

69072

ORIGINAL

Decision No. _____

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

KEN PENROSE, ET AL.,
Complainant,

Case No. 8068

vs

THE COUNTY WATER COMPANY SOUTH
SUBURBAN SYSTEM, a California
Corporation,
Defendant.

Harold Ken Penrose, Maurice F. O'Shea and
James W. Lugo, for complainant.
John A. Erickson, for defendant.
Jerry J. Levander, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

Public hearing on this complaint was held before Examiner Patterson on February 18, 1965, in Artesia. The matter was submitted upon receipt of a late-filed exhibit and is now ready for decision.

The complaint signed by 124 residents of the City of Artesia who purportedly are served by defendant alleges, in substance, that defendant's water system is undersized and needs to be replaced; at many times the water pressure is entirely inadequate; the system does not meet minimum water works standards necessary to supply adequate fire protection; on occasions the water is black, muddy and distasteful; defendant does not have a valid health permit; water service to customers has been

interrupted for long periods without advance notice; and in some instances defendant has refused or unnecessarily delayed emergency repairs affecting service to customers.

Defendant, in its answer, alleged that conditions of service had substantially improved due to effecting an interconnection with the Southern California Water Company at Norwalk Boulevard and Hibbing Avenue and the installation of a new 8-inch main from this interconnection along Hibbing Avenue to Ely Avenue. Defendant admitted that, except for the new 8-inch main, the remainder of the system is undersized. Defendant also admitted that it does not possess a valid health permit.

Complainant's allegations concerning low pressure, dirty water, interruptions in service and delay in making repairs were amply supported by testimony of approximately 12 customers. Some customers testified that at times during the summer months pressures were so low that sufficient water could not be obtained to flush toilets, and that operation of washing machines and taking of showers could be undertaken only in the early morning hours around 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. Despite the recent connection to Southern California Water Company made in the latter part of 1964 and the installation of the 8-inch main on Hibbing Avenue, customers testified that they were still experiencing low pressure problems.

With respect to water available for fire protection, a captain of the Los Angeles County Fire Department testified as to fire flow tests made at hydrant locations on defendant's system. The results of these tests, as shown in Exhibit 1, indicate a fairly adequate flow of 651 gpm at 20 pounds psi from the hydrant

connected to the new 8-inch main on Hibbing Avenue, but the flow of 177 gpm and 162 gpm from the hydrants on 192nd Street and 194th Street, respectively, are entirely inadequate and would not even qualify as fire hydrants under the fire insurance underwriters classification.

An inspector for the City of Artesia testified that defendant performed construction and maintenance jobs on the water system in a piecemeal fashion and that the excavations and construction materials in the streets during these periods of long delays constituted hazards to the public. He also testified that in at least one instance defendant had performed work in the streets without securing the necessary permit from the City.

The City manager for the City of Artesia recommended that defendant not be allowed to make any extensions of his system until the present customers are adequately served. He also presented a copy of City of Artesia Ordinance No. 91, Exhibit 5, which was passed on September 24, 1964, as an urgency ordinance, requiring that no new pipelines, replacements, repairs or extensions thereof for water service or the installation of any water system be constructed in the City without a permit being first obtained from the City and that said permit would not be issued until the plans for the installation had been submitted to and approved by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and by the City of Artesia.

According to the record, defendant's water system serves approximately 250 metered customers in the City of Artesia. The water system includes two wells equipped with a 7.5 hp and a 10 hp pump, respectively, two 1,000-gallon pressure tanks and

a 25,000-gallon corrugated storage tank. The 7-block service area is bounded on the north by Orangethorpe Boulevard, on the south by Flora Vista Drive and 195th Street, on the west by Norwalk Boulevard and on the east by Ely Avenue. Excluding the recently installed 8-inch asbestos cement line on Hibbing Avenue, the water distribution system consists entirely of 2-inch steel lines except for a 4-inch steel line running from north to south on the rear property line of the lots facing on Norwalk Boulevard and a short length of 3-inch steel line north of Hibbing Avenue.

