



Orange Water and Sewer Authority

OWASA is Carrboro-Chapel Hill's not-for-profit public service agency delivering high quality water, wastewater, and reclaimed water services.

April 23, 2020

Mayor Pam Hemminger
Town of Chapel Hill
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Blvd Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Mayor Lydia Lavelle
Town of Carrboro
301 West Main Street
Carrboro, NC 27510

Chair Penny Rich
Orange County Board of
Commissioners
Post Office Box 8181
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Dear Mayor Hemminger, Mayor Lavelle and Chair Rich:

We are pleased to submit this report on our service, projects, and initiatives since January 2020. This report includes information on the following items:

1. COVID-19 Preparation and Response
2. Key System Resiliency Projects
3. Infrastructure Investments
4. Draft Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Budget and Rates
5. Executive Director Transition
6. Affordability Outreach
7. New Website Launch
8. Upcoming Appointments

COVID-19 Preparation and Response:

OWASA continues to take proactive measures to ensure we provide the Carrboro and Chapel Hill communities with high quality and reliable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water services throughout the significant challenges the COVID-19 pandemic places on our Team, Community, State, Country, and World. We are working very closely with local and regional partners as well as State and Federal agencies to plan and coordinate our work.

OWASA's focus is on our core mission responsibilities and the safety of our employees and the public we serve. This is a very dynamic situation which requires us to update and refine our response as we learn and receive new guidance and direction from public health and governmental officials. We continue to update our Continuity of Operations Plan as the situation dictates.

Some of the steps OWASA has taken to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 include, moving the majority of staff to teleworking or on-call hours, closing the administrative office to the public, postponing recreation season, and limiting in-person interaction by suspending hand delivering of paper notices and instead posting relevant information on our website.

On March 12, 2020, we suspended disconnects of service and late fees due to non-payment.

OWASA will continue to monitor the situation and make decisions with the most up-to-date information available.



Key Drinking Water System Resiliency Projects:

OWASA has completed key portions of several major projects to improve resiliency throughout the community's water and wastewater system. This quarter, significant progress was made on projects at the Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant (WTP):

A \$2.2 million construction contract was awarded for a project to simplify and increase resiliency of a complex piping network around the WTP. This project was taken up following the November 2018 water emergency. Work is expected to begin in late summer and be complete in 12 to 14 months.

A \$3.1 million construction contract was awarded for a project at the WTP to replace bulk chemical storage tanks, a safety containment area, and chemical system feed pumps. This will provide for future plant capacity while also replacing aging components. Work is expected to begin this summer and be complete in about 15 months.

Preliminary design work is underway to convert the remainder of the WTP's electrical distribution system to an updated voltage standard and provide improved transfer capabilities for on-site generators.

OWASA has also invested nearly \$2.2 million this quarter in design and construction work improving the water distribution system resiliency.

Infrastructure Investment:

OWASA maintains about 750 miles of water and wastewater pipes, a water treatment plant, a wastewater treatment plant, pump stations, and other infrastructure. Meeting the community's needs and increasing system resiliency requires ongoing rehabilitation of the water, wastewater, and reclaimed water systems. Capital investments, including debt payments for capital projects, account for about half of our costs. In the last fiscal year, we invested about \$19.2 million to renew, replace, and improve infrastructure. Our five-year Capital Improvements Program can be viewed [here](#).

- 1. University Lake Pump Station:** Work is substantially complete on a \$1.7 million project to improve the pumping system and associated facilities to send water from the lake to the WTP.
- 2. Water Main Replacement:** Work is substantially complete for water main replacements at the service road to Fordham Boulevard east of Scarlett Drive as well as at Country Club Road. Replacement work is continuing along Barclay Road and at the service road at Dobbins Drive between Erwin Road and East Franklin Street.
- 3. Investment in our Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities:** Work was substantially complete on a \$1.5 million project to rehabilitate deteriorating concrete and improve resiliency at the structure where wastewater first enters our Mason Farm

Wastewater Treatment Plant. A \$2.5 million project to rehabilitate the settling basins at the WTP was completed this quarter.

Draft FY 2021 Budget and Rates:

Our community and its economy have been significantly impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The University of North Carolina and the local school systems have closed. Many businesses have also closed, and residents have been directed to stay at home. Many in our community are unemployed, and it is uncertain when any of these circumstances will change.

Restrictions and closings related to the pandemic began in the second week of March, and we are analyzing how these strategies to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus are impacting water demand and our budget for the next fiscal year.

Due to the community's economic hardship, staff provided us an option that does not include a rate increase in October 2020 (a five percent rate increase had been projected). We are continuing to try to balance ways to reduce expenditures while minimizing the anticipated impacts resulting from spending less on operating and maintenance and investing less in infrastructure.

Executive Director Transition:

The Board of Directors is working with Slavin Management Consultants to select OWASA's next Executive Director. Short-listed candidates will be interviewed remotely by the Board in late April. Final selection may be impacted by COVID-19.

