

## **Copalis Rocks Community Meeting Minutes**

May 26, 2012

### **Attendees:**

Chevy C.  
Doug & Mary B.  
Paul & Debbie S.  
Miles B.  
Jim F.  
Jack F.  
Steve W. & Stephanie S.

Dick & Diane K.  
Jeff & Deanne A.  
Erik & Nancy P.  
Shelly & Sandi S.  
Dan & Janice W.  
Robert N. Jr.

Meeting called to order

The water system was discussed first.

### **CRMBA has filed a rate case with the UTC**

The water system has been regulated since February 2011 with rates that were based upon our initial expenses. Now that we have been in operation for more than a year, we have data on current expenses. We filed rate case with the UTC based on these current expenses and on our capital investments in the system. Our new rate is scheduled to be discussed at an open meeting of the UTC next week, May 31<sup>st</sup> @ 9:00am in Olympia. The UTC commissioners will listen to comments from consumers either present at the meeting or listening in via phone. They will either pass our new tariff or send it back for further review. A letter was sent out to all homeowners indicating this and we are here talking about this for open discussion (copies of the letter were available at the meeting).

In order to arrive at this rate, NWWS has gone through all of our expenses and capital expenses and calculated the new rate based on UTC guidelines.

Although this cost could be significant higher, we have worked hard to keep it at an affordable rate for all. All of the work put into the water system by the owners has been on a voluntary basis not calculated into our monthly water fee.

The UTC web page is very user friendly. It lists out all of our company information and has contact information for users. In addition to this, we have also set up a web page for our CRMBA organization where we list updates, water outages, work, and road information as well. I believe there is a link to NWWS and the UTC, etc. for users.

The following question was raised: **Why have you eliminated the capital surcharge and rolled these costs for water and capital surcharge into one fee. It does not allow for clean accounting practices going forward. Especially when the capital surcharge should go away when it is paid off in 2023. The \$84,900. We called the UTC, spoke to a Mr. Cupp who mentioned that this way of accounting is rather unorthodox.**

It was the recommendation of NWS to do this. Basically we are a very small water system, the less expenses the better to keep our water rates low. There are two ways to collect money:

- Having a rate on operating costs and separate surcharges for each capital project.
- Including the depreciable assets in the rate

The second way is much easier to track for our group. There were many administrative requirements when using a surcharge. These include keeping a separate checking account, calculating and tracking interest and principal payments from each customer, filing quarterly reports, and filing a request prior to taking money out of the account (each time).

It would be less expensive because we would otherwise need additional assistance from NWS, resulting in a higher water rate for all to pay. This is not a scenario we want to have, nor do we think that there is any benefit to do it this way in the long run. All of our numbers are available from the UTC and NWWS. You can always request to see these at any time.

The argument for the surcharge is that it is easier to understand and hence more transparent to the customers.

CRMBA owners agreed to discuss this further with NWS and the UTC before making a final decision.

### **Update:**

CRMBA did discuss these issues at some length with NWS and the UTC and made the decision to stay with the single rate. There were comments and discussion at the UTC meeting on the following Thursday, with one customer calling in and explaining the view on staying with the surcharge method. Ultimately, the UTC approved the rates as proposed. These new rates will be used in the June billing.

CRMBA agreed at the request of the UTC to hold another community meeting this year to discuss this again and provide more explanation as to how the rate is calculated.

### **Water Conservation:**

The DOH and DOE has set forth requirements that all water systems make concerted efforts to reduce water use. Our goal is a reduction of 5% over a 6 yr. timetable. It's pretty easy for our group to do this as we've curtailed leaks. But nonetheless it is something we can all help with. NWS will assist with this effort by sending educational pamphlets from time to time

### **Meters:**

Meters have all been installed, the company that installed them is now out of business. D. K. commented that his has been driven over and is setting at an angle. He would like to have it reset.

