

HOUSE CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, JULY 8, 2014

NORRISTOWN WATER TREATMENT PLANT
AND BOIL WATER ADVISORY - MAY 20-24, 2014

WEST NORRITON TOWNSHIP BUILDING
1630 WEST MARSHALL STREET
JEFFERSONVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

BEFORE REPRESENTATIVES:

REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT W. GODSHALL, CHAIRMAN,
REPRESENTATIVE MARCY TOEPEL
REPRESENTATIVE MIKE VEREB
REPRESENTATIVE KATE M. HARPER
REPRESENTATIVE MATT BRADFORD

ALSO PRESENT:

AMANDA RUMSEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ELIZABETH ROSENTEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

TESTIFIERS INDEX

BY MR. BOBST	6
BY MR. SERVIDIO	15
BY MS. PAPE	28

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Good morning. The
2 hour of 11:00 a.m. having arrived, I call the meeting to
3 order.

4 The presentations today will focus on the
5 water treatment issues and the boil water advisory that
6 impacted approximately 18,000 Pennsylvania American Water
7 Company customers in late May of this year.

8 I look forward to the presentations and
9 believe the information provided will be educational and
10 valuable to both the members and the general public and
11 also to the company.

12 I would like to have the people at the
13 head table introduce themselves, starting to my left.

14 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Thank you,
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 I am Kate Harper, State Representative,
17 and I represent Blue Bell, Whitpain Township.

18 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: Good morning. I'm
19 Marcy Toepel from the 147th, that's Western Montgomery
20 County.

21 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Bob Godshall up from
22 the Lansdale, Souderton, Telford area.

23 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Mike Vereb from the
24 150th District.

25 MS. ROSENTEL: Beth Rosentel, Executive

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 Director of the Consumer Affairs Committee, for Chairman
2 Pete Daley.

3 MS. RUMSEY: Amanda Rumsey, Executive
4 Director of the House Consumer Affairs Committee, for
5 Chairman Godshall.

6 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Before we begin with
7 the presentations, Representative Vereb is recognized for
8 comments. This is his home district.

9 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Thank you,
10 Mr. Chairman, and it's good to be home. It's good to be
11 back up here again on the dais, not dealing with an easy
12 issue, but I really want to thank the Chairman for
13 hosting this hearing today.

14 We discussed during the events that we'll
15 be talking about, one late night I called the Chairman
16 and explained to him what businesses and residents were
17 going through, not just in my district, but in this
18 region, and he agreed to come down and hold a hearing.

19 And we wanted to get a budget -- at least
20 we thought it was done. We wanted to get a budget out of
21 the way and then come in and hold a hearing. The hearing
22 is being streamed live for the public that could not be
23 here to see it, to be able to watch it live, and then
24 we'll host it on the website later on for people to view.

25 I also want to thank West Norriton

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 Township for hosting us, as they were one of the larger
2 communities affected by this. And I certainly thank all
3 the testifiers. And Rich Gestrinch is here for Lower
4 Providence as well to provide information to us.

5 Basic concept: Who, what, when, where,
6 and why is what we're going to be looking for. This is
7 not going to be a public lynching. This is going to be
8 a fact-finding mission.

9 We owe it to our residents, as the water
10 company owes it to their customers, to explain what
11 happened, how it happened, why it happened, and what
12 we're going to do to make sure it never happens again.
13 When people pay their bills, all they're asking for is
14 one simple thing, and that's clean drinking water.

15 And, as we know, late May this had a major
16 impact on businesses, businesses that were unable to
17 recover their losses because this was only a two-day
18 outage, where most insurance companies call for 72 hours
19 of outage. So this had a major impact and certainly
20 warrants this hearing. And I look forward to the
21 testimony of all of our testifiers today.

22 So, Chairman Godshall, I know it wasn't
23 that long of a ride for you, but I'm very thankful for
24 you taking the time out with the committee today to be
25 here to get to the bottom of the issue.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 locally owned restaurants and delis, had no choice but
2 to close their doors due to the lack of quality drinking
3 water for food preparation. Many of these businesses
4 who are locally owned and operated by residents who live
5 within our townships.

6 Needless to say, the impact of this issue
7 hit them much harder than the larger chain-owned
8 restaurants that have the resources available to bring in
9 potable water that meets the standards and requirements
10 set by the Montgomery County Health Department.

11 Due to the large service area impacted by
12 the loss of water and the extended period of time,
13 finding water tanks became a stressful endeavor for our
14 business owners.

15 Over the course of this event, the
16 Township received numerous calls from residents voicing
17 their frustration with the length of the boil water
18 advisory and the impact it had on their daily lives.

19 Several residents expressed their
20 frustration over not receiving the automated calls
21 regarding the boil water advisory and conflicting
22 information they had received.

23 It has been noted that the problem
24 surfaced on Tuesday, May 20th when water quality
25 inspectors at the Norristown Plant determined that

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 heavy rainfall totals throughout the month had churned
2 up sediment in the source water of the Schuylkill River
3 near the Norristown Water Treatment Plant. This caused
4 dramatically lowered capacity, and an effective water
5 shortage.

6 Prior to May 20th, the Norristown area
7 received roughly seven inches of rain for the month of
8 May. Beginning on April 30th and ending May 1st, West
9 Norriton Township experienced heavy rainfall and major
10 flooding in the Port Indian section of the township.
11 During this period, roughly 4.8 inches of rain had
12 fallen in the area and we experienced the fourth highest
13 cresting of the Schuylkill River on record at 20.8 feet.

14 Also during this time the Army Corps of
15 Engineers authorized a release of water from the Blue
16 Marsh Dam located upstream from West Norriton. It is our
17 belief that this release of water from the dam upstream
18 increased the water levels in the Schuylkill River.

19 Initial forecasts had the Schuylkill River
20 cresting at 14 feet, which would be at minor flood stage
21 for the township. The heavy rainfall, coupled with the
22 dam release, caused the forecast to increase to 21 feet,
23 thus exceeding the major flooding stage.

24 Coupled with that, West Norriton Township
25 recently completed an inflow and infiltration study for

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 our sanitary sewer system. As part of this study the
2 Township installed flow meters into our sanitary sewer
3 system to monitor flow.

4 Two storms of significance were analyzed
5 as part of this report: June 7th, 2013, and July 23rd,
6 2013.

7 The storm of June 7th, 2013, lasted 24
8 hours and West Norriton received between three to four
9 inches of rainfall. This amount of rainfall would
10 represent a two-year storm based on the latest NOAA, the
11 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Point
12 Precipitation Frequency Estimates.

13 The storm of July 23rd, 2013, was a very
14 short, high intensive event lasting two hours. West
15 Norriton received 1.6 inches of rain, and this rainfall
16 amount would represent another two-year storm based on
17 the NOAA Point Precipitation Frequency Estimates.

18 During the events of Superstorm Sandy,
19 West Norriton and the surrounding areas were hit with
20 heavy rainfalls and winds that impacted the Schuylkill
21 River.

22 When the snow melted from this past
23 winter's harsh weather and the Schuylkill River iced
24 over from the cold temperatures, significant water
25 runoff made its way to the Schuylkill River.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 During these periods we received no
2 notification that the Norristown Water Treatment Plant
3 was experiencing water quality issues.

4 In my previous position I served as the
5 Manager of the Borough of Pottstown. In this capacity
6 I also served as the Authority Manager for the Pottstown
7 Authority. This Authority operates a water plant that
8 produces an average of 4.5 million gallons of water per
9 day for roughly 12,000 customers.

10 The plant also uses the Schuylkill River
11 as the sole source of raw water for processing. During
12 my time as Authority Manager I cannot recall a storm
13 event or heavy rainfall that impacted the long-term
14 operation of the water plant.

15 While most plants have operational
16 procedures for tropical storms or heavy rain events, the
17 rainfalls that impacted the Norristown Plant occurred
18 prior to the boil water advisory. The most significant
19 rainfall prior to the issuance of the boil water advisory
20 occurred on May 17th, three days prior.

21 In my discussions with area managers, the
22 Norristown Water Treatment Plant was the only plant that
23 uses the Schuylkill River as the sole source of raw water
24 to experience an issue with water quality due to heavy
25 rainfall.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 A question we have been asked over and
2 over again is how did this happen and what can be done
3 to prevent an issue like this again?

4 I applaud PA American's response when the
5 issue was discovered. The daily conference calls and the
6 support we received from their staff were remarkable.
7 While no one can find fault with their response, the
8 question remains as to why this happened.

9 Again, on behalf of the residents of West
10 Norriton Township, I would like to thank this committee
11 for allowing me the opportunity to testify on this
12 critical issue.

13 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Thank you. Thank you.

14 We've been joined at the front table by
15 Representative Bradford.

16 Thank you for coming.

17 Questions from -- starting with
18 Representative Vereb.

19 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Thank you.

20 Businesses closed by their inability to
21 properly service their customers. Was that by choice or
22 was that by mandate?

23 MR. BOBST: I believe it was by mandate.
24 If they could not provide water by the health department
25 standards, they had to close. Many of the larger chains,

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 like the Wawas and the chain restaurants, brought in
2 tankers; they had the ability to retrofit their plumbing.

3 The businesses that we talked to in West
4 Norriton, the 10 to 15 that were closed, did not have the
5 ability, one, to find tanks. The only one that was able
6 had to locate one in New Jersey. But then to bring in
7 the plumber to put in systems to pressurize the water was
8 much more costly than they had anticipated.

9 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Obviously with the
10 exception of wells, was this a township-wide event for
11 residents?

