


MEMORANDUM

To: Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
From: Gary O'Connell, Executive Director 
Date: April 20, 2022
Re: Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) Quarterly Briefing
cc: Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive; 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, reliable Albemarle water. Here are some recent updates from the ACSA:

1. **Budget and Rates** – The proposed FY '23 Budget and Rates will be presented to the ACSA Board on April 21st. Our wholesaler RWSA is proposing a 10.5% rate increase, primarily due to new major capital projects to improve water quality and reliability. All customers in May will receive a newsletter on the budget and rates. We anticipate the ACSA retail rate to our customers to be less than half that increase, as we have rate stabilization reserves that have been planned to offset the RWSA projected capital debt increases.
2. **Spring Customer Newsletter** – Will go to customers as a bill insert with the April bills, and in email form to all e-bill customers.
3. **On-Line Service Request** – We went live on April 1st with a new on-line service request page on our website. This gives our customers another means 24/7 to contact us regarding any non-emergency service issues. There is built-in tracking and notifications to customers with updates on the status of their service request. We continue to ask customers to contact us 24/7 by phone at 977-4511 if they have an emergency. We have staff on-call after-hours to respond to emergencies.
4. **On-Line Bill Payment** – Another of our technology improvement projects was launched last spring to simplify our payment approach. Prior to the new system we saw about 10% of our customers using, while under the new system use has grown to 37% and climbing.
5. **AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure)** – One of our Strategic Plan major initiatives is to utilize the various AMI technologies that are available in the

water metering world. A tremendous advantage with AMI is near real time leak detection inside the customer's home or business, or water service line, a tremendous water conservation and cost savings tool. In our January 2019 Customer Survey, over 97% of the respondents found it important to have leak notification. We also will be adding in the future a new customer "portal" online feature for a customer to track their water use. The second phase was about 1,200 meters, primarily residential meters in Scottsville, and all 450 large meters in the ACSA system (1/3 of overall monthly use). The remaining 19,500 meters are the final phase. With the global chip shortages, many large quantities of our meter deliveries have been delayed. In the meantime, all our antenna installations are being completed. Notices go out to each customer 30 days prior to installation, and then a mailer card 5 days prior to the meter install. The meter/communications device is a quick 15 to 20-minute change-out for each customer and the 2,000 meters installed thus far have gone smoothly. We are offering an "Opt-Out" for customers who do not wish to participate.

6. **AMI Video** – We have produced a MyWater video on our new advanced meter project to explain to customers the why and how of the AMI project. The 2 ½ minute video is on the ACSA website: www.serviceauthority.org.
7. **ACSA Capital Projects Update** - The approved FY 2022 Capital Improvements Program totals \$11.1 million. Highlights and current major projects are detailed below:
 - **Madison Park Pump Station Upgrade** - Constructed 37 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 plan is to replace this pump station on-site. Design work is at the 100% stage. The project has been bid and contract documents are being processed.
 - **Oak Forest Sewer Pump Station Abandonment** - This is an aging pump station in need of rehabilitation. With the adjacent Stonefield development, we now have the opportunity to extend a sewer main via micro-tunnel and eliminate this aging pump station and avoid an expensive upgrade. Work on the construction is under way with about 80% completion. A major underground tunnel bore has been completed for the sewer piping for this project.
 - **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. Construction contract has been authorized.
 - **Pantops Sewer Study** - Area study to reduce wet weather infiltration and inflow (I/I). This study will likely lead to targeted sanitary sewer system rehabilitation. Flow monitoring and manhole inspections have been completed, and the investigation portion of this project, including robotic televising of the sewer lines, has been completed. Rehabilitation work is nearly complete.
 - **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. We have completed the second phase of work, with the third phase design now complete, and project to be bid this month.

- **Crozet Phase IV 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. The design phase is complete and easement acquisition is under way. The VDOT Lickinghole Creek Bridge Replacement must be completed before we start this water main replacement.
- **Hessian Hills Water Main Replacement** - The water mains in the Hessian Hills area have major deterioration, and they are also undersized throughout most of the subdivision. This project follows our Strategic Plan goal to replace aging and undersized water mains throughout our system. It will also eliminate a small amount of plastic pipe installed in the early 1980's. Work along Barracks Road and Georgetown Road is continuing to take place at night due to high traffic volumes during the day. Construction on this project is about 90% complete. Paving has taken place on the neighborhood streets. Project in final phases of work. Barracks and Georgetown Road will be fully restored, in coordination with a VDOT project.
- **Hollymead Sewer Rehabilitation** - ACSA staff has identified other large drainage basins to be evaluated for infiltration and inflow (I/I) to continue our efforts to maintain the integrity of our wastewater collection system. This study area includes the oldest portions of the Hollymead Subdivision, as well as the offsite portion of the sewer main that serves the westernmost area of Forest Lakes South. The Forest Lakes Offsite Sewer will be the primary collector for the upcoming Brookhill development, and an evaluation of this trunk main will provide an excellent baseline of pipe integrity in advance of the future construction activities around this sewer. All of the manholes have been inspected, flow monitoring and smoke testing have been completed. Rehabilitation work has begun and work is at the 24% stage.
- **Energy Audit** - This project will consist of a comprehensive energy audit of the Operations Center and all pump stations (20). It will evaluate current energy consumption and the factors that drive it, as well as an analysis of utility rate structures to identify potential cost savings. Surveys are being conducted of all systems, including operation and maintenance procedures to determine where energy conservation can be improved. An evaluation of infrastructure needed to convert our fleet to electric vehicles has been added to the scope of the audit. The project is at 85% completion.
- **Avon Street Maintenance Yard** - 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, causing us to relocate some equipment and larger materials to the former ACSA Maintenance Yard at the Crozet Water Treatment Plant, which we lease from RWSA. This project will develop the ACSA owned Avon Street property into a satellite facility for larger vehicle and materials storage. The Planning Commission has approved the Comprehensive Plan Compliance review. Design of the site is under way at the 65% stage, and the initial site plan has been submitted to the Albemarle County Planning staff.