### **Road Issues were discussed next:**

Last year we were able to do make the repairs to the main hill road, and some of using the middle and lower south lanes personally paid for the additional asphaltting beyond the lower "Y". This has made navigating that hill better and safer for all. I am sure everyone in the community appreciates this upgrade and use the road not only to travel via car but via foot traffic too. It's just much safer for all.

There is some settling that has happened where we placed the gravel along the main hill road toward the lower "Y". We shored up the hill and stabilized this area. This settling is to be expected and we did the best with the money that we had available. Again, many thanks to Robert N. and Doug B., Bruce D. and Chevy C. for all of your efforts to improve the development.

This repair has held, we will be having the asphaltting company (DBC) come back to patch this area with an overlay and tar the remaining areas where the joints meet the old asphalt. This will hopefully help prolong the road for a while until we are able to do something different with a retaining wall at the lower "Y".

Late last fall a questionnaire was sent out to all homeowners asking how they would like to see the road maintenance and the main hill maintenance handled. The common thread among those few who answered was:

"We all pay toward the main hill, entry and gate maintenance and care. The remaining road areas in the development are on private property with easement language and should be

taken care of by the homeowner or group of homeowners using the road if they have agreed amongst themselves to share in the upkeep”.

We have asked that all home and landowners pay a fee of \$10.00 per month, but further discussion we have decided to increase it to \$20.00 per month fee. \$240.00 per yearly fee to pay for the mowing at the top as well as along the side of the hill, say a 6 – 10 foot swath along the hill. Last year D. Buffett took care of this work, but going forward our community will need to retain a company to come in and do this. Dick and Dan have a company that mows their lawns on a regular basis, maybe their yard crew would be willing to take this on. Mary B. to contact them to coordinate and arrive at a cost for doing this. The excess money collected will go toward maintenance of a gate, asphaltting, repairing of roadway from the “Y” up.

#### **Gate:**

We’ve gone out to bid for the gate, received an estimate for roughly \$13,600 not including tax. We think a simple gate that does not have a lot of welds is best for our environment. Perhaps one constructed out of aluminum and powder coated. Picture of proposed gate was distributed to those in attendance.

The location of the gate will be closer to the highway, near the large spruce and larger cedar stump as you come into the long drive of the highway. This would allow for security access to be limited on either side as these two trees in essence they provide a natural barrier. We discussed having a lighted keypad at the entrance so as to enter a code when needing access. We will be looking into the cost of having it wired remotely for phone access to homes and or cell phones. We are uncertain as to the technology surrounding this, but will be looking into it. We’ll see if this is cost effective. We do know that some newer cars have the capability of remotes inside their cars, some later model cars do not and therefore will need to have a “clicker”, which again is an added expense and one which will be needed to be picked up per homeowner wishing to have one .

What to do about renters? Perhaps they will have one code to use or the rental agency will be issued one remote that they will need to track so as to secure the area for the rest of the residences. These are all things to be worked out.

We will continue to go out for bid with a couple other companies so that the right decision for the development can be made.

**Please note that the gate will not be installed until we have secured all of the funds needed to pay for this effort.**

**Request for Funds for Road and Gate efforts:**

We've handed out an updated spreadsheet of those who have contributed to the road repair efforts made last year. We will update with monies that we have collected for our efforts toward the gate and main hill /entry maintenance. Thanks to all who contributed. We will continue to go to homeowners and ask for contributions toward this effort. Again, we are asking for \$1,000 from each homeowner in the development for the gate fund and again \$20.00 per month for the road maintenance fund. Any overage will be kept in the bank and used for repairs and fund future repairs to the road and retaining wall at the lower "Y".

A spreadsheet was distributed to those attending the meeting. If you were unable to attend the meeting on May 26<sup>th</sup> and would like to have a copy of this spreadsheet, we are happy to send to you via pdf. format. **We will not post sensitive information to our web page.**

If you see any discrepancies or errors in these minutes please contact Mary B. as soon as possible