12 MR. BOBST: Yes, it was.

13 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: To your knowledge,
14 did residents bring up the fact of having brown water
15 before the advisory was posted?

16 MR. BOBST: We did receive some phone
17 calls from that, but they were very sporadic throughout
18 the township, so we couldn't really essentially locate
19 them into one area, if there was a break with that.

20 We did talk with Shawn Scanlon, who is our
21 contact at P American, to let him know that.

22 But, yes, we did have instances of brown
23 water in the township.

24 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: That's all.

25 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: In your testimony you

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 say, which I don't quite understand, "In my discussions
2 with area managers, the Norristown Water Treatment Plant
3 was the only plant that uses the Schuylkill River as the
4 sole source of raw water to experience an issue with
5 water quality due to heavy rainfall."

6 Were there other areas that had the same
7 problem that didn't use the Schuylkill as a sole source?

8 MR. BOBST: Not that we could find, no.

9 We only used the Schuylkill River
10 because we were -- the other various plants from
11 Birdsboro to Pottstown down into Upper Providence and
12 into Oaks, and when we called, we were not told that they
13 had any similar issues that we were facing in West
14 Norriton Township.

15 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Well, I do know the
16 Schuylkill is one of the most used sources of water for
17 public water actually in the state of Pennsylvania.

18 How about down in Philadelphia? Was it
19 just centered here in West Norriton?

20 MR. BOBST: We went to -- when we were
21 doing our fact finding, we called everybody upstream
22 because we didn't know -- because the way the river
23 flows, obviously anything that would come down from the
24 Pottstown area would hit West Norriton and the Norristown
25 area before it hit the Philadelphia area.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 From the news reports we had seen, no one
2 from the Philadelphia area was noticing any of the
3 issues -- the same issues.

4 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Are there any
5 questions?

6 Representative Harper.

7 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Thank you,
8 Chairman Godshall.

9 Were you satisfied with the communications
10 between your township and the water customers and the
11 company before, during, and after the event?

12 MR. BOBST: Yes. I mean, the only issue
13 we faced is obviously with telephone numbers. A lot of
14 the residents were complaining they didn't get the
15 automated phone calls. So we tried to share as much
16 information on our website that we got. We had the daily
17 conference calls.

18 Like I said in my testimony, we were
19 definitely pleased with the response after the fact. I
20 think the bigger question is why did it happen?

21 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Okay. Thank you.
22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: There are no further
24 questions. Thank you very much.

25 And we'll go to our second presenter,

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 which is Cosmo Servidio, Regional Director of DEP.

2 MR. SERVIDIO: Good morning, Chairman
3 Godshall and members of the Consumer Affairs Committee.
4 I am Cosmo Servidio. I am the Regional Director of the
5 Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection,
6 regional office in Norristown.

7 Thank you for giving us this opportunity
8 to testify on the boil water advisory and low pressure
9 issues experienced by some Pennsylvania American Water
10 customers from May 20th to the 24th.

11 My comments will focus on DEP's policies
12 and regulations in regard to water suppliers during these
13 incidents.

14 The Pennsylvania Safe Drinking Water
15 Regulations require that public water suppliers shall
16 take whatever investigative or corrective action is
17 necessary to assure that safe and potable water is
18 continuously supplied to the users.

19 When there are circumstances which may
20 adversely affect the quality or quantity of positive
21 water pressure in any portion of the distribution system,
22 there is evidence of contamination, or a water supplier
23 suspects a high risk of contamination, a public water
24 supplier is required to report the circumstances to the
25 Department within one hour of that discovery.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 In the case of one of these events, DEP
2 has a policy in place to require the public water
3 supplier to provide public notice as soon as possible,
4 but no later than 24 hours after the water supplier
5 learns of the situation.

6 The policy provides procedures to ensure
7 water supplies are safe for potable use during a
8 loss-of-positive-pressure situation and after pressure is
9 restored.

10 The notice requires a boil water advisory,
11 a BWA, as a public notice that directs consumers to boil
12 their water or use an alternate source of drinking water.
13 Boiling water is recommended to inactivate or destroy
14 pathogens that may be in contaminated water.

15 In order to lift a BWA, public water
16 suppliers must accomplish the following: One, complete
17 the necessary corrective actions; two, flush the lines or
18 storage tanks; and, three, obtain satisfactory lab
19 results on two consecutive days.

20 From the morning of Tuesday, May 20th
21 through Friday, May 23rd, DEP staff from the southeast
22 regional office was in frequent contact with PA American,
23 monitoring their response to the treatment upset at the
24 Norristown Treatment Plant.

25 On Friday, May 23rd, DEP received sample

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 results from PA American. The results the DEP received
2 shortly before noon on Friday, May 23rd were samples that
3 were taken on Wednesday, May 21st and Thursday, May 22nd.
4 The sample results indicated the absence of bacteria in
5 the finished water and in the distribution system.

6 From DEP's perspective, PA American
7 followed DEP's policies and regulations during this
8 incident.

9 I again thank the committee for allowing
10 me the opportunity to provide testimony, and would be
11 happy to answer any questions.

12 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative Vereb.

13 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Thank you,
14 Chairman.

15 In your, perhaps, third paragraph talking
16 about some customers of PA American Water were affected,
17 do you have any idea why just some?

18 MR. SERVIDIO: A total was 18,000. So
19 some municipalities were affected by the interruption,
20 some weren't. So the total I believe was 18,000.

21 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: I'm sure they'll
22 testify to it or have the answers to the questions, but
23 I'll just ask you as well, why would the municipality of
24 Norristown not be affected by this?

25 MR. SERVIDIO: They were up -- again, I

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 think -- actually, I could get back to you on that
2 answer.

3 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: We'll ask the water
4 company. I don't want to put you to the test.

5 Then we go down further about the notice
6 to you within the one hour of that discovery. We heard
7 from the township manager, I certainly heard from
8 residents, that water had been brown up to a day, day and
9 a half before there was a public notification.

10 To the DEP's knowledge, was that when that
11 discovery was made? I know you said they followed
12 policies, but are we pretty sure that the notifications
13 were made to the proper people once this water
14 contamination was found?

15 MR. SERVIDIO: Yes. We were contacted on
16 the evening of May 19th.

17 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay. And then you
18 reference some testing that was done, saying there was no
19 bacteria in the water.

20 Do we have any knowledge was there ever --
21 in this particular situation was there ever a test that
22 actually showed bacteria in the lines, or was this just
23 dirty water?

24 MR. SERVIDIO: Just dirty water. There
25 was no sign of any bacteria.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: That's all I have.
2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative Harper.

4 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Thank you,
5 Chairman Godshall.

6 You thought that Pennsylvania America
7 followed the requirements of your department, right?

8 MR. SERVIDIO: Correct. Yes.

9 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Some of the
10 complaints I heard, ironically, were about turning the
11 water back on.

12 So in your testimony you said they had to
13 do two days of tests.

14 MR. SERVIDIO: Correct.

15 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: They did them
16 Wednesday and Thursday and you found out Friday.

17 But I recall a lot of distress among
18 people about when will the water be back on? When can
19 we reopen our restaurants? When is this going to end?

20 Are your regulations consistent with
21 science? Can you do it any faster? If they tested it
22 Thursday and it was fine, why didn't you put the water
23 back on on Thursday?

24 MR. SERVIDIO: It takes two consecutive
25 days, you know, of testing per our regulations, and they

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 followed that. And that's the protocol they needed to
2 follow.

3 Once -- on the third day, once we get
4 those samples back and they were deemed as clean, then
5 we can allow them to lift the advisory.

6 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Right. I mean,
7 that sounds like a good idea to me. I'm not a scientist
8 in this field as you are.

9 I guess what I'm saying is, the distress
10 I heard was about turning the water back on.

11 Is there any way that the regulations
12 could be changed or fixed to make it easier to say,
13 Okay, it's really okay, turn it back on right now?

14 MR. SERVIDIO: I wouldn't be able to
15 really comment on that, Representative, at this point.
16 That's something that I can bring back to Harrisburg,
17 central office, and see what answer we can get back to
18 you on.

19 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: All right. Great.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative
22 Bradford.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Thank you,
24 Chairman Godshall.

25 I have a question. I know after -- and

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 obviously in a different context -- but after some of the
2 storms, working with the utilities on the electric side,
3 one of the things I thought was helpful -- and,
4 unfortunately, we had a real run of extreme weather
5 events -- was kind of doing an after-action review of
6 kind of bringing everyone in and kind of saying -- from
7 the county level to the Department of Health, townships,
8 and really saying what went wrong, what went right.

9 Hopefully this never happens again. But
10 in these type of circumstances, is there any plan to do
11 something like that, to kind of say, Hey, look, what did
12 go right here, what needs to be improved?

13 Is that something typically DEP takes the
14 lead on, or is it the water utility? Who kind of
15 typically takes the lead?

16 MR. SERVIDIO: It's the water utility.

17 We did have a follow-up meeting with PA
18 American a few weeks after the event, and we -- you know,
19 the days during the event we were in contact with
20 Montgomery County Health Department and even followed up
21 with them afterwards, and we felt everything worked to
22 our regulations.

23 But, nevertheless, we always want to
24 partner with the communities that we regulate, and they
25 did come in and we had follow-up meetings just to -- some

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 of the additional questions that we had. And I believe
2 they'll be speaking after me about some of the changes
3 that they plan to make.

4 But I know we have a very good working
5 relationship with them and they were very attentive
6 during the entire incident.

