

# High Knob Utilities, Inc.

## Meeting Minutes for

**July 13, 2004**

Call to Order: Keith Arnett called the monthly meeting of the High Knob Utilities, Inc (HKUI) Board to order at 7:00 pm. HKUI Board members in attendance were Keith Arnett, Jem Anderson, Bob Brown, Scott Cooper, and Josh Douglas.

Previous Minutes: The Board accepted the minutes of the May meeting, with one typo identified by Keith Arnett. There was no HKUI Board meeting held during June (since the HKOAI Board followed its custom and did not meet, no HKUI Board meeting was scheduled).

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Brown presented a status update, reflecting receipt of six tap fees and \$7,484 in customer billings and significant expenditures for employee labor costs and for materials and supplies for the water project. Substantial expenses were also listed under the Capital Projects category, including over \$165,000 in E.C. Pace pipe work.

Operations Committee Report: The Joint Operations Committee did not meet in June or July.

Water Manager's Report: Dan Althouse reported that High Knob employees were able to install the tool body on the red truck and is already paying dividends in efficiency. Charlie's Auto will perform some finishing work to complete the job.

There were no significant leaks in the water system (three fixes made in tap lines)—the only major outages were related to the ongoing construction work. One tap was replaced on Boulder Road, the new pressure reduction valve manhole at Lazy Livin' and Clubhouse is installed (thus repairing the leak mentioned in the May minutes), and a new round of lead and copper testing (along with 24 other sampling requirements) was completed. When the water project is complete, it will be necessary to replace 11 defective meters.

The pool is consuming 3,000 gallons of water per day—far more than would be expected, while the water project requires an additional 2,000-4,000 gallons per day to flush and fill the new mains and pressurize the system. When the water system project is complete, the pool will no

longer use water from the drinking water system. Total production averaged 49,100 gallons per day for residential use in the previous two months. The Mountain Top and Alpine Reservoirs are now on-line and the Ridge Reservoir is no longer in use to hold or control water.

The High Knob crew stopped work on the “force-work” portion of the water project during late June and early July in order to accomplish the work listed above, tear down the unsafe playground equipment, build a stable platform in front of the front bulletin board, read meters (the latest Consumer Confidence Report will be mailed with second quarter bills) and haul fill dirt to the service entrance to prepare for the upcoming entrance improvement. The crew has also been heavily involved in setting up a bypass system to service the 175 or so homes in the central part of High Knob that would otherwise be served only by the soon-to-be-abandoned 4,000 gallon Playground Reservoir (or, more accurately, the portion not used to flush the lines and restore service). There is substantial risk in the bypass system, which relies on abandoned lines, but the Playground Valve Station should be in place before the end of July. The net result of these activities has placed the High Knob crew about two weeks behind schedule on its portion of the water system project.

In addition, E.C. Pace made a critical error on July 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, connecting residential service to a low-pressure line and capping a high-pressure line rather than the reverse (as directed by High Knob staff). The time and material costs associated with the error will be handled at the end of the contract (in conjunction with other work/services exchanged between the E.C. Pace and High Knob crews).

HKUI made two draws of funds from the State loan, totaling almost \$260,000, to pay for work and materials for both work crews and for engineering work. Over \$410,000 in loan funds remain available to complete the project. Dan Althouse believes HKUI’s cash position will be approximately \$25,000 at the end of July.

Looking forward regarding the water project, the Playground Valve Station site is ready, the Butler/Turkey Trot system is complete to the valve station site (including site preparation for the new reservoir), the pipe installation is complete on Bridle Path, supplies are in place for HKUI work on Red Bud, the SCADA system is ready for final operational testing, the preliminary electrical work is done, and E.C. Pace has completed its work above Massanutten Mountain and most of its work on Massanutten Mountain itself. Remaining work includes High Knob Road (by E.C. Pace), a meter bypass at Shenandoah, the Mountain Top Pump Station, a second pump installation on the Alpine system, a meter installation at Salt Lick Well, SCADA work, and replacing a connection from the Salt Lick System to Alpine. The house at 115 Alpine will have a serious pressure problem until the Salt Lick-Alpine connection is complete; the Board agreed

to provide a “loaner” pump (up to \$150) with the understanding that the homeowner would handle installation.

In addition, the HKUI crew needs to find/fix a newly-discovered leak on Salt Lick, replace some posts and valves, conduct water sampling, take care of manholes on Windy Way and Lazy Livin’, and install four new taps to support construction.

Jerry Soucy asked why HKUI did not replace the main line on Mountain Top Road—he has experienced problems with freezing in previous years and is concerned a cold winter could cut off his water service. The consulting engineer felt that the other changes being made in that area were sufficient to resolve the problem.

**Unfinished Business:** The Board learned that the reservoir signs discussed at the May meeting were posted. The Board will probably budget for installation of fencing next year to improve security around the reservoirs.

**New Business:** The Linden Volunteer Fire Department kindly loaned equipment to High Knob during the 1-2 July problem detailed above and allowed HKUI to keep it over the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday weekend. Keith Arnett recommended a \$200 donation to show our gratitude; the Board approved the donation.

Josh Douglas discussed the mid-mountain problems from the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, prompting discussion about the poor performance of the answering service (it proved impossible for Keith Arnett to get through to provide information on the status of the problem, and others also were very frustrated by the poor quality of information they received. Keith has addressed the matter with the answering service owner; the operator on duty will receive additional training and the staff has a fax number they can use to provide information to the answering service.

**Question and Comment Period:** Wes Gillespie reminded the Board and attendees that it often takes a few hours to address service problems, and patience is therefore warranted. Jerry Soucy then sought updated information regarding a complaint from the HKOAI Annual Meeting and was told the HKUI Board lacked the authority to restrict water usage (i.e., mandate conservation), though it could request that residents minimize water usage.

The July meeting of the HKUI Board adjourned at 8:15 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. on August 14<sup>th</sup>, and the Operations Committee is scheduled to meet at 7:30 p.m. on July 26<sup>th</sup>.

JEM P. ANDERSON  
HKUI Board Secretary