



# Orange Water and Sewer Authority

*A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.*

## Summary of the OWASA Board of Directors' Meeting on December 9, 2010

*Please note: The summary below was prepared by OWASA staff and is not approved by the OWASA Board. Audio recordings of the OWASA Board's meetings and the Board's official minutes, when adopted, are available to citizens for review. Video recordings of OWASA Board meetings in the Chapel Hill Town Hall on the fourth Thursdays of the month are also available.*

The OWASA Board of Directors:

- **Received additional public comments and deferred consideration of a draft plan for sustainable management of OWASA's forest lands.** OWASA staff will draft a report early in 2011 regarding comments and questions from citizens including those at a community meeting on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Following review by an OWASA Board committee, the report on comments will be considered by the Board and guidance on this matter will be provided to the staff at that time. OWASA will inform citizens about further consideration of forestry management and will continue to receive public comments.

OWASA's objectives for forestry management include protecting water quality (with stream buffers), enhancing the diversity and health of OWASA's forest lands, improving wildlife habitat, and minimizing impacts on adjacent properties.

- **Adopted a resolution asking Orange County and the Towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough to clarify certain language in the 2001 Water and Sewer Management, Planning and Boundary Agreement (WSMPBA) to ensure that OWASA will have timely, cost-effective access to OWASA's Jordan Lake water supply storage allocation for use by OWASA customers.**

OWASA's *Long-Range Water Supply Plan* recommends that OWASA develop water purchase/sale agreements with neighboring utilities that will secure the permanent ability to cost-effectively purchase water (especially through OWASA's Jordan Lake water supply storage allocation) under appropriate conditions of supply and demand consistent with the long-term performance objectives of:

1. Avoiding future Water Shortage declarations through temporary purchases of treated water from neighboring utilities. This offers the most cost-effective way to supplement OWASA's local supply during the infrequent times of severe drought, equipment failure, natural or manmade disaster, or other unforeseen circumstance. Purchasing water also reduces (unbudgeted) revenue losses that result from a declared Water Shortage and would have to be recovered through subsequent rate increases; avoids higher customer bills from surcharges imposed during a declared Water Shortage; and lessens the hardship and inconvenience to customers who have already reduced their water use through diligent and ongoing conservation efforts; and

2. Providing additional flexibility and redundancy in the event of critical facility failure, extreme weather, or other unforeseen/ emergency circumstances.

The *Long-Range Water Supply Plan* also recommends that OWASA work cooperatively with the local elected boards to amend the *2001 Water and Sewer Management, Planning, and Boundary Agreement* – only as needed – to resolve any unnecessary constraints on access to OWASA’s Jordan Lake allocation and to ensure a reliable and sustainable water supply for the future.

OWASA believes the WSMPBA in its present form may be construed as impeding OWASA’s access to Jordan Lake by its broad prohibition of all cross-jurisdictional water transfers except in times of emergency. OWASA’s *Long-Range Water Supply Plan* identifies OWASA’s Jordan Lake water supply allocation as an important insurance policy for times of special need, but some of those circumstances may not qualify as “emergencies” under current language of the WSMPBA. The purpose of the proposed clarifying language is to avoid any future misunderstandings or disagreements that might impede the timely access to our Jordan Lake allocation, and to provide greater certainty for OWASA’s water supply planning and management efforts.

- **Awarded a \$4.8 million contract to replace the sanitary sewer near Bolin Creek from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to Estes Drive, and part of the water main in Umstead Drive east of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.** The existing sewer is in poor condition and wastewater overflows could occur due to limited capacity. The sewer project will take about a year and will involve closing parts of Umstead Drive to through traffic when new lines are installed in the roadway. OWASA informed citizens about its plans in letters earlier this year and held a public meeting in September to receive questions and comments. The partial water main replacement is needed because the present line is too close to the planned location of the new sewer.
- **Reviewed a draft statement of issues and assumptions for developing the budget for July, 2011 through June, 2012 (Fiscal Year 2012).** The draft issues statement is an early step in developing the budget for the coming year.
- **Entered into a contract to sell the 61-acre Tract 1 portion of OWASA’s Ray Heirs property adjacent to University Lake.** The Board agreed to sell 61.3 acres of the 76-acre Ray Heirs property for \$725,000. Per terms of the conservation easement that OWASA previously conveyed to the State of North Carolina, 45.9 acres of the property will be permanently protected – regardless of future ownership – as a riparian buffer area, and the remaining 15.4 acres will be allowed to accommodate no more than two homesites. The 14-acre Tract 2 parcel is also for sale and is currently being actively marketed.

For more information, please see the agenda materials at <http://www.owasa.org/about/board-meetings.aspx>. The OWASA Board’s next scheduled business meeting will be on Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM in the Community Room at the OWASA Administration Building, 400 Jones Ferry Road, Carrboro.