7 We had several calls a day keeping us up
8 to speed. And we made sure that the County Health
9 Department was involved, and we knew that they were
10 contacting all the member municipalities.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Great. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative Toepel.

14 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: Thank you for
15 being here today.

16 Just to follow up on Representative
17 Bradford's question, in your interviews and your work
18 with American Water after the fact, did you come to any
19 conclusion as to why it was just this facility that had
20 trouble? As Jason Bobst brought up in his testimony,
21 none of the other facilities along the Schuylkill had
22 this same issue.

23 MR. SERVIDIO: It was just this facility.

24 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: And do you have a
25 conclusion as to why?

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 MR. SERVIDIO: There were -- you know,
2 obviously the huge amounts of rain, the turbidity in the
3 water, and their system, their filters were affected by
4 that, so there was a low capacity. And then from there
5 it affected the lines. And then obviously the boil water
6 advisory was instituted.

7 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: So is there some
8 conclusion as to how this can be prevented in the
9 future --

10 MR. SERVIDIO: I believe --

11 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: -- that it will
12 not be the only facility that's affected by --

13 MR. SERVIDIO: I believe that those are
14 some of the options, Representative, that they're going
15 to be discussing.

16 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: Okay.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative Vereb.

19 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: You know, it's easy
20 to sit here two months afterwards and try to be calm and
21 try to figure it out, but I'm going to back myself up to
22 some of the frustrations that we went through.

23 In this event who was in charge of it
24 overall? I mean, we had the county commissioners holding
25 their road show down in -- on Montgomery Plaza, we had

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 the water company doing their communications with the
2 municipalities, and we had the municipalities at the end
3 of it trying to, not fend off the residents, but trying
4 to explain to them to the best of their ability what was
5 going on.

6 There seemed to be conflict at the time of
7 messaging between some of the things the water company
8 was reporting versus what our county commissioners were
9 saying on behalf of their Health Department director.

10 Who would you consider -- you know, we
11 have an electrical outage, you know, a major electrical
12 outage, obviously the utility has the PUC involved, and
13 there's the immediate communication with the
14 constituents, in this case the elected officials. And
15 the water company didn't do this this time.

16 But who's in charge of this event in
17 totality? Is there anyone?

18 MR. SERVIDIO: It's the utility to notify
19 us of the event. So it's incumbent upon them to let us
20 know, obviously in consultation with us.

21 We, again, have the meetings with them,
22 all the calls during the day, to make sure that they were
23 following our regulations, which they were. But it's
24 incumbent upon them to reach out to the communities
25 accordingly.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: But who links the
2 Health Department, yourself, and the utility? Who links
3 that?

4 So you do the environmental part. The
5 Health Department does the health part. You have three
6 separate entities here trying to address the same
7 problem.

8 So basically the role of the DEP is just
9 to make sure they're following your policies and
10 guidelines?

11 MR. SERVIDIO: Correct. Correct.

12 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: And then what we
13 expect as elected officials is -- no disrespect to PA
14 American Water -- but the same utility that's responsible
15 for it happening, we leave them in charge of fixing the
16 problem.

17 You can imagine, there's a significant
18 lack of confidence, especially when brown water's coming
19 out of your spigots, to know that that particular utility
20 is calling the shots. Not to just fix it, but then to
21 turn everything back on and let businesses go back to
22 operation.

23 So that's just something I think the
24 Chairman and I struggled with in our phone call as, you
25 know, Who's on third? Who's in charge of the entire --

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 the totality of the situation that happened?

2 Because, as you can imagine, these
3 managers -- and I know we have -- see Commissioner Jason
4 Donahue and Steve Toll here from West Norriton -- they
5 were inundated with phone calls of heated anger.

6 And part of that I think -- while
7 communications may have gone on with elected officials,
8 part of that were mixed messages that were being sent by
9 the different press releases that went out.

10 And the one -- I would have loved to have
11 had the County here. I didn't even think about it until
12 we started getting into this.

13 But there was definitely mixed messages
14 coming, and that's the worst thing I think we can do to
15 the public in these types of events.

16 So that's something maybe we can look
17 into, is who actually calls the shots and coordinates
18 this in the future.

19 I mean, the utility, they clearly --
20 unfortunately, the electric companies have it down to a
21 science at this point, but...

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Thank you.

24 I have discussed this with Representative
25 Vereb at length. It's hard for me to visualize, why only

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 here? I've been -- in prior life, operated a large
2 facility just south of Reading, drawing tremendous
3 amounts of water from the Schuylkill, and Reading and
4 then Pottstown and all the municipalities down the line.
5 And why only here?

6 It's hard to -- I think for me to
7 rationalize that statement, and I think for a lot of the
8 people here. It's just, why did it happen just here?

9 MR. SERVIDIO: I think the company will be
10 better prepared to answer that, Chairman.

11 Again, you know, different withdrawals
12 from the Schuylkill River. Each plant is different.
13 Each plant is operated differently.

14 So I guess they would have a better gauge
15 to tell you what happened exactly that day.

16 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Okay. When you get
17 colored water, you would think that it would be in the
18 river, but apparently that's not the case. And I will
19 ask the company that.

20 Is there any further questions from
21 anyone?

22 If not, thank you very much. I appreciate
23 your coming.

24 MR. SERVIDIO: Thank you, Chairman.

25 Thank you, members.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: The final presenter
2 today is Kathy Pape, President, Pennsylvania American
3 Water Company.

4 MS. PAPE: Good morning.

5 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Good morning.

6 MS. PAPE: It's on now. Can you hear me?

7 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Yes.

8 MS. PAPE: Chairman Godshall and members
9 of the committee, Representative Vereb, Representative
10 Harper, I appreciate the opportunity that you've given me
11 to speak to you about the water events that occurred at
12 the end of May.

13 I'm Kathy Pape, President and CEO of
14 Pennsylvania American Water.

15 Before I start through my remarks, I'd
16 like to thank the community for their cooperation and
17 patience during the event that occurred. I know, and
18 all the members of the water company team know, it was
19 difficult for many members of the community. But the
20 cooperation from the community was helpful in -- helpful
21 to our employees as they worked through the night to get
22 to the end game, to restore normal service.

23 My remarks this morning will cover what
24 happened, the root cause of what happened, the
25 communications efforts that the company went through

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 during the event, and also the short-term and long-term
2 solutions that we see to preventing this from happening
3 again.

4 I want to make one important point
5 clear -- and I've seen the issue raised already with the
6 prior presenters -- water quality leaving the plant was
7 at no time compromised. So at no time during the event
8 was there any violation of water quality regulations.

9 I heard a mention of some dark water, some
10 brown water. And that might have occurred on or about
11 the same time, but it wasn't caused by the issue at the
12 plant. There could have been a main break somewhere that
13 caused brown water.

14 What occurred at the plant was a quantity
15 issue, not a quality issue.

16 If you think of the rain events that
17 occurred -- and I'll talk about those in a couple minutes
18 -- if you think about the Schuylkill River as you might
19 think about a stream, and if you put a stick into a
20 stream and you stirred that stream up, all the sediment
21 that would rise up is the same thing that happens when
22 rain falls, when heavy rain falls into a stream or into a
23 river.

24 So we call it turbidity, but it's
25 cloudiness, it's junk, it's gunk. And what happened is

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 our filters were plugged with all the sediment, all the
2 turbidity that occurred on the river. That turbidity
3 plugged the filters -- think of a screen -- plugged the
4 filters, and water could not get through.

5 Ultimately the precautionary boil water
6 advisory was caused by the fact that we had zero or
7 negative pressure in parts of the system.

8 I'd like to address, and kind of deviate
9 from my prepared remarks, to address the question that
10 seemed to be raised by several members of the committee,
11 and that is, why did it occur at this water treatment
12 plant and not at other plants along the Schuylkill?

13 We draw from the Schuylkill, but we are a
14 zero discharge plant, what's known as a zero discharge
15 plant. So although we take water from the Schuylkill
16 River, we do not put any water back into the river. We
17 don't put solids and we don't put liquids back into the
18 river. We don't have a permit to put water -- anything
19 back into the river. It's an environmentally responsible
20 way to treat water. We're the only zero discharge plant
21 along the Schuylkill River.

22 So the City of Philadelphia, many people,
23 many customers asked us that question during the event,
24 why aren't they having any issue?

25 Well, they have a discharge permit, an

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 NPDES permit, so they can discharge to the river. So can
2 Pottstown and also Phoenixville have plants that have
3 discharge permits. So does Aqua Pennsylvania. They draw
4 from the Schuylkill River, but they are permitted to put
5 their residuals -- it comes off after the treatment
6 process -- back into the river.

7 Somebody had suggested that perhaps we
8 could have received an emergency permit from DEP during
9 the event.

10 Well, we could perhaps have done that, but
11 we don't have piping. If there's piping -- you have to
12 have piping from the treatment plant to the river if
13 you're going to put your residuals back into the river.

14 So that's one of the things that we'll be
15 looking at as part of our After Action Report, should we
16 have in place an NPDES permit from DEP that would permit
17 us in an emergency situation to put residuals back into
18 the water.

19 The rain events that occurred in May, the
20 first event which occurred at the end of April, April 30
21 to May 1 -- and I know that many of you are aware in West
22 Norriton, because I was aware, of some of the flooding
23 that occurred in West Norriton at the time.

24 But that event put down seven inches of
25 water in a very short period of time. And the Schuylkill

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 River crested at 20.83 feet. That's the highest crest,
2 other than Agnes in '72, Floyd in '99, and the
3 Chesapeake-Potomac Hurricane in 1933. So it was a
4 significant amount of water.

