ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

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

MEETING SUMMARY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
June 23, 2015 at 5:30 PM in the OWASA Boardroom

Committee Members present:	Steve Dear, Chair; Terri Buckner, Quinton Harper, Michael Hughes and John Young (Ex-Officio)
Staff:	Ed Kerwin; Stephen Winters, CPA; Patrick Davis; Greg Feller
Citizens:	None

1. Review and discuss potential affordability outreach strategies for the next year.

Patrick Davis, Sustainability Manager, presented lessons learned in the pilot program and the results of a poll of local partner agencies (which are participating in the affordability outreach pilot program) regarding potential strategies. The agencies gave highest rankings of need to

1. pursuing grant funding,
2. assisting agencies with retrofits and
3. continuing targeted in-home water audits.

Comments by the Committee included:

- The presentation to the OWASA Board on June 25 should note that fixing leaks and reducing water use and bills will benefit both customers and agencies which otherwise would provide bill payment assistance for the customer. Staff should also state that water use evaluation training has been provided to some agency staff.
- Committee members are pleased with progress made on the pilot program.
- OWASA and partner agencies should seek volunteers' participation in the affordability program.
- To the extent that time and resources are available, local agency partners should consider applying for grants, possibly with volunteer help.
- OWASA should develop videos on water conservation.
- OWASA should seek publicly-usable testimonials from people helped in the affordability outreach program.
- Using Care to Share funds to pay for plumbing retrofits could be a long-term strategy for more permanently addressing affordability/bill assistance needs.

- OWASA should seek local plumbers' and contractors' participation in and support for the affordability program.

2. Invite and consider questions, comments, and suggestions from the public regarding our affordability outreach efforts.

There were no comments from citizens.

3. Discuss if the Committee wishes to make any comments and recommendations at the June 25, 2015 Board meeting.

The Committee reached an informal consensus that OWASA should continue the affordability outreach program, and develop a plan for sustainably continuing the program, including an assessment of resource needs and strategies.

4. Next meeting

The Committee deferred scheduling its next meeting.

The Committee adjourned at 7 PM.

Prepared by:

Greg Feller

Greg Feller, Public Affairs