- **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 out 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 road improvement project overlaps with ours. Easement acquisition is under way.
- **Northfields Water Main Replacement** - This project addresses the goal in our Strategic Plan for the eventual replacement of all asbestos-cement water mains in our system. 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. The design of some sanitary sewer extensions as part of this project, specifically in areas along the road, has been added to our consultant's scope of work.
- **Exclusion Meters Replacement** - In the mid 1990's with the development of Glenmore, many new customers installed irrigation systems for their properties and wanted to have their sewer bills reduced by the amount of water that was diverted to irrigate their properties. Private meters were installed behind their ACSA meter to record this volume and it was "excluded" from the calculation of their sewer charges and these became known as exclusion meters. On January 1, 2006 the ACSA Rules and Regulations were modified to no longer allow exclusion meters, and required that all future irrigation meters would be tapped separately off our water mains to be owned and controlled by the ACSA. This project is a multi-year replacement program by our in-house CIP Crew to install dedicated, ACSA owned irrigation meters that will eliminate all remaining private exclusion meters in our system. The number of exclusion meters in the ACSA system has been reduced to 383, with about 113 replaced thus far, or about 23%.
- **Pipe Saddles Replacement** - The ACSA Maintenance Department has discovered in recent years that pipe saddles used to make water service line connections to PVC water mains have been failing. Either the zinc-coated straps or the cast iron saddle bodies are deteriorating. This project is a multi-year replacement program.
- **Scottsville Phase IV (James River Road) Water Main Replacement** - Continues our systematic program to replace undersized and deteriorating water mains in the ACSA system. At the 50% design stage.
- **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. Project is at the 50% design 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. In an effort to gauge community interest for such a project, ACSA staff mailed out a survey to the residents seeking feedback on their interest. Based on initial feedback received, a majority of the property owners are interested in connecting to public sewer if it was made available. The project is in the preliminary design phase with additional field surveying under way.

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.

Attachment: Spring ACSA Customer Newsletter

news & updates

Meeting Today's Challenges. Just Like You.

Dear Customer,

As we know all too well since 2020, the best-laid plans can end up being tossed aside by the events of the day. I've written several times about how the Albemarle County Service Authority and our dedicated staff have handled Covid in order to continue delivering safe, clean water to your taps. Now, we face inflationary challenges created as we come out from under Covid (finally?) and price increases for energy generated by the conflict in Ukraine and world economic pressures.

While we can't see into the future at the ACSA, our staff and I do our best to properly plan and make sure that our decisions are not short-sighted and leave us - and you, our customers - vulnerable to unforeseen events. We're also fortunate to work with partners like the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority and Charlottesville utilities, who share our views on moving forward using thorough planning and preparation. Rivanna, in particular, is continuing to push forward with much-needed upgrades to our water and sewer systems. Yes, the costs of these efforts will add slightly to your bills but, because of the tools we have put in place, the ACSA is fully prepared to lessen their financial impacts on you.

In our last newsletter, I shared with you how the ACSA is in a strong position to meet new federal and state regulations that are on the horizon. As thousands of other utilities across the country deal with the regulations' significant impacts on their staffs and resources, we can say that our past work - and that of our partners - continues to pay off. As a result, the revised Lead and Copper Rule and new testing regimen for PFAS contaminants are not likely to cause us a great deal of concern.

I look forward to sharing our continued progress throughout 2022, including the introduction of a new online customer portal and the re-opening of our offices on April 4. I thank you, as always, for your continued patience and respect for our staff as we continue to make our way into the future.



Gary O'Connell, Executive Director



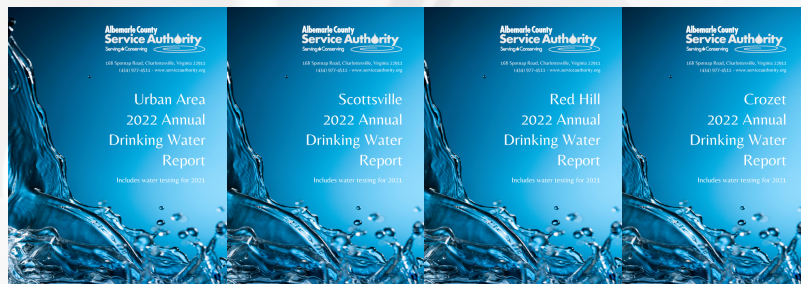
ACSACONnect



ACSA_connect

ACSA Water Quality Reports Coming This Spring

Our drinking waters report detail our work to deliver water of highest quality to your homes and businesses. Once again, our water meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements. You can also read about how well we handle the issue of lead and PFAS discoveries in our nation's drinking water. Visit our homepage - www.serviceauthority.org - later this spring for your service areas's water report.



**Need help, but it's not an emergency?
The ACSA just made it a whole lot easier.
Visit our new Service Request Page @
www.serviceauthority.org.**

Come & take a look at **MyWater** Provided by ACSA

To make it easier for you to understand everything involved in our MyWater utility innovation program and our first effort to upgrade your water meters, the ACSA created a short video to explain ALL of the benefits you will enjoy, along with details about how the meter work will be conducted. To watch the video, visit serviceauthority.org and click on the MyWater page.



Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

- Enhanced Customer Service
- Proactive Leak Alerts
- Customer Cost Control
- Added Efficiency & Sustainability

What to expect