5 Also, the second event occurred May 10-11.
6 Less than an inch came down at that point. But then on
7 May 16 we had an additional 1.6 inches of rain.

8 So all of that, as I described before,
9 stirred up the Schuylkill River, and so the sediment, the
10 turbidity that was in the river, was then pulled into the
11 plant and clogged the filters, so water could not get
12 through to get out into the distribution system.

13 The plant actually shut down automatically
14 a couple times because water couldn't move through the
15 filters and into the system.

16 So early on the night of May 19, we
17 contacted the PUC and DEP, which is the protocol when an
18 issue is occurring, because we wanted to issue a
19 mandatory conservation order. We knew we weren't going
20 to be able to push production capacity through to meet
21 the demand on the system. So, of course, we asked
22 customers, Please only use water for essential purposes.

23 By the time the kids came home from school
24 on the 20th and people came home from work, we had
25 several tanks that went dry.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 At that point, once you have tanks dry and
2 you get no-water calls, you then have zero or negative
3 pressure in parts of the system.

4 So the mandatory conservation order went
5 to 11 townships or boroughs in the area, because we
6 wanted everybody to conserve.

7 However, the zero or negative pressure
8 didn't occur in the entire system. It only occurred in
9 six municipalities. If I remember them correctly, it was
10 East and West Norriton, Lower Providence, Whitemarsh,
11 Whitpain, and Worcester Townships.

12 So many customers said, So why did I get a
13 mandatory conservation call but I did not get the
14 precautionary boil water advisory? And that was because
15 we wanted everybody to conserve, but not everybody had to
16 have the precautionary boil water advisory because not
17 all areas had zero pressure.

18 So the water quality leaving the plant was
19 never compromised. We were never in a situation where it
20 didn't meet all DEP and EPA water quality regulations.

21 But when we issued the precautionary boil
22 water advisory, that was because if you have negative or
23 zero pressure, there's a potential for bacteria getting
24 into the system.

25 There was never any indication that there

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 was bacteria in the system. But the protocol, the
2 regulations of DEP say if you have negative pressure,
3 zero pressure, you have to go to a precautionary boil
4 water advisory.

5 During the night of May 20 into May 21,
6 our plant staff backwashed the filters over and over.
7 And if you think of the filter as a screen and you think
8 of it in layman's terms as being gummed up, backwashing
9 pushes water through at high pressure in the opposite
10 direction to get the gunk and the stuff, the sediment,
11 out of the filter.

12 So our staff worked overnight. And by the
13 morning of May 21, operationally the issue was over. Our
14 tanks were refilling. The system was back in service.

15 But when you issue a precautionary boil
16 water advisory, you just don't snap your fingers and then
17 it's over. Once that precautionary boil water advisory
18 was issued, in order to lift it, we had to conduct
19 bacteria testing at various sites, and we did 11 sites in
20 the system. Those tests have to be done. They have to
21 come back negative.

22 And I'll address Representative Harper's
23 question because this is like -- this is like science
24 class. The tests are done. The bacteria, you have to
25 wait for it to grow. It's like a Petri dish. And I have

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 asked the same question that you asked. Come on, we're
2 in a computerized world. Why do we have to wait so long?

3 But it takes -- the technology, as it
4 exists right now -- and I believe our staff at American
5 Water has the best understanding there is -- if there was
6 a faster way to do it, we would.

7 So you have to do the test. Then you have
8 to wait for the test to come back. Then you have to do a
9 second test. And as impatient as I am, I have asked, So
10 why don't you do one at 11:59 and one at 12:01 if you
11 have to do it in two different days?

12 The tests have to be 12 hours apart.

13 Once you get that second test -- you do
14 the test. Then you have to get the results back.

15 So that's what caused the time to elapse
16 between the 21st and the 23rd when all tests came back
17 negative, there was no bacteria in the system. But on
18 the 23rd we then consulted with DEP and we were able to
19 lift the precautionary boil water advisory.

20 The communication efforts during these
21 type of events are important, so I just wanted to touch
22 on what we did and how we did it.

23 During each of the three I'll call them
24 steps, we issued the mandatory conservation notice, we
25 issued a precautionary boil water advisory, and we also

1 lifted that advisory.

2 In each of those circumstances we used our
3 auto dialer, and we're required to do that. So we sent
4 outbound calls to -- in the initial circumstance, the
5 mandatory water conservation notice, we sent that auto
6 dialer to all 31,000 customers.

7 When we issued the precautionary boil
8 water advisory, it went to 18,600 customers in those six
9 townships that I mentioned.

10 We also worked with a group -- a team of
11 our employees physically called all of our critical
12 customers, 400 of them, in those six communities. And
13 that would be healthcare facilities, day care centers,
14 dialysis centers, restaurants, to notify them, to do it
15 more quickly than the auto dialer might do.

16 We also wanted to be sure that the word
17 was spread, so we issued press releases to the
18 Philadelphia and the Norristown media outlets.

19 Additionally, we used our Facebook page
20 and our social media sites.

21 And, importantly, the social media sites
22 were very helpful because not only did it get the news
23 out, what customers needed to do, what was going on, what
24 steps we were taking, where the water tankers were
25 located, where they could get bottled water, where they

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 could get potable water that wasn't in a bottle, but the
2 local municipalities in the area and also the County used
3 that information from our site, and then the information
4 was re-Tweeted on their sites as well.

5 So in particular Montgomery County was
6 very helpful in using their social media sites to get
7 the information out to the public.

8 We also hosted daily conference calls
9 on the 21st, the 22nd, and the 23rd for legislators,
10 municipal officials, the fire departments, and the
11 emergency services personnel. It was good to have
12 realtime information exchange to answer questions that
13 were arising over time so that local officials and
14 legislators could answer their constituent calls.

15 In terms of root causes, the very nugget
16 root cause was the high turbidity on the Schuylkill River
17 that plugged the filters.

18 The backwashing of the filters was not
19 enough. We couldn't get to a state initially to produce
20 enough water to meet the demands in the system.

21 We also -- when we know we might have high
22 residuals, we truck some of the liquids away from the
23 plant in tankers. And we were doing that at this point
24 also, but we couldn't truck it away fast enough. We
25 couldn't truck those liquid residuals away because it was

1 such a significant amount of residuals because of the
2 rain event.

3 We talked about why it was our plant and
4 not others. We talked about the NPDES permit.

5 I'd like to talk just for a couple minutes
6 about our short-term solutions and our long-term
7 solutions, or at least potential solutions.

8 Initially we looked at our standard
9 operating procedures at the plant to look at what could
10 we have done differently that might have helped.

11 So as of last week we changed operating
12 procedures related to managing the clarifier at the plant
13 and the thickener levels. We also looked at what are our
14 protocols from removing a unit from service. And finally
15 we looked at changes in protocols for trucking liquids
16 away from the plant.

17 We also are looking at the need for
18 improved and new interconnections with our nearby water
19 suppliers.

20 We were also able -- and one of the ways
21 we mitigated the impact to the local community was to buy
22 water, to open our interconnect with North Penn Water
23 Authority, North Wales Water Authority, and with Aqua
24 Pennsylvania.

25 Without those interconnections we would

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 have had significantly more impact. But we're looking
2 at whether or not we could put more interconnections in.

3 It isn't as easy as just, you know,
4 putting a pipe down somewhere. But we're looking at it,
5 and it would involve some capital.

6 We're also looking at the capacity of our
7 residuals treatment facility and whether or not we need
8 to increase that capacity of the treatment facilities.

9 In conjunction with that we're also
10 talking to DEP about whether or not we should be looking
11 at an alternative, emergency NPDES permit to discharge to
12 the river.

13 So if we have this circumstance again, we
14 would at least, in an emergency, be able to discharge to
15 the river.

16 We need to put some piping in to do that,
17 but that will be part of what we're looking at. So our
18 analysis will be going on in 2014, and any capital
19 improvements will go on in 2015.

20 We have also talked to DEP about moving --
21 implementing a quicker review for the permit if we were
22 to need to get one. If that's one of our alternatives,
23 it would be expedited and not take the normal length of
24 time that a permit would take.

25 I want to close by thanking, once again,

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 the legislators in the area. I want to thank the
2 municipal officials, the fire departments, and the
3 emergency service personnel that worked with us to
4 mitigate the impact on customers, because that's why
5 we're all here ultimately.

6 Also, I want to recognize the day in and
7 day out never stopping. In fact, with some of our
8 employees, we had to send them home and bring in some
9 backup because they wouldn't rest until we were able to
10 provide normal service to our customers, until we were
11 able to lift that boil water advisory.

12 It's truly an unbelievable group of people
13 and I personally am thankful for them every day.

14 That is the substance of my comments. I
15 certainly am available for any questions that you have.

16 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Thank you.

17 Representative Vereb.

18 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Thank you,
19 Mr. Chairman.

20 Thank you, Kathy, for your testimony.

21 I'm going to go back on a series of
22 questions if you don't mind.

23 Your fourth paragraph, "Let me start by
24 making one very important point: The water quality
25 leaving our Norristown Water Treatment Plant was never

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 compromised at any time during this event.

2 "The issues we faced at the plant with
3 high turbidity, cloudiness, in our source water slowed
4 down the treatment process, which meant the plant's
5 production could not keep pace with customer demand. But
6 at no time did the plant distribute any contaminated
7 water to our customers, so this fact needs to be very
8 clear."

