

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 48929

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Louis A. Veit, et al,
Complainants,

vs.

The Rohnerville Water Works,
Defendant.

Case No. 5453

Application of Thelma B. Wood request-
ing permission for extension of her
Campton Heights Water Service area by
reason of continued requests for water
service from customers of The Rohner-
ville Water Works owned by Melvin J.
Strong.

Application No. 34322

Ethel Veit, in propria persona, complainant,
Case No. 5453.
W. L. Simmins, for Humboldt County Board of Health,
interested party, Case No. 5453.
Melvin H. Strong, in propria persona, defendant,
Case No. 5453, and protestant, Application
No. 34322.
Mahan & Harland, by Carlos Mahan, for Thelma B. Wood,
interested party, Case No. 5453, applicant in
Application No. 34322.
John D. Reader, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

Louis A. Veit and 25 other persons, in a complaint filed
March 23, 1953, against The Rohnerville Water Works, alleged as
follows:

- "1. That the water supplied is not filtered.
- "2. That the water supplied is unfit for house-
hold use.
- "3. That the water is full of iron and sediment
including bugs.

- "4. That in some locations the pressure is very low causing a great fire hazard.
- "5. That at many times the water has a very offensive odor.
- "6. That the owner of said water works refuses to remedy the condition."

Complainants request the issuance of an order directing that they be supplied with an adequate quantity of water at all times and that it be of a quality fit for household use, free of iron, rust, mud, bugs and other injurious matter.

The defendant, Melvin H. Strong, doing business as The Rohnerville Water Works, by his answer admitted that the water supply is not filtered, at times contains iron, and that the pressure is very low in some locations but denied generally the other allegations of the complaint.

Thelma B. Wood, doing business as Campton Heights Water Service, by the above-entitled application filed May 5, 1953, requests that her service area be extended to adjoining territory including that presently served by The Rohnerville Water Works.

A public hearing consolidating both proceedings was held before Examiner Carl Silverhart in Rohnerville on July 9, 1953, on which date the matters were submitted.

The evidence shows that water for the defendant's system is obtained from six springs and two wells. Approximately 10,280 feet of pipe varying in size from 3/4 to 4 inches in diameter is used to convey water by gravity from the springs, one of which is now abandoned, to two 15,000-gallon covered redwood distribution tanks. One well is 12-inch steel-cased, equipped with a 3 by 5 inch double-acting pump and connected to a 3 hp electric motor. The other, a 6-inch steel-cased well, is maintained for standby purposes. Water from these wells is transported to the tanks via 720 feet of 1 1/2-inch pipe. The distribution system contains 17,500 feet of pipe

varying in dimensions from 3/4 to 4 inches in diameter. Some 135 consumers are served and in addition approximately 12 consumers north of the main distribution system. The supply for the 12 consumers is obtained from a seventh spring from which water is delivered by gravity to a 3,000-gallon wood tank. This tank is connected to the main distribution system to supply water during such times as the spring does not afford an adequate supply.

Complainants' testimony generally was to the effect that the water supplied by defendant was malodorous, turbid and contained rust. Such conditions, they stated, have prevailed for several years. Several of the complainants testified the water pressure was low. Others testified that they obtained water elsewhere for drinking purposes.

An engineer of the Commission's staff testified that he conducted a field investigation during the course of which he inspected defendant's water system. The witness indicated that as a result of such investigation he found that during the late summer very little water from the springs is available through use of the existing pipelines, some of which are in a state of disrepair and in need of replacement. According to the evidence the distribution tanks are not sufficiently elevated to afford satisfactory pressure. Further, long dead ends of small diameter pipe are causing low pressure conditions and are a contributing factor in the rusty water situation. The record shows that all of the 4-inch pipe and the larger percentage of the mains are black iron pipe. About 50 per cent of the mains are over 25 years old and approximately 25 per cent were installed more than 10 years ago, secondhand pipe having been used.

The Commission's engineer made the following recommendations:

1. Eliminate the springs as a source of water supply.
2. Install not less than a 30,000-gallon distribution tank, or its capacity equivalent, at an elevation at least 50 feet higher than the present tanks.
- 3.a. Install "tie-ins" to eliminate dead ends on Weber and Belle Streets.
- b. Recondition or replace the existing 4-inch distribution mains.
- c. Carry out a main rehabilitation program which will accomplish the replacement of approximately 500 feet of main each year until the system has been completely reconditioned or replaced.
4. Install a hypochlorinator to assure potability.
5. Discontinue the use of the spring and present tank for the 12 consumers north of town and tie that system directly to the main distribution system.

