MEMORANDUM

To: Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
From: Gary O'Connell, Executive Director
Date: April 17, 2024
Re: Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) Quarterly Briefing
cc: Mr. Jeff Richardson, County Executive; Mr. Trevor Henry, Deputy County Executive; Mr. Lance Stewart, Director of Facilities; ACSA Board of Directors; ACSA Leadership Team and Operations Council

We have to start by thanking the Board for your support over time, and during my tenure at ACSA. 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. As you are likely aware, I will be retiring from the ACSA on June 30th. I will have completed 14 years of service to our customers at the ACSA. I have enjoyed my water journey, and appreciate the support of your Board and staff. Here are some recent updates from the ACSA:

1. **AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure)** – We are about complete with the installations of our advanced radio read meters. We are hopeful to be completed with the 22,500 new installations by late April. The customer benefit to AMI is instant water leak detection, which has proven to already save a lot of water and customer money. The final phase will be a customer oriented online portal to give customers access to all their water use information, including water leak alert notifications.

2. **FY 2025 Budget, Rates and CIP** – The next budget effective July 1, 2024 is in development. The proposed budget and rates will be presented to the Board at the April 18th meeting, with a public hearing scheduled for June. A customer newsletter on the budget and rates will go out in May. The RWSA wholesale rate to ACSA is a 14.3% increase; we will be using rate stabilization reserves to cushion to a 7% increase. One of our strategic goals is to keep our water rates as affordable as possible, while we continue to make major infrastructure investments.

3. **PFAS** – The "forever chemical" that is all around us. ACSA does not have PFAS in our drinking water, plus we have the added barrier of advanced GAC (granular activated carbon) to remove a wide range of contaminants. Federal regulations on PFAS are about to be released. Many parts of the country have major PFAS issues in their water supply. Albemarle County is fortunate to have very clean, mostly mountain stream fed reservoirs. Attached is a recent flyer we sent to our customers on PFAS and the clean, safe Albemarle water we provide.

4. **Social Media** – We have reactivated our social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, with added emergency notifications on X. Take a look and please follow us.

5. **Cybersecurity** – One of the water sector challenges is security, and in today's world that is cybersecurity. We are active in threat assessment monitoring, third-party review, like the FBI, and continual security upgrades. Our treatment partner RWSA is similar.

6. **CIS** – Our next major Strategic Plan item will focus on a new Customer Information System (CIS). This will include a new phone system, website enhancements, and a modern replacement billing system. All are part of our focus on improving the ACSA customer "experience".

7. **Spring Newsletter** – Focus on tips for spring, watering, water to beer spotlight, and some water informational notes. Goes to all our customers with their April bills, or an e-bill link. See an attached copy of our latest newsletter.

8. **Executive Director Recruitment** – With an upcoming June 30th retirement, the ACSA Board of Directors is going through a national recruitment to hire the future leader for the Authority. The goal is to have a new Executive Director in place by early June so there can be a seamless transition. The recruitment brochure is on the ACSA's (www.serviceauthority.org) website if you have an interest.

9. **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. The contractor has begun work.

    - **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 to utilize this technology to proactively monitor our system. We are 85% complete.

    - **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. Contract has been awarded and construction activities have begun along Hillsboro Lane. Some work will be performed at night due to high traffic volume along certain roadways.

- **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 new site will also replace some of our storage at Crozet that was lost with the water plant expansion there. This site creates the opportunity for some sustainable and conservation-oriented applications including solar energy and electric vehicle charging stations. The project will be rebid after receiving bids that were over budget.

- **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. An alignment has been selected. Spring bidding for this project.

- **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. Project is at the 90% design stage.

- **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. Revised easement plats have been received and we are preparing for negotiations.

- **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 at the 90% 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. Deed of Easement and negotiation underway. Coordinating with Albemarle County on the striping design and future County streetscape project. Construction is targeted for the second half of 2024.

- **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. Construction scheduled for 2027.

- **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 95% design phase, with easement acquisition underway.

- **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. In the easement acquisition phase of work.

- **New FY 2025 CIP** - $12.1 million capital projects are being proposed. We are proposing $140 million over ten years, major investments in ACSA infrastructure. Focus on aging waterline replacements throughout the system.

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.

PFAS SOURCES

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS

PAINTS

NONSTICK COOKWARE

FIREFIGHTING FOAMS

PESTICIDES

WATER-RESISTANT FABRICS

FOOD PACKAGING

What are PFAS?

- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) is a term applied to a broad range of widely used, long-lasting chemicals that break down slowly over time.
- Because of their widespread use, traces of PFAS can be found in food products, the blood of humans and animals and in the global environment, including water, soil and air.

Where do PFAS come from?

- PFAS are found in everyday household items like take-out food containers, shampoo, stain and water-resistant fabrics such as those used on umbrellas and boots, industrial products and many other mass-produced products and materials.
- Because PFAS are so widespread and long-lasting, it is difficult to pinpoint a single source of contamination.

Does Albemarle County's public water supply contain PFAS?

- The Albemarle County Service Authority (ACSA) and the Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA) routinely test the water supplies for PFAS and other potential contaminants. Positive tests for PFAS have occurred in the past but are rare and have always been well below the threshold of concern.
- The public water supply in Albemarle County remains safe. An advanced water treatment process using GAC (granular activated carbon) acts as an additional barrier to PFAS and other contaminants.

Have questions about PFAS in Albemarle? Our environmental compliance specialist and the ACSA team are happy to chat. Please contact us at environmental@serviceauthority.org or 434-977-4511.

Albemarle County Service Authority
Serving Conserving

March | April 2024 Newsletter

Mineral Profile: Water to Beer Spotlight

It's time for a history lesson! Long before ACSA provided municipal water treatment, Albemarle County water was a critical component in beer served at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello home.

Peter Hemings, an enslaved man at Monticello, learned the malting and brewing processes and made the beer. Hemings' water sources likely differed from the reservoirs that now serve the ACSA; however, our local water's mineral profile provides insight into the unique taste of this historical brew.

The water used in beer at Monticello likely came from several sources (including rainfall, spring water and well water), each of which had its own unique chemistry. The most important chemicals in today's Albemarle water mineral profile include calcium chloride, magnesium sulfate and gypsum. While modern beer typically consists primarily of barley with wheat or corn as adjuncts, Monticello beer did not use barley since the crop was not grown on the land. Instead, Hemings' main ingredients included malted wheat and malted corn.

Hemings' Monticello beer was a very pale, slightly sweet ale and likely tasted quite different from today's beers. Want to learn more about the history of Albemarle water? Keep an eye out for more historical facts in our quarterly newsletters!

Breweries That Use ACSA Water

Selvedge Brewing, Urban
Decipher Brewing, Urban
Starr Hill Brewery, Crozet
Pro Re Nata Brewery, Crozet
James River Brewery, Scottsville

Four Tips for Spring Watering

April showers bring May flowers…and May flowers bring new opportunities to improve your water usage! As you prepare to work on your lawn and garden, keep these tips in mind:

1. Water early in the morning or late in the evening. This will minimize water loss from evaporation, ensuring every drop counts.
2. Adjust your sprinklers to avoid watering sidewalks, driveways and other areas without plants.
3. Mulch around plants. This retains soil moisture and reduces how often you need to water.
4. Use a rain barrel to collect and store rainwater. Then, recycle this water when caring for your plants.

Fix-a-Leak Week

Fix-a-Leak Week is an annual initiative by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency dedicated to finding and fixing leaks in and outside your home. Fix-a-Leak Week 2024 is March 18 through 24, but don't worry – you can celebrate all year long! Here are a few tips:

- Regularly inspect all faucets and fixtures throughout your home for drips or leaks, including sinks, showers and outdoor spigots. Even a slow drip can waste significant amounts of water over time. If you notice any leaks, promptly repair or replace the faulty components, such as worn washers or seals, to prevent water loss and potential damage to your property.
- Check for silent leaks in your toilet tank by adding a few drops of food coloring to the tank. If you don't flush and color appears in the bowl, you have a leak.
- Keep an eye on your water bill. Spot an unexpected increase? You probably have a leak.
- Check outdoor faucets and hoses for leaks, especially after winter freezes and thaws.

Executive Director Gary O'Connell Announces Retirement

I will be retiring from the ACSA on June 30, 2024, after 14 years as your executive director. It has been a fun and rewarding journey to work on providing safe, clean and reliable Albemarle water to our 23,000 customers.

We have a great team here at ACSA that takes pride in making the customer experience as good as it can be. I know that commitment and focus will continue into the future, including some strategic customer service improvements coming your way over the next two years. There have been many capital investments made to ensure high-quality water at your tap. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service in this community, and thank you for your support over the years. The ACSA Board of Directors will be going through a recruitment process to find my successor.

Gary

Water Quality Reports

Leave us a positive review on Google and Facebook!

Employee Recruitment

ACSA is hiring! Check out job openings on our website.