9 This is uncontaminated water. This is
10 what our residents expect. I understand the corporate
11 explanation as to the technicalities that there's no
12 bacteria in the water, and that's why I asked the DEP,
13 so that it is very clear.

14 But perhaps you could rephrase that
15 paragraph. Our customer -- your customers, our
16 constituents, to them, that is -- when this looks like
17 chocolate milk, that is contaminated.

18 So how do we as the front line with our
19 constituents, your customers, how can our staff or
20 ourselves explain to people everything is fine?

21 Can you rephrase that? Because I know
22 what you're trying to get at, and that was the question
23 I asked of Cosmo and the DEP, was there bacteria found at
24 any time during this event? And the answer to that, from
25 his agency, was no.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 Is that what you're trying to address
2 here, or is this a new type of water that we're going to
3 be getting used to in the future?

4 MS. PAPE: Well, I can't speak to the
5 bottled water, that's not something we produce.

6 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Well, this
7 (indicating) is what water routinely looks like, whether
8 it's bottled -- that's why I took the label off, so we're
9 not advertising anybody.

10 MS. PAPE: Right.

11 The water leaving the plant was never
12 compromised. It always met DEP regulations, and the
13 bacteria tests confirmed that.

14 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay. Let me stop
15 you there.

16 What do you mean -- I don't think I'm the
17 only one with this complication.

18 How do you say water's not compromised
19 when it's cloudy, brown?

20 Look, everyone that talked to me said it
21 was brown, and they said it was brown for a couple days
22 before the notification.

23 How do you expect us -- me -- I'll just
24 speak for myself -- how do I look somebody in the face,
25 and say, Oh, no, it wasn't compromised?

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 Like, what is compromised? Is compromised
2 bacteria -- I'm trying to give you an out.

3 MS. PAPE: Well --

4 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Is it bacteria?
5 What is compromised in the corporate setting?

6 And we know from the DEP there's no
7 bacteria. But, to me, "compromised" means anything that
8 gets into that plant that changes the product that you
9 put out the day before it got in there?

10 MS. PAPE: Well, "compromised" to us means
11 that it didn't meet regulations.

12 The brown water didn't come from the
13 plant. If -- and we didn't get a lot of calls on brown
14 water. We had -- our calls were related to no water or
15 low pressure. But we didn't get brown water calls.

16 If there were brown water issues, it was
17 caused by a main break.

18 And many times when there's a main break,
19 water in the system is stirred up, the sediment in the
20 pipe is stirred up, and it may produce brown water.

21 And I agree with you that it's hard to
22 tell a constituent or a customer that the water is fine
23 if it has a color, an odor, or a taste.

24 But it meets all regulations. It would
25 not hurt them if they drank it.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 But I agree with you, if it has a color to
2 it, regardless of what the color is, it's difficult to
3 tell somebody, It's fine to drink the water.

4 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Respectfully, if
5 our regulations say that brown water is acceptable, then
6 obviously the committee now has some work to do moving
7 forward.

8 I emphatically disagree. Not just from
9 talking to a constituent standpoint, but being a
10 firefighter in Norristown for a number of years, back in
11 the day, when you turn a hydrant on, you would brown
12 everyone's water for many square blocks, depending on how
13 far out you went. So I understand that. And that system
14 would flush itself out. But residents would call all the
15 time, even though there was a fire.

16 And to sit there and think for one second
17 that we're going to be able to look at any constituent
18 and say that, Well, you know, it doesn't -- they met the
19 DEP requirements, but they just didn't meet the consumer
20 requirements of clean drinking water.

21 So I'm hung up on that, and I'm sure other
22 people are hung up on it, and I'm sure residents are hung
23 up on it.

24 So just understand that the technical
25 aspects of it we may be fixing, but the actual tangible

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 aspects of what went on, brown water in people's -- and
2 they had it. I mean, we heard it. Bobst heard it;
3 Gestrich heard it, everybody heard it, that there was
4 brown water.

5 So I would ask if your technical folks are
6 here, to ask if there was a water main break and where
7 was it, because we certainly didn't have one in this
8 township that impeded traffic, which usually water mains
9 do.

10 Now, on that note, I know you've done a
11 great job, at least in this township specifically, by
12 replacing some mains in roads that certainly would cause
13 those problems.

14 We had a lot of conversation about the
15 sediment that was stirred up. And that rain that had
16 occurred, many will tell you -- will know that I was out
17 there all night long with our fire department rescuing --
18 not rescuing people, but trying to keep people in their
19 place and making sure that they were as safe as they
20 could be down along that river.

21 But we all know this, and we all know the
22 fact that the Blue Marsh Dam played a role in that.

23 So my question is -- and maybe you can't
24 answer it, maybe you can -- is, what is the difference
25 between rain over the period of four days, a steady rain,

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 versus a hurricane?

2 In other words, when a hurricane comes in
3 with driving winds and driving force, refrigerators
4 floating downstream, propane tanks, materials out of
5 garages, when a current is intense from a hurricane, why
6 would that not give you the same problem?

7 Or in the past why haven't the previous
8 hurricanes not given your intake the problem that this
9 three- or four-day rain, multiple inches at a time?

10 But part of what we saw in West Norriton
11 that confirmed with the Blue Marsh Dam gauges and their
12 commentary with us is that they did release water, more
13 than they had, I guess, desired.

14 But I think it's different releasing water
15 from a dam than an actual hurricane or major tropical
16 storm coming in. And why didn't we have that a few years
17 ago when a hurricane came through here?

18 The only thing we had left in this
19 township was drinkable water. Electric was out, trees
20 were down, roads were closed.

21 MS. PAPE: Right.

22 The only thing that I know of -- and
23 perhaps you're talking about Hurricane Sandy -- but the
24 residuals that were produced at the time weren't as great
25 as the residuals that we saw at this point.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 So it's not that a hurricane -- or the
2 rains related to a hurricane, the heavy rains, wouldn't
3 cause issues, but the residuals produced at that point
4 were not as great as those that we saw during this event.

5 We haven't been able to establish a causal
6 connection between the release at Marsh Dam or Marsh Lake
7 and what occurred.

8 But certainly if there -- the water flow
9 that came from the Marsh Lake was in addition to the
10 rain, so it certainly didn't help. And it certainly
11 would have helped us had we known that there was going to
12 be a release.

13 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay. You're
14 talking about you don't discharge. So help me out with
15 this.

16 What would you have discharged? What
17 solids are you speaking of?

18 I think others have sewage treatment
19 plants or managed sewage treatment plants. But when you
20 use "solids," are you talking about dirt? Are you
21 talking about debris, stuff that gets strewn in your
22 intake?

23 What are we talking about when we say
24 solids in the system that you would have the ability in
25 the future to discharge back into the river? What is

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 that?

2 MS. PAPE: Well, whatever is left.
3 Whatever we take out of the river, so it could be dirt,
4 it could be debris, it could be the chemicals that are
5 used in the treatment process.

6 At the back end of our plant there's two
7 by-products, one's solids -- and those solids are hauled
8 away and they're land applied right now -- and then
9 there's liquids -- and those liquids go back around to
10 the head of the plant.

11 So most plants discharge back to a river.
12 Most plants don't discharge to a municipal wastewater
13 system. They put everything back into the river.

14 So we have two pieces. The solids are
15 land applied, and then everything else that's liquid
16 comes back around to the head of the plant.

17 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Did you happen to
18 see an influx of solids over the period?

19 I mean, we started -- the dates are back
20 here in my notes, but obviously there was about a
21 two-week period from when the rain had stopped to when
22 this occurred.

23 Did we see an influence -- I stand
24 corrected if it's a week and a half, but it certainly
25 is more than a couple days.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 Did we not see an influx of solids coming
2 into the plant?

3 MS. PAPE: There were increased solids
4 coming into the plant. That turbidity increased. And
5 that's why we started with hauling some of the I'll call
6 it liquids, but it's a mixture coming off the plant. We
7 started hauling it away in tankers, as we typically
8 could, but we could not keep up with the residuals -- the
9 volume of residuals that were coming off.

10 So in the future one of our remedies is
11 perhaps we ought to have two tankers available. We ought
12 to be readier than we were to remove some of the
13 residuals from the plant.

14 But, yes, we saw increases. As soon as
15 you see a rainfall, if you look at a source of supply
16 like the Schuylkill after a rain and, you know, if you
17 see what I call chocolate milk, it's not a good day at
18 the treatment plant. Not just Norristown, any treatment
19 plant.

20 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: So I guess what you
21 were saying is you were not pumping brown water through
22 the system, that was happening for some other reason.

23 Could it have happened because some of
24 your storage tanks were dry?

25 MS. PAPE: No.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 When we drew down, the water in the
2 storage tank meets all standards, and that water moves
3 around in the tank. So I won't get into the details of
4 regulations that address those issues, but the water
5 can't just sit.

6 So I don't think it was coming from the
7 tanks. I certainly could find out, though, and we could
8 talk about it.

9 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Respectfully, the
10 residents would love to hear where it came from, for
11 sure.

12 And then you talked about flushing out
13 your intakes. And I hate to do this to you because I
14 know you're not multiple feet down in the river looking
15 at this, but do you have any idea how big the intakes
16 are? We're talking multiple feet, right, by multiple
17 feet? We're not talking about small intakes?

18 MS. PAPE: No, we're not talking about
19 small intakes.

20 But we could certainly -- it's pretty
21 interesting to go down and look at the intake on the
22 Schuylkill, but we could take people down. But it's not.
23 It's multiple feet.

