

It may not be too long before Cumberland River water flows from the faucets of Lafayette, if plans for a new water line extension to Hartsville go according to plan.

Which plan goes, however, is still somewhat up in the air, after the July 1st Lafayette City Council meeting.

Plans for a water line to Hartsville, which gets its water from the Cumberland River, began after last summer's drought, when the city's springs failed to supply enough water and even the city's connection to the Barren River seemed dangerously near to failing.

In December of 2007, the council decided that it would be better to run a water line from the Cumberland River rather than develop additional springs or depend on the Barren River source through another drought year.

At that time, four of the six member council voted to approve a \$10 to \$10.5 million, three phase water plan to ensure a sustainable water source for Lafayette's water customers.

Phase I of the project, as presented by Professional Engineering Services, was scheduled to begin in August of this year, bringing a 12" diameter line from an existing Hartsville water line at the intersection of Highway 25 and Highway 10 near Hartsville, approximately 30,000 feet to Hillsdale, for a cost of \$2,775,900. The target date for completion of Phase I was December of 2009; however, the line would have remained empty until the completion of Phase II, targeted for October of 2010.

Because of the Highway 10 Corridor plans (which, upon completion, will connect Lafayette more directly to Interstate 40), Mayor J.Y. Carter and Water Superintendent Gene Reid, upon review of the three Phase plan, started looking at optional routes for the extension line. The state hasn't yet bought right-of-ways for the Corridor project, and neither Mayor Carter nor Superintendent Reid fancied seeing a newly laid line dug up or re-routed to accommodate the Corridor.

The New Harmony Road, which has no future construction plans, seemed to be a logical alternative. After Carter and Reid met on June 30 with Trousdale County Mayor Jerry Cliff, Water Superintendent Jerry Helm, and representatives of Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon, they were ready to present that alternative to the council at their July 1 meeting.

“In my mind, the firm of Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon is a better fit for the job,” said Carter, upon introducing George Garden, vice president of the firm. “They’re already working on our airport project, and they’re working on the Hartsville water project.”

“I believe that by coming up the New Harmony road, you can get more water, sooner,” said Garden, addressing the council.

“I advocate communities working together,” he continued. “They can get so much more done by working together. There’s a window of opportunity here [with the new Hartsville water treatment plant being constructed] where we can get a lot done in a very short time.”

Garden later explained that the firm is currently involved in planning the new Hartsville water treatment plant, as supplemented by Corrections Corporation of America. The deadline for that project is mid-2010.

“We’d like to help as many people as we can, while not wasting money,” said Garden. “The planning and design of the Hartsville system has something to do with Lafayette. The planning and design may change, depending on where Lafayette runs their line.”

The New Harmony Road plans would see water leaving the Halltown tank at the North end of Hartsville, coming up the Halltown Road to the New Harmony Road, and on to Lafayette. The Highway 10 plans called for water leaving Hartsville near the new CCA prison.

“We also believe we can improve Hartsville’s water without raising their commercial rates for five years. The same could go for wholesale rates,” said Garden, referring to the cost of water purchased by Lafayette from Hartsville.

Councilman Ronnie Krantz suggested that a decision about changing plans and engineering

firms be put off for 30 days, so the Utility Committee could study on the proposed changes. Council members Richard Bransford, Ruby Flowers, and Steve Turner make up the committee, which is chaired by Mayor Carter.

Larry Cato, also of Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon said they would be glad to meet with the committee and answer their questions about the new proposal. A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 9. According to Garden, two questions will be considered at the meeting:

- Will the newly proposed route get more water to Lafayette sooner than the Highway 10 target date of October, 2010?

- What will the wholesale water rates be from Hartsville to Lafayette?

“This project may be the most important thing the city will do in the next 30 years,” said Mayor Carter, “because it will ensure that we have water. Everything else depends on water.”