Affordability Outreach:

As noted, we temporarily suspended all service disconnects and late fees due to non-payment starting on March 12, 2020. All customers who had been cut off were reconnected. On March 31, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 124 prohibiting utilities from shutting off service to customers, charging late fees, and charging reconnection fees for at least 60 days. The Order allows customers at least six months to pay arrearages accumulated during the effective period of the order.

In the coming months, OWASA will be working through our partnerships in the community to meet the expanded need due to other financial stresses in the region.

We continue to encourage donations to Care to Share and have seen a significant increase in contributions over the last two years. In 2019, on-bill contributions to Care to Share raised \$11,089 for the Inter-Faith Council for Social Service to provide utility bill assistance. This was a 44 percent increase over 2018.

New Website Launch:

OWASA launched a new website on March 9, 2020. The newly launched site provides a more user-friendly experience for customers and other visitors to the site, whether they are looking up critical information regarding their bill or learning more about where our water comes from and how OWASA treats it before it reaches their home or business.

The capacity of the new website was tested early on with the COVID-19 situation developing quickly. Through the new website, users have been able to find out the latest information about OWASA's steps to help mitigate the spread of the virus while continuing to provide high-quality water and wastewater service. You can view the new website [here](#).

Upcoming Board Appointments:

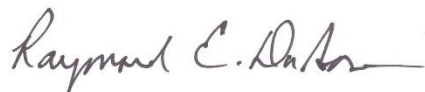
Terms for three current members of the OWASA Board of Directors will expire this summer. In addition, OWASA currently has a vacancy on its Board following the resignation of John Cooley, a Chapel Hill appointee.

Current Board Chair Ray DuBose (Orange County appointee) and John Morris (Chapel Hill appointee) are eligible for re-appointment to the Board this year. Ruchir Vora (Chapel Hill appointee) will be completing his second three-year term on the Board in 2020.

We look forward to working with each local jurisdiction through the appointment process in the coming months.

We would be happy to provide you more detailed information on the items above or other topics of interest as desired. Please feel free to contact Executive Director Ed Kerwin (ekerwin@owasa.org or 919- 537-4211), or me.

Sincerely,



Raymond E. DuBose, Chair
OWASA Board of Directors

Attachments

cc: Mr. David Andrews, Carrboro Town Manager
Ms. Bonnie Hammersley, Orange County Manager
Mr. Maurice Jones, Chapel Hill Town Manager
OWASA Board of Directors
Ed Kerwin, OWASA Executive Director

MONTHLY SUMMARY OF CALLS AND E-MAILS TO OWASA
FROM NEIGHBORS REPORTING ODOR
FROM THE MASON FARM WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	11	3	9	0	8	3	8	1	3	3	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
February	7	5	2	0	8	0	4	1	0	3	3	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
March	9	0	7	1	10	4	1	1	0	2	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
April	9	2	4	0	9	3	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
May	6	0	2	5	8	3	2	5	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
June	4	1	1	1	5	1	8	8	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
July	1	0	2	0	0	2	6	3	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	-
August	1	0	4	3	11	2	9	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	-
September	2	5	2	2	9	3	1	1	5	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	-
October	2	6	1	1	8	8	2	0	3	3	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	-
November	0	0	1	7	2	6	7	1	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
December	3	3	2	5	8	10	2	1	1	6	3	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	-
TOTAL	55	25	37	25	86	45	51	23	23	30	27	11	17	3	0	2	3	0	0

January-2002 to December-2019 History and Present (2020)

An “odor event” is defined as: One or more odor reports received during a 24 hour period from WWTP neighbor(s). Each odor event shall be considered to be “verified” unless OWASA determines conclusively that an alternative source other than the WWTP created the odor.

**LOG OF CALLS AND E-MAILS TO OWASA
FROM NEIGHBORS REPORTING ODOR IN THE MASON FARM
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) AREA**

January 2020 – December 2020

Date call received	Time call received	Location
January 2020	No Reported Odors	N/A
February 2020	No Reported Odors	N/A
March 2020	No Reported Odors	N/A
April 2020	-	-
May 2020	-	-
June 2020	-	-
July 2020	-	-
August 2020	-	-
September 2020	-	-
October 2020	-	-
November 2020	-	-
December 2020	-	-

**SUMMARY OF ON-SITE HYDROGEN SULFIDE (H₂S)
ODOR MONITORING**

Month and year	Headworks Monitor			UNC Monitor			Digester Monitor			Switchgear Monitor		
	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Average H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Minimum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)	Maximum H ₂ S Reading (ppm)
January 2020	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ¹	0.0010	0.0000	0.0107 ²	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ³	0.0007	0.0000	0.0112 ⁴
February 2020	0.0000	0.0000	0.000 ⁵	0.0010	0.0000	0.0122 ⁶	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ⁷	0.0007	0.0000	0.0298 ⁸
March 2020	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ⁹	0.0001	0.0000	0.0015 ¹⁰	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000 ¹¹	0.0000	0.0000	0.0024 ¹²

Monitor Locations :

Headworks Monitor (#1) – Monitor located at Headworks Facility.

Digester Monitor (#2) – Monitor located between Digester #1 and Digester #4.

UNC Monitor (#3) – Monitor located at Primary Sludge PS.

Switchgear Monitor (#4) – Monitor located at Switchgear Building.