24 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: I'll take your word
25 for that.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 So when we flush, flush backwards,
2 backflush --

3 MS. PAPE: Yeah, backwash the filters.

4 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Backwash, there you
5 go. Okay. Do you remember when that decision was made?
6 And perhaps why wouldn't it have been made earlier? Is
7 there some type of an indicator that as it's filling up,
8 as it's clogging, that you can do that multiple times
9 during the entire storm, or in this case it wasn't a
10 storm, but the residual of the storm?

11 Like, when was that decision made to
12 backflush and why wouldn't it have been done sooner?

13 MS. PAPE: I recall the night of the 19th
14 that the local staff started to backwash. But we have
15 seven filters. So when you operate a plant, you know,
16 when your filters start getting plugged up, the first
17 thing you think about -- because you do backwashing on a
18 regular basis.

19 Depending on your source water quality,
20 backwashing is part of your normal treatment processing.
21 But that means your normal level of residuals coming in.
22 And you know when to do that. And in many instances it's
23 automated for backwashing.

24 So when they saw the extra residuals
25 coming through, they started to backwash, but they

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 weren't able to eliminate all the residuals that were
2 coming into the plant.

3 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay. So I assume
4 while other water suppliers have this discharge component
5 that you're speaking of, they also have intakes, correct?

6 MS. PAPE: They do.

7 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Why wouldn't any of
8 the other providers not have had problems at the intake
9 part of the water system? Why weren't their intakes
10 getting blocked and being affected the same as yours?

11 MS. PAPE: Maybe I misspoke.

12 There were no issues at the intake.
13 Everything was fine coming into the intake. It was when
14 it got to the filters in the water treatment plant that
15 clogged. The intake was fine. So we didn't have any
16 issue at the intake.

17 And their issues -- they didn't have
18 issues on the filters because they could take those extra
19 residuals and put them right back into the Schuylkill.

20 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: So the residuals
21 would bypass the filtering process is what you're saying
22 then.

23 MS. PAPE: The residuals are on the back
24 side. So if the water is coming this way (indicating),
25 your residuals stick in the filters, stick in the screen,

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 and the clear water comes through.

2 When you backwash as part of your
3 treatment process, you back up, you collect those
4 residuals, and then you have to do something with them.

5 If you are not a zero discharge plant, you
6 can put them right back into the river.

7 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: All right. So we
8 backwash, and that water goes nowhere but comes right
9 back in. So you're constantly fighting the solids that
10 were trying to get through in the first place. You blow
11 it out to get more water in, but those solids continue to
12 build up.

13 But if you had to discharge, I guess my
14 question is, you would discharge those solids before
15 filtration or after?

16 MS. PAPE: We would discharge them --
17 backwashing is a process, and what's backwashed is then
18 collected and goes through what we call the residuals
19 treatment process -- residuals management process.

20 So all those backwash residuals --
21 actually if you go down to Norristown, it's really
22 extremely interesting, because the residuals come off and
23 then we separate the solids from the liquids and there's
24 a press. And we're looking at the type of press we have.

25 But the press squeezes the water out of

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 the solids, so that way you separate -- clearly separate
2 your solids from your liquids. And you want to get your
3 solids with as little water as possible because
4 somebody's going to haul them away, and you pay more for
5 liquids than you do for solids.

6 So the press squeezes the water out, the
7 water goes back to the head of the plant, the liquid, and
8 the rest in that residuals process is land applied, it's
9 hauled away in a truck.

10 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay. The outlying
11 issue that we're really looking for sometime in the very
12 near future of public communication regarding is why --
13 what was the cause of the brown water?

14 I mean, having no water pressure at all is
15 certainly -- I don't know if it's understandable, but
16 it's understandable in terms of our hearing today, but
17 there was brown water.

18 And I really was hoping we'd have that
19 answer as to why that brown water.

20 I have heard from numerous people,
21 employees, former employees, who said that tanks,
22 including the one out at the end of Potshop Road, went
23 dry.

24 MS. PAPE: Yes.

25 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Which then you

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 could understand the residual in the bottom of that tank
2 comes into play when it then gets filled back up, when
3 the system's back up to normal.

4 But can you explain to me how the
5 municipality in Norristown was not impacted down to the
6 boil water? I know they were part of it, but then to the
7 boil water.

8 MS. PAPE: Right.

9 The reason it wasn't is it was not one of
10 the areas that had zero or negative pressure. That's
11 why. And I know, because we had a lot of questions about
12 it. But that's why Norristown did not have the
13 precautionary boil water advisory, although they were
14 asked to conserve.

15 And that's true of the other five
16 municipalities that were not affected by the
17 precautionary boil water advisory.

18 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Mr. Chairman, just
19 two more. Thank you for your patience.

20 He's still smiling at me. That means I
21 can go.

22 What are we doing for businesses? What do
23 we do for businesses?

24 I realize, as I said earlier, most of
25 their insurance plans call for 72 hours. Now, I'm not

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 suggesting you keep this out of business for 72 hours,
2 but what do businesses do? How do they recover from this
3 with no insurances that cover them? I'm not suggesting
4 the water company's going to pay for it, but what happens
5 to these small businesses that were impacted?

6 The residents have rebounded, but we have
7 businesses that lost a significant amount of business,
8 local small businesses that couldn't afford to bring in
9 outside tankers.

10 MS. PAPE: I didn't know about the 72
11 hours.

12 But any business that had a financial loss
13 should call our 800 number and we will process it with
14 our insurance carrier, as we typically do.

15 So I understand. Especially I think the
16 larger restaurants, maybe chains, it was a little easier
17 for them. But I come from a family that owns
18 restaurants, small restaurants, and to lose two days of
19 your business is a significant impact.

20 So that's what they should do.

21 And we've had others who have already done
22 that. We've logged the calls.

23 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Well, that's
24 actually good information. I know some of our small
25 businesses will appreciate that.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 And just a last question. You talked
2 about capital improvements to infrastructure, in terms of
3 what happened here, but are there other capital
4 improvements in the plant site?

5 I want to be clear, the improvements that
6 have been done in the communities -- and I'm specifically
7 talking about Burnside Avenue, not because I live there,
8 but because that road was closed more than it was open at
9 one point, Liberty Avenue, those old neighborhoods -- I
10 know that you replaced all that out in the field.

11 What type of capital work is going on at
12 the plant, has gone on in the last couple years, or will
13 be going on, either related or unrelated to what happened
14 here?

15 MS. PAPE: Well, the plant was improved
16 not too long ago, I want to say ten years or so ago,
17 significant upgrades. So the increase in the capacity of
18 residuals handling will be the number one thing that
19 we're looking at there.

20 Interestingly, I lived in this area for 30
21 years. I never realized that there was a significant
22 increase in demand from the time that plant was put in
23 until now.

24 So we provide service in 36 counties in
25 the Commonwealth. Not a lot of those areas are growing,

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 but this is one of the growth areas. So we're going to
2 look at the residuals handling.

3 We're also doing the work on the Forrest
4 Avenue booster station. We passed it when we came in
5 here. That certainly helps pressure in the area.

6 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay. I thank you
7 for your testimony, and I do publicly apologize to you
8 folks. I know you made a trip up to Harrisburg last
9 week, and, as I said to you -- bad verbiage at this
10 point -- but you were in the eye of the hurricane of the
11 budget and I couldn't meet with you.

12 I do think we need to straighten out the
13 issue of brown water. I think your information for small
14 businesses is very helpful. And I would hope you could
15 keep us posted.

16 I think the one thing is, Cosmo, as I
17 stare at you so brightly from here, is, we have to decide
18 and we have to see if it's legislation or a process.

19 Your definition of "breached" or
20 "compromised water" is much different than residents'.
21 And I don't mean that to be rude. You don't have
22 bacteria, which is great. That's why I asked the
23 question.

24 But brown water, wherever it's coming
25 from, however it's happening, is certainly compromised

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 water. And I think that that should trigger just as much
2 as low pressure or bacteria.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your
4 patience.

5 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Thank you.
6 Representative Harper.

7 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Thank you.

8 It seems from the testifiers we've had
9 this morning that once the incident occurred, things were
10 handled in accordance with law and regulations and pretty
11 much as they should have been handled.

12 But it was still a very distressing
13 experience for the people who got the boil water
14 advisories and couldn't operate their businesses or who
15 were afraid to take showers or whatever.

16 So I guess my question is, going back to
17 how it started, how we could prevent it from happening
18 again, and I see that you're taking steps.

19 I'm wondering, how significant is it that
20 clarifier number two was out of commission when all of
21 this happened? How long does it take to fix a clarifier,
22 and is there any way you could have put it back into
23 service when you saw the weather reports?

24 I mean, I just want to know, what could we
25 do to stop this from happening?

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 MS. PAPE: Yeah. There is an arm in the
2 bottom of the clarifier that needed to be repaired.

3 So once you start repairs, putting it back
4 in service when the weather man changes the weather
5 forecast isn't easy.

6 But certainly having that clarifier out of
7 service at that point in time didn't help the situation.
8 And that's why we want to look at the capacity of the
9 clarifier, so that perhaps one could have handled
10 something like this if they were both larger.

11 Also looking at exactly when you do your
12 repairs. Perhaps the times of the year when maybe you
13 wouldn't be using as much water.

14 But, you know, there's never really any
15 good time. You couldn't do it in the winter, and we had
16 such a long, hard winter.

17 So I trust our -- the local folks that
18 they didn't do it, Oh, let's pick when we're going to get
19 heavy rainfalls. Because certainly when you get into
20 August and September, that's when you could have
21 hurricane effects, so you wouldn't pick that time.

