the highest quality drinking water never ends.

We feel it is vital to outline the challenges we'll face in the future before they cause you concern. Not only is the ACSA working to fully comply with the EPA's revised Lead and Copper Rule (LCR), which will govern how water providers must protect our customers from exposure to lead through their drinking water, but we've also been proactive with years of testing for PFAS, so-called "forever chemicals" being found in drinking water all over the country.

To achieve success, we must turn to you for financial support; all of our work is paid for by rates and fees, not tax dollars. Rivanna is the wholesale provider of our services and 62% of our budget goes to paying their costs, which totals an estimated \$326 million over the next five years.

The ACSA is mindful of the inflationary times, so we are again applying cash reserves to lower this year's rate increase to where the average residential customer will see an increase of 18 cents a day.

Investing in the future isn't always easy, but these choices are the choices we must make to protect public health. The ACSA will continue our work to ensure the money you've entrusted to us does the best possible job of providing high-quality water.



Gary O'Connell, Executive Director



The ACSA continues to work with our vendor Core & Main/Sensus and our project management consultant Esource to upgrade our system's water meters.

We are proud to announce that the final phase of our Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) under the MyWater banner began in early April and our installers have successfully upgraded more than 2,000 meters. We anticipate that between 50 and 80 meters will be upgraded every day.

Approximately 20% of the ACSA's water system is fully operational with AMI and we look forward to making continued progress so you can reap the benefits for years to come.



Enhanced  
Customer  
Service



Proactive  
Leak  
Alerts



Customer  
Cost  
Control



Added  
Efficiency &  
Sustainability



# Learn From Your Lawn

You Can Become Water Wise Thanks to These Tips!



## #1 - Let's State the Obvious First...

**Don't water too much. Don't water too little.**

How can you tell when to water? Try this test. Walk on your lawn. If you can see your footprints, it needs water. If it bounces back, skip the soaking.



## #2 - Watch Where You're Watering

Just like this young Water Watcher, make sure you water your grass and not your driveway or sidewalk. If you have an irrigation system, after your grass is cut, check your heads. Make sure they can flow freely and are pointing to where you want to water.



## #3 - Water your lawn, not the sky.

Water your lawn in the heat of the day and you might as well be watering the sky. It will evaporate before it gets into the soil. Water before the sun comes up and winds hit their peak or after the sun goes down and winds tend to weaken.

For more tips on how to be Water Wise, visit the EPA's WaterSense webpage at [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

## 2023 ACSA Drinking Water Quality Reports Available Online

The ACSA's Annual Drinking Water Reports detail how our dedicated staff delivered water of the highest quality during 2022; it met or exceeded all regulatory requirements. You can also read about how we're prepared to meet proposed new PFAS regulations.

The reports are on our website at [www.serviceauthority.org/waterqualitysupply/water-quality](http://www.serviceauthority.org/waterqualitysupply/water-quality). You can also scan the QR Code to go straight to the webpage.

If you wish to receive a paper copy of one or more of the reports, please contact Tim Brown at [tbrown@serviceauthority.org](mailto:tbrown@serviceauthority.org) or 434-977-4511, ext. 119.