The engineer estimated that an initial capital investment of approximately \$11,500 would be required to comply with his recommendations.

The defendant testified that some of the complaints were justified. He stated that the engineer's recommendations were reasonable and that he could obtain the funds to make the improvements therein contained. He further testified that he would prefer to develop a new well rather than install filters and that the costs involved would be about the same, namely \$2,500. Such a new well, if drilled deep enough, has the possible advantage of providing a better quality of water than now obtained and might, in combination with the other recommended system improvements, alleviate the rust problem. He would thereafter request the Commission for such increase in rates as might be warranted by such capital investment.

Several consumers were called as witnesses upon behalf of defendant. They testified the water which they received was clear and the pressure good.

The record demonstrates that complainants, by a fair preponderance of the evidence, have sustained the material allegations of the complaint.

The ensuing order will direct the defendant to improve his water system in accordance with the recommendations above set forth, except that he will not be required to install a hypochlorinator, inasmuch as the use of all the springs will be terminated. Also, the development of a new well will be ordered.

In order to provide defendant with an untrammelled opportunity to make such improvements, the submission of Application No. 34322 will be set aside.

The defendant is placed on notice, however, that in the event he fails to comply with all the provisions of the following order, Application No. 34322 will be deemed resubmitted.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held and based upon the evidence therein adduced,

1. IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Melvin H. Strong and Leona M. Strong, doing business as The Rohnerville Water Works, shall:

a. Within fifteen days from the effective date of this order;

- (1) Have separate bacteriological analyses made of the water from each of the three groups of two springs presently used to supply their consumers and within ten days thereafter submit copies of said analyses to the Commission. Samples shall be taken in each instance at the furthest downstream point just upstream from the first consumer supplied said spring water or just before said spring water commingles with that from any other source, whichever may be the case.

- (2) Discontinue the use of the present tank now serving 12 consumers north of Rohnerville and connect the pipelines supplying such consumers directly to the main distribution system and within ten days after completion thereof notify the Commission in writing.
- b. Within forty-five days from the effective date of this order install tie lines on Weber and Belle Streets and within ten days after completion thereof notify the Commission in writing.
 - c. Within one hundred twenty days from the effective date of this order;
 - (1) Install not less than a 30,000-gallon distribution tank, or tanks of equivalent capacity, at an elevation not less than 50 feet higher than that occupied by the present distribution tanks.
 - (2) Discontinue the use of all springs presently a part of their water system as sources for water supplied their consumers.
 - (3) Recondition or replace the existing 4-inch distribution mains.
 - (4) Within ten days after compliance with the above Subparagraphs 1c(1) to (3), inclusive, notify the Commission in writing thereof.
 - d. Within one year from the effective date of this order, develop a new deep well water supply and within ten days after completion thereof notify the Commission in writing.
 - e.
 - (1) File with the Commission, within thirty days after the effective date of this order, a main replacement program scheduling the replacement of the remaining distribution mains (i.e., all mains presently installed which are less than 4 inches in diameter) at a rate of not less than 500 feet per year until completed. Replacement pipe shall be either cement-asbestos, steel, cast iron, or galvanized iron under this program.
 - (2) Replace the initial 500 feet, or more, of the mains referred to in Subparagraph 1e(1), above, within 90 days from the effective date hereof and within ten days after replacement thereof notify the Commission in writing.

(3) Replace additionally not less than 500 feet per year of the mains referred to in Subparagraph 1e(1), above, each calendar year commencing with the year 1954 and thereafter until completed.

f. File with the Commission on January 2, 1955, and each year thereafter to and including January 2, 1958, annual reports setting forth a description of the mains replaced during the preceding 12-month period and the mains to be replaced during the succeeding 12-month period as required by Subparagraph 1e(3), above.

2. IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that the submission of Application No. 34322 is set aside provided, however, that in the event Melvin H. Strong and Leona M. Strong shall fail to fully comply with each and all of the provisions of Subparagraphs 1a(1), 1a(2), 1b, 1c(1), 1c(2), 1c(3), 1c(4) and 1e(2) of this order, Application No. 34322 shall thereupon be deemed resubmitted.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 4th day of August, 1953.

R. J. Sinden
President

Justus J. Calver

Harold Hills

James F. Fother

E. P. Hill
Commissioners