22 So we'll look at that. But certainly
23 having that out of service didn't help.

24 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Okay. And I guess
25 to the questions that Representative Vereb raised, I'm

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 sure there are many reasons why people would experience
2 brown water.

3 Could that have been caused by the low
4 pressure?

5 MS. PAPE: I don't think it would have
6 been caused by low pressure, but we'll get an answer on
7 the brown water --

8 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Or varying
9 pressure that stirred up sediment in the pipes or in the
10 house or whatever?

11 I mean, there should be some system
12 whereby your company recognizes the complaint and figures
13 out the reason, particularly if there's no main break,
14 which would be the most likely reason.

15 MS. PAPE: Right.

16 Any change in I'll call it velocity
17 through the pipes could affect anything that stirs up the
18 sediment in the bottom of the pipes, it's there all the
19 time.

20 But we'll look at it and we'll address how
21 we get that word out to the community. Because if that's
22 the primary concern -- and I apologize. Had I known
23 that, I would have come here with an answer on brown
24 water.

25 But if that's the concern, that's what we

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 need to address. And it doesn't matter if it's
2 perception. We say we know the water is fine, even
3 though it's brown.

4 But from a customer's point of view, if
5 you don't want chocolate milk, you're drinking water, you
6 want it to be clear. So I agree with that. We'll get an
7 answer on the brown water and why -- and have a
8 communication with our customers so they understand, and
9 then they can decide.

10 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Well, I agree that
11 -- I mean, if you're saying that the water leaving the
12 plant was fine, that's really good news.

13 But if it's coming out your tap and it's
14 not fine, that's really bad news.

15 So we want to be reassured that
16 Pennsylvania American Water is getting these complaints,
17 taking them seriously, and trying to figure out what is
18 going on and trying to prevent it from happening again.

19 It does seem like you handled it correctly
20 when it did happen, but I think it was, nonetheless, a
21 distressing situation.

22 MS. PAPE: Well, Representative Harper,
23 let me make it clear that we don't just test the water
24 when it came out of the plant. When we did those
25 bacteria tests, we did them at 11 sites, and they're not

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 all clustered around the plant. And those were out in
2 the system that was affected.

3 So we felt comfortable. We did the two
4 tests, and all of them came back negative.

5 So in the system we felt comfortable that
6 the water at the tap was fine.

7 REPRESENTATIVE HARPER: Okay. Thank you.
8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative
10 Bradford.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Thank you,
12 Chairman.

13 I wanted to follow up on Representative
14 Vereb real quick. And, again, I don't like to make a
15 habit of agreeing with my colleague, but on the
16 discolored water, I will tell you, in our community in
17 Worcester Township, before we went to no pressure, we had
18 no water, there was discolored water. And, again, that's
19 not just anecdotal, that was in our own home and in homes
20 throughout our community.

21 In hearing you go through the time line,
22 I must say, it's obviously distressing, the discolored
23 water, and I think that needs to be addressed.

24 But one thing I think you've actually done
25 a great job, Kathy, is kind of explaining how a mandatory

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 conservation order becomes -- goes to zero pressure which
2 then results into the boil water alert.

3 I think for a lot of residents who don't
4 have the background knowledge of any of this -- and I
5 count myself as one of them -- you go from thinking,
6 Okay, I'm conserving water, I'm doing my part, I'm not
7 watering, to, Oh my goodness, but I'm drinking my water
8 out of my tap, I think everything's fine, and then a
9 couple hours later it's boil your water. Oh, jeez, I
10 just drank that water an hour ago.

11 And that kind of -- as it kind of
12 progressed -- the situation progressed, I think there's
13 a communication issue just in terms of educating the
14 consumer.

15 Unfortunately, to the point we made
16 earlier, we've gotten very good on the electric side of
17 dealing with it.

18 On the water side I think there was a real
19 distress among a lot of residents of, okay, why did we go
20 from conservation to boil to, in some cases in
21 communities like mine, where we had no water at all.

22 So I think that is part of what needs to
23 be done. I think the communication strategy, while I
24 appreciate everybody with best efforts, again, I think
25 there was -- there's an education process that's just

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 desperately needed because I don't think anyone
2 understood.

3 And, again, there's kind of the
4 bureaucratic -- and I think Representative Vereb did a
5 good job of eliciting this -- you know, everyone says,
6 The water was fine. But everyone's like, No, my water
7 was brown. And "fine" and "brown" to most of us when it
8 comes to water is not simpatico.

9 MS. PAPE: Well, and maybe one of the
10 things that we missed in terms of our follow-up should be
11 an educational effort. So we'll add that, in addition to
12 the capital improvements, and changes in our operating
13 procedures perhaps, an educational outreach and
14 discussion and maybe some community groups to have a
15 discussion about what happened.

16 Because you always hope it will never
17 happen again. But better to educate the public as to
18 what goes on and what you should be concerned about, what
19 you shouldn't be concerned about, and how we can better
20 communicate when we do have an incident.

21 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: All right. I
22 also just wanted to touch on, quickly, the residual issue
23 that I know you've touched on a lot.

24 Not being an expert, again, by any means,
25 but it would seem to me there are several wastewater

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 treatment plants in the area of the water plant.

2 Could that be piped to a wastewater
3 treatment plant so it would be treated before it would be
4 otherwise discharged into the river? Is that done with
5 some water plants?

6 MS. PAPE: Well, you can discharge into
7 wastewater treatment plant, and we do discharge a little
8 bit of liquid into the treatment plant, but you couldn't
9 discharge at the volumes that we had.

10 And wastewater plants are very fussy about
11 what they take in. It might seem that they take
12 everything that comes by, but from an industrial process,
13 they do not take everything and they have pretreatment
14 rules.

15 So we could still send some of that
16 liquid, but we couldn't send the volume that we had or
17 there would have been an issue with the wastewater plant,
18 which would have been probably a bigger issue.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Okay. So when
20 we're saying We're sending tankers, I mean, this is --
21 you've got a huge -- in a storm like this, the volume is
22 truly a mess. It's not you just need to call Mascaro and
23 get some tanks --

24 MS. PAPE: Right. No.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: -- and sit these

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 things next to the plant. This is a huge volume.

2 MS. PAPE: Right. Right.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Okay. I think
4 one of the things you touched on is the residuals were
5 just much higher in this event than they had been
6 previously.

7 Is there any reason, anecdotal or
8 scientific, why a rainstorm that was commensurate with
9 some of these other storm events would result in a much
10 higher level of residuals coming into the plant?

11 MS. PAPE: I don't know that from a
12 scientific basis, but it may be because a rainfall isn't
13 all created equal. It's the period of time over which it
14 falls.

15 We didn't know anything about the release
16 from Marsh Lake until we were having one of our municipal
17 calls. And some -- one of -- maybe Whitpain -- asked
18 whether or not this could be related to that release. So
19 that could have been part of it as well.

20 But why this one and not the others, I'm
21 not sure. But we do know -- I mean, we could see the
22 residuals coming in.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: One of the last
24 questions I have is kind of just choreographing of who
25 gets notified and in what order.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 One of the issues -- and I think, again,
2 this is a day or two into this -- is restaurants were
3 getting called one by one by the County Department of
4 Health. And I think that process, frankly, needs a good
5 bit of improvement.

6 I think there was clearly an issue. Some
7 of them did know. They're like, Oh, no, we're open
8 today, but we're just offering bottled water.

9 There is a disconnect between how it
10 played out in the communities as opposed to, I think,
11 what we're hearing.

12 I think someone said, Look, we can give
13 you fountain soda -- or -- no -- We can't give you
14 fountain soda, but we'll give you bottled water, but we
15 can be open because our dishwashers are so hot, or
16 something. There was clearly a disconnect.

17 And I think there needs -- and, again,
18 education, but also improvement. Again, I know I keep
19 belaboring the point of having been through this on the
20 electric side. There has been tremendous improvements
21 over these last couple storms in terms of getting that
22 ability to get it out to the community.

23 And I think it's great to hear from the
24 public safety side that water quality was never
25 compromised. But I think in order to get to the public

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 confidence issue, we've got to deal with that
2 communication-education side.

3 Because it just strikes me that what we're
4 hearing a lot of anecdotally as it played out in those
5 couple days, I think there needs to be some
6 reconciliation to how it played out as opposed to how we
7 think it would play out in the book because I don't think
8 in every case that was exactly what we want.

9 MS. PAPE: I agree.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: All right.
11 Thanks, Kathy.

12 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative Toepel.

13 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: Thank you, Kathy.

14 You made comments earlier, and then again
15 with Representative Bradford, on the release from Blue
16 Marsh, and it would have been helpful to know that they
17 were going to release water.

18 Who actually approves the release? Maybe
19 that's not a question for you. Maybe Cosmo knows that.

20 And if you had known, if there was
21 notification to you they were going to release water, how
22 could you better prepare for that event?

23 And maybe that's something we need to
24 discuss also about the notification of release of water
25 from the dam if it's going to have that kind of impact on

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 your facility.

2 MS. PAPE: I understand that that
3 reservoir is controlled by the Army Corps, U.S. Army
4 Corps, so we don't have any control over it.

5 Had we known, we could have potentially --
6 if they knew in advance, a week, two weeks in advance, we
7 could have then had more tankers ready. We could have
8 readied ourselves knowing that there could be a potential
9 impact for it.

10 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: When you're saying
11 a week or two in advance, that may not be possible in an
12 event like that. Do they make that kind of decision in
13 that kind of time frame?