¹ Maximum reading zero all of January 2020

² Maximum reading was recorded on January 13, 2020

³ Maximum reading zero all of January 2020

⁴ Maximum reading was recorded on January 8, 2020

⁵ Maximum reading zero all of February 2020

⁶ Maximum reading was recorded on February 25, 2020

⁷ Maximum reading zero all of February 2020

⁸ Maximum reading was recorded on February 25, 2020

⁹ Maximum reading zero all of March 2020

¹⁰ Maximum reading was recorded on March 1 and 2, 2020

¹¹ Maximum reading zero all of March 2020

¹² Maximum reading was recorded on March 2, 2020

DISTRIBUTION OF OWASA E-MAILS ABOUT OFF-SITE ODOR ELIMINATION

Location	Name
Highland Woods	Paul Neebe
	Mary Turner
	Malcolm Forbes
	Natalia Lebedeva
	Gary Richman
	Gail Wood
	Robert and Melissa Porter
	Robin Casey
	Joseph Clancy
	Ann Schwab
	Seth Kingsbury
	Amanda Kingsbury
	Freeman and Angela Kirby
	Reed Johnson
	Kay Johnson
	Rex Bartles
	Lisa Bartles
	Ann Alexander
	Nortin Hadler
	Carol Hadler
	Frank P. Rexford
	Scott Brees
	Kendall Brees
	Rainer Blaesius
	Elisabeth Schweins
	Susannah Shearer
	Fred Hall
	Lawanda Rainey-Hall
	Katie Jamieson
	Richard Harrill
	Angel Smith
	Jordon Sharome
	Cameron Williams
Marian Rice	
Janet McLamb	
Michael Henning	
Benjamin Duan-Porter	
Matthew Mauck	
Finley Forest	Adam Kimplead
	Cindy Underwood
	Dan Puckett
	David J. Polewka
	Kathryn Conard
Laurel Hill	Michael Sharpe
	Julie Maness
	Bob Wendell
	Carol David

Location	Name		
St. Thomas More Church and School Morgan Creek area	Pat Evans Ewan Rodewald and Sharon Hodge Marcella Grendler Kay Goldstein Ann Wilson Louis Fogleman St. Thomas More Church staff		
	Ellen Johnson Aldersgate United Methodist Church Betsy Malpass Hanson Malpass Jeannie Cox Laura King Moore Jeanne Langley AW Carr Marilyn and Don Hartman		
	Ronald McDonald House Family House	Robert Huls Shelly Day Greg Kirkpatrick, Executive Director Janice Ross, Operations Manager	
		Reserve	Matt Hapgood Steve McPhail James F. Howard Steven and Susan Frye Doug Longman Barbara and Edward Paradise Jeanne and David Jarrett Nadine O'Malley Mark Witcher Ralph Abrahams Kathy Abrahams
	Bayberry Drive area UNC		William Ware Johnny Randall, NC Botanical Garden Jennifer Peterson, NC Botanical Garden Phil Barner, Energy Services Director Margaret Holton, Water, Sewer & Stormwater Coordinator Mary Beth Koza, Director, Environment, Health and Safety Ross Fowler, Finley Golf Course Michael Wilkinson, golf pro Andrew Sapp, Men's Golf Coach UNC Tennis Center UNC parking Mike McFarland, University Communications Scott Ragland, News Services Linda Convissor, Director of Local Relations UNC Farm (Faculty Staff Recreation Association) Frank Maynard, Athletics/ Finley Golf Course

Distribution of OWASA E-mails About Off-Site Odor Elimination

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Location	Name
	Robert Costa, Athletics/ Finley Golf Course
	Mark Steffer, Athletics/ Finley Golf Course
	Jeff McCracken, Public Safety
	Kate Luck
UNC Healthcare	Mel Hurston
	Karen McCall
	Keith Morris
Town of Chapel Hill	Maurice Jones, Town Manager
	Florentine A. Miller, Deputy Town Manager
	Ralph Karpinos, Town Attorney
	Lance Norris, Public Works Director
	Chris Roberts, Town Engineer
	Richard Terrell, Public Works Operations Superintendent
	Catherine Lazorko, Public Information Officer
	Jeanne Brown, Assistant to the Mayor
	Phil Mason, Planner
	Sabrina Oliver, Town Clerk
	Amy Harvey, Public Affairs and Communications
	Chris Blue, Police Chief
	Bryan Walker, Captain/Police Information
	Josh Mecimore, Police Information Officer
	Allison Weakley
	Kiel Harms
	Ran Northam
	Ross Tompkins
City Schools	Bill Mullin
	Todd LoFrese, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services
	Jeff Nash, Community Relations
	Crystal Jones
	Chris Liles
	Darlene Ryan
Other Utilities	Indira Everett, Duke Energy
	Brenda Duke, Duke Energy
	Steve Small, Duke Energy
	Billy Miller, PSNC
	Time Warner Cable
Orange County	Orange 911 Center Supervisor on duty
	Connie Pixley, Environmental Health Supervisor
Other	Bill Ferrell, Meadowmont Community Association
	Chamber of Commerce
	Michael Hughes
	Post Office