Defendant's president and manager testified as to the program to eventually replace the entire water system with mains not smaller than 6 inches. A map showing this replacement program was received as late-filed Exhibit 7. This map and the witness's testimony indicate that the replacement program consists of 7 phases, the first of which was the installation of the 8-inch main on Hibbing Avenue, to be completed by extending the 8-inch main down Ely Avenue to 195th Street. The second phase will consist of installing 6-inch lateral mains in 192nd Street and 194th Street, connecting them with the 8-inch main on Ely Avenue and the existing 4-inch steel main running from north to south near Norwalk Boulevard, and serving the lots which face on 192nd and 194th Streets from the new 6-inch mains. The third phase will consist of making similar connections and installing 6-inch lateral mains on 191st and 193rd Streets. The fourth phase will consist of making similar connections and installing a 6-inch lateral main on Bingham Street. The fifth phase will consist of extending the 8-inch main from Ely Avenue along 195th Street and Flora Vista Drive to Norwalk Boulevard. The sixth phase will consist of

installing a 6-inch main on Orangethorpe Boulevard. The seventh phase will consist of installing an 8-inch main on Norwalk Boulevard.

The witness testified that the complete replacement program would cost in excess of \$100,000 and would necessitate increasing rates to produce a minimum water bill of \$5.00 per customer per month. He stated, therefore, that it would be desirable to replace the system in gradual stages, paying for the improvements out of earnings and allowances for depreciation. He did not present a definite time schedule for the program but indicated that he would like to have phases 1 and 2 completed by the middle of summer this year and that the entire program might take as long as 5 years.

He also testified as to the results of pressure tests made on the system the day of the hearing. The tests showed static pressures ranging from 40 pounds to 52 pounds psi.

A vice president of Southern California Water Company testified that, subject to approval of this Commission, his company would undertake to serve the area and would be willing to pay defendant for any facilities used and useful in supplying water service to the area.

Based upon the entire record we find that:

1. Defendant's present water system is inadequate to provide satisfactory service to its customers.
2. At times water served by defendant has contained excessive sediment.
3. Defendant does not possess a valid health permit.
4. Defendant has been dilatory in completing construction and maintenance work and in responding to service calls from its customers.

From the foregoing findings we conclude that defendant should be ordered to make improvements in its South Suburban water system, make certain tests, and submit reports, to the extent indicated by the following order.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Defendant, County Water Company, shall complete phase 1 of the main replacement program, consisting of extending the 8-inch main from Hibbing Avenue along Ely Avenue to 195th Street, not later than June 15, 1965, and shall notify the Commission in writing within 10 days thereafter.

2. Defendant shall complete phase 2 of the main replacement program, consisting of installing 6-inch mains in 192nd Street and 194th Street, cross-connecting them with the 8-inch, 2-inch and 4-inch mains and serving lots facing on 192nd Street and 194th Street from the new 6-inch mains, not later than August 15, 1965, and shall notify the Commission in writing within 10 days thereafter.

3. Defendant shall submit to the Commission within 30 days after the completion of phase 2, the results of a pressure survey conducted in accordance with Section II, 3,c of General Order No. 103. The survey shall include, but not be limited to, pressure charts taken at representative points served from each of the remaining 2-inch lateral mains.

4. Defendant shall submit to the Commission within 45 days after the completion of phase 2, a time schedule for the remaining phases of the main replacement program, and shall report the status of installation of these replacements each 90 days thereafter until the replacement program has been completed.

5. Defendant shall submit to the Commission a summary of

all service complaints received and the disposition made thereof, for a period of six months following completion of phase 2 of the main replacement program. Said summary shall be submitted within 30 days following the end of the six-month period.

6. Concurrently with phases 1 and 2 of the main replacement program, defendant shall install facilities to permit periodic flushing of mains and shall advise the Commission as to the location of such facilities when submitting the notification required under ordering paragraph 2.

7. Defendant shall furnish to the Commission a copy of its water supply health permit not later than 10 days after it is obtained from the State Department of Public Health.

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

Dated at Los Angeles, California, this 18th day of May, 1965.

Frederick C. Hallock
President
William M. Bennett
George F. Grover
Alfred

Commissioners

Commissioner William M. Bennett, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.