



County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
Alan Weaver, DIRECTOR

SHAVER LAKE ASBESTOS AFFECTED WATER PIPE MEETING MINUTES

July 25, 2014

CAC Members Present: Peter Van Vleet
Brian Murray

County Staff Present: Alan Weaver
Bob Yeatts
Jerod Weeks

Call to Order: Meeting started at approximately 6:00 pm

Introductions

History of Problem

Bob Yeatts explained that asbestos piping is common, has been used since 1920 and is installed throughout the County of Fresno. The use of asbestos/cement piping was replaced by PVC in 1975. He went on to explain that acidic water has eaten away at the protective layer inside of certain asbestos cement pipe releasing asbestos into the water system. This situation has never been seen before.

QUESTIONS

Acronyms:

A/C Asbestos/Cement
PVC Poly Vinyl Chloride
CAC Citizens Advisory Committee
WWD Waterworks District
MFL Million Fibers per Liter
MCL Maximum Contamination Level

Q. Has a sleeved replacement been used before?

A. Yes, the County has been in contact with the company that does the process. This process will require system shut down, excavation, sleeve insert in the pipe then steam sent in. A robot would then be sent into the system to cut holes into the laterals to get flow to properties. The cost estimate for this process is \$1 million per mile.

- Q. **How many miles are eroded vs how many total miles of pipe?**
A. 1.5 to 2 miles need to be replaced and there is approximately 15 miles of good pipe
- Q. **What is the timeline for repair?**
A. A preliminary engineering study is not expected to be completed until April 2015.
- Q. **Are there any state funds or grants available?**
A. Yes, there are funding options and the County is looking into those options.
- Q. **What is the acceptable level of asbestos and what readings are we getting?**
A. The acceptable level of asbestos in a water system is 7 MFL per the EPA. The County has received only one test that has been above the acceptable level which was taken during high flow and not under normal conditions. A test taken under normal conditions would not result in a violation.
- Q. **Who is the chairman of the CAC?**
A. The Chairman of the CAC is Peter Van Vleet who can be reached by attending a CAC meeting.
- Q. **How many wells and holding tanks are there? Are they tied together?**
A. WWD41 has 3 separate holding tanks, 1 in Granite Ridge which has a capacity of 240,000 gallons, 1 in Timberwine at 240,000 gallons and 1 in Ridgetop at 260,000 gallons. The District also consists of 33 wells. The water tanks are tied together and water can be transferred however the County has isolated the affected area and will continue to do so as long as there is an adequate supply of water in all areas.
- Q. **Is there a possibility of fire hydrants being clogged?**
A. No, asbestos particulates are very small. Fire hydrants in the affected area have been identified and will only be used in case of emergency.
- Q. **Can we put a whole house filter on our house?**
A. Yes.
- Q. **Would the property owner be responsible for paying for a filter?**
A. Yes.
- Q. **Is drinking the water a health hazard?**
A. EPA studies have suggested that a person drinking water containing asbestos well above the MCL over a long period of time can develop benign intestinal polyps.
- Q. **Is it safe to take a shower or do laundry?**
A. This is unknown.
- Q. **Can the County install filters at the source of the problem?**
A. No, we would not meet fire hazards regulations and it would not solve the problem which is spread throughout the pipe.

Q. **Can we apply a “band-aid”?**

A. The County is taking measures to reduce the release of asbestos particulates however the A/C pipe has deteriorated to a point where repair or replacement is necessary. It will take roughly 6 months to have a study completed then current funds will be assessed to determine the best method to pay for cost of the project.

Q. **Are the developers who installed these pipes going to be held accountable?**

A. No they are not at fault; they were using the approved pipe at the time.

Q. **How long has the County known about the problem?**

A. The County discovered an increased release of asbestos 3 years ago however test results did not violate the MCL.

Q. **Did the District get any information about the problem 3 years ago?**

A. The CAC was informed.

Q. **Will the study take into account new development?**

A. Developers bring in new water above and beyond what is needed for new developments and will have no effect on production.

Q. **Who will fund this project?**

A. WWD41 will fund the project.

Q. **I’m in an area within the affected zone with PVC pipe, am I ok?**

A. Your PVC pipe will not be dug up however asbestos may travel from the A/C pipe to the PVC pipe.

Q. **How many homeowners in the Districts?**

A. The County has an obligation to serve or eventually serve approximately 2000 parcels however currently there are only 903 active connections

Q. **Will everyone fund the project?**

A. All active connections will contribute to fund the project however depending on the legislation governing the future rate increases, vacant parcels may not be required to contribute.

Q. **I bought a house a year ago why didn’t the realtors disclose this?**

A. There were no violations of the asbestos MCL and the problem was not yet believed to be significant, so there was nothing to disclose.

Q. **How much PH change would it take to slow this process and what is the cost associated with it?**

A. A PH level increase close to or at 7 (neutral) will not solve the problem. The pipes in the affected area have already deteriorated to a point where repair or replacement is needed.

Q. **When does the District vote on the Prop 218 and what happens if we do not vote on it?**

A. All residents of the District will be notified when the vote will occur. If the Proposition 218 vote fails there will be no funding source to pay for the project.

RESOURCES DIVISION

- Q. **We had to replace the copper in our house, is that because of the acidic water?**
A. Yes.
- Q. **How often is water shifted between tanks?**
A. Operators monitor tanks to make sure there is an adequate supply and if not water is then shifted.
- Q. **Should we be testing our own water?**
A. That is a decision left to the property owner
- Q. **When does the CAC meet?**
A. The next CAC meeting is on September 11, 2014 at 2 P.M. and will be posted on the marquee outside of the community center.
- Q. **Is the Prop 218 just for the water District or the whole County?**
A. The Proposition 218 is for property owners within the District only
- Q. **Is there a ball park estimate of how much this project will cost per household and time length**
A. The cost and time length for payback is unknown until an actual cost of the project is determined.
- Q. **Will the Engineer performing the study be open to inputs from resident's knowledgeable of the system?**
A. Yes.
- Q. **Is there a way to fund this project without prevailing wage?**
A. No.
- Q. **Will the Prop 218 specify the amount charged per property?**
A. Yes.
- Q. **What happens if we fix this problem and we find more pipes found to have been deteriorated?**
A. The County will discuss options to repair those pipes when and if that situation presents itself.
- Q. **What lab does the County use to test water?**
A. Moore Twinning Associates, Inc.
2527 Fresno Street Fresno, Ca 93721
(559) 441-7021
- Q. **Can we truck in our own water?**
A. Yes.
- Q. **What does friability mean?**
A. Substances designated as being hazardous, such as asbestos or crystalline silica are often referred to as being friable if they are present in such a state that small particles easily can become dislodged, thus enabling them to become respirable (able to enter human lungs), posing a health hazard

Q. **Will this affect our fire insurance?**

A. It should not; fire protection water is at sufficient levels.

Q. **Does the County have someone that can address the health standards of asbestos?**

A. The County has contracted with a specialist who will observe operations and discharge practices and will conduct testing and then will give the County his opinion of friability and health issues.

Q. **What is the Districts Website?**

A. <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/DepartmentPage.aspx?id=48427>

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Jerod Weeks
Special Districts

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