14 MS. PAPE: I do not know.

15 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: But that is a
16 conversation you could possibly have with them --

17 MR. PAPE: Uh-huh. Right.

18 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: -- in the future
19 that you could be aware of a possible release of water
20 that's going to have a major impact on your facility.

21 MS. PAPE: We could reach out to them as
22 part of our follow-up, so that at least we have a sense
23 of what their protocol is and if they could notify us.

24 Regardless, even if they know three hours
25 ahead, to know that is at least -- when you're operating

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 the plant and responsible for potable water to the
2 public, any change, to have some advance knowledge of it
3 is helpful.

4 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: And I would think
5 not only to your facility, but all the facilities and
6 treatment plants -- sewage treatment plants and water
7 facilities along the Schuylkill River.

8 MS. PAPE: Yes.

9 REPRESENTATIVE TOEPEL: Thank you very
10 much.

11 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Representative Vereb.

12 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 Kathy, if you have an 800 number handy, if
15 you could state the 800 number. If not, just make it
16 available. I know there are a number of small business
17 representatives here from our community.

18 Do you have it handy?

19 MS. PAPE: I don't. I don't have it
20 memorized, I'm sorry, but anybody who is here that would
21 like it, we'll stay after and we can give them the number
22 for sure.

23 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay.

24 I was kind of settled down, my sediment
25 was settled, but the brown water issue --

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: How about your
2 residuals?

3 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: My residuals.

4 Oh, it's so good to laugh.

5 The brown water issue is a major issue.
6 When we deal with, in our case down here PECO, and
7 there's outages, people see PECO trucks in the field,
8 they see lines down, they see trees down in their yard,
9 they have something tangible to not be patient about, but
10 at least understand that there's a reason that they have
11 no power. There was a storm, there was an accident,
12 there was something happened, no matter how small or
13 large scale that outage is.

14 And in this case there was -- and I'm not
15 saying you should put water trucks all out in these
16 neighborhoods, but we didn't see water main breaks. And
17 there may have been, and we have to find out if there
18 were. But it just seems to be something which is very
19 tangible in these people's homes and businesses, but yet
20 not tangible to find out, even today, why.

21 I was up at one of our small businesses
22 the other night -- the other afternoon, and imagine
23 owning a bar. At home we can unscrew the little filters
24 on our faucets and we can kind of do some work and then,
25 of course, all that sediment is sitting down. Your

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 sediment, that we don't know where it came from, is now
2 in our hot water heaters and now in our low points of our
3 homes and pipes.

4 But imagine in a small business where you
5 have the fountains at bars, you know, the little guns
6 that pull water into them for the different product, you
7 know, the amount of work that has to go into this.

8 So they're not -- brown water is not
9 acceptable to them. It's not acceptable to you. It's
10 not acceptable to anybody.

11 But if you haven't figured it out by now,
12 there was brown water. And I'm really hung up on it. I
13 just don't understand how we don't have that answer
14 today.

15 As I said, many people have suggested the
16 tanks went dry. I don't want to say dry dry, but it went
17 below acceptable levels, which then when those tanks were
18 filled, it pushed that sediment up in through the system.
19 That's a commentary on my part.

20 But certainly I know the tanks we're
21 talking about, the physical locations, and I know from my
22 own experience of a well what happens when you shut that
23 down and turn it back on.

24 So please don't underestimate how much
25 communication must be made to the townships, the

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 constituency of ours, your customers, and the businesses
2 as to why. Why. Because now all that sediment that we
3 don't know where it came from is in all of our
4 constituents' homes and businesses.

5 The only other follow-up is, in your mind,
6 was this a water emergency? Was this an emergency, in
7 terms of the precautions that had to take place?

8 I'm not trying to set you up, but the
9 reason I ask it is it's very apparent, and it's not that
10 it's necessarily your fault, you've heard from
11 Representative Bradford about who was in charge. I think
12 from your standpoint you had a grip. But we did have
13 businesses next to each other, some open, some closed, in
14 communities affected.

15 And it just seemed to be there was no
16 sheriff in town for this -- there was no point person in
17 charge of all of it, to make sure that all of the
18 entities, from yourself, to health, and to any other
19 agency that would have been involved, there was no one in
20 charge, and, therefore, orchestrating accurate
21 communication to all the constituencies, both residential
22 and commercial.

23 And the worst thing, we can all assure
24 you, the worst thing you can have when you're dealing
25 with constituents is not correct information.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 Even worse than that is to communicate
2 something that's different than your neighboring elected
3 official, county elected official, or Health Department
4 is communicating.

5 Besides brown water, then people become
6 infuriated because, again, they don't know who's on
7 third.

8 There was just no orchestration of the
9 broader communication, the immediate impact of the Health
10 Department. So I think that's something else we have to
11 look at.

12 But who should take charge if this happens
13 tomorrow, of the totality of what went on here, not just
14 your blockages and the brown water, but all of the
15 businesses and residents from a health perspective that
16 we face here?

17 MS. PAPE: Well, Pennsylvania American
18 Water operates 10,000 miles of pipe in the Commonwealth
19 and we have 36 treatment plants, so we have issues, we
20 have breaks. We always take responsibility for what's
21 going on relative to the water and communication to our
22 customers and to municipalities, legislators.

23 But there are some entities that are
24 involved that we don't have control over. We don't have
25 jurisdiction over whether or not the restaurants are open

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 or closed. That's a Health Department issue. So we try.
2 We reach out. But we can't -- we don't manage everybody.

3 So we try to take charge of the situation
4 and we always have an incident command center. We always
5 have calls. And what the public saw was only probably 10
6 percent of the calls and the coordination that were going
7 on behind the scenes throughout the night with the DEP,
8 with the PUC, with our folks.

9 But there are some groups that we don't
10 control. We can only manage what we can control.

11 So I don't disagree with you. There's
12 only room for one quarterback when you have an issue
13 that's going on. You've got to have somebody in control.

14 And in most circumstances the water
15 company is in charge. We manage the communications and
16 we work with DEP, the PUC and legislators and municipal
17 officials and things are fine.

18 REPRESENTATIVE VEREB: Okay. Well, there
19 wasn't such a pleasant picture of one of your plant sites
20 in the Times Herald, the front page of the Times Herald,
21 with a bunch of residue on the top of it. You became the
22 face of the problem.

23 So we'll look forward to suggestions from
24 anybody that has testified or anybody else in the
25 industry that's here.

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 I think one of the things we can work on
2 is who will be in charge when this happens again, to make
3 sure that we articulate facts and straight talk to the
4 people that are impacted by what went on here.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: A question. You
7 mentioned briefly the PUC.

8 What part did the PUC play in -- what did
9 they play in this and what do they normally -- when
10 they're involved in a situation like this, where do they
11 come in?

12 MS. PAPE: The PUC has an emergency -- I
13 want to call it an emergency response group that's part
14 of their staff at the PUC. And in any incident where we
15 have an issue with water quality, water quantity, we
16 connect with them at the same time we call DEP.

17 So in the middle of the night between the
18 19th and the 20th, 4:00 a.m., I think we were in touch
19 with the PUC.

20 So they don't manage water quality, but
21 they do address what's going on in terms of customer
22 issues, customer impacts, customers who are without
23 water.

24 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: So they were involved
25 in this situation?

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 MS. PAPE: They were.

2 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Okay. We had asked
3 them to come in and testify. We do have comments from
4 them, but they chose not to come down here today.

5 I was also amazed to find out that
6 apparently you have hookups with the North Penn Water
7 Authority, which is up in the Lansdale-Hatfield area, and
8 North Wales Water Authority.

9 Are those pipe hookups? Is it a matter of
10 only opening valves?

11 MS. PAPE: No, it really isn't. That's
12 what I thought, too. I thought just go out, turn it on.

13 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Yes, that's what I --

14 MS. PAPE: What's taking you so long?

15 But it really isn't that easy. But we're
16 dealing with pressures, managing pressures among systems.

17 So we had our distribution group -- in
18 addition to what was going on at the treatment plant, we
19 had distribution folks coming in, not just from here, but
20 from other areas, to manage those interconnections.

21 Because if you open them or close them in the wrong way,
22 you will end up with breaks in the system then as well.

23 So we're going to look at whether or not
24 we can make that more flip the switch. But it's not as
25 easy as I think or, it sounds like, as you think as well.

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1 I thought it should be easier as well.

2 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Okay. As a
3 nonengineer listening to the testimony, which I do
4 understand, which I didn't previously to coming down here
5 today, an NPDES permit seems to be the logical out. You
6 don't have to worry about the tankers. You don't have to
7 worry about anything. And apparently everybody else is
8 sitting there with an NPDES permit except for American.

9 MS. PAPE: We certainly can go to an NPDES
10 permit.

11 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: You do qualify, right?

12 MS. PAPE: Right.

13 I don't think there's any reason that we
14 wouldn't qualify. We could put the residuals back into
15 the river.

16 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Just the same as
17 everybody else does.

18 MS. PAPE: That's right.

19 CHAIRMAN GODSHALL: Okay. I just want to
20 thank the committee members and also the people that came
21 out here today.

22 I have worked with American on many
23 occasions as Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee, and
24 they have always come forward straight -- with straight
25 answers and trying to help and correct situations in some

DEPOSITION OF HEARING, 7/8/2014

1 other situations that we've been involved in. So I
2 appreciate your testimony here today.

3 And you said you'll stick around if
4 there's any questions from anybody in the audience. But
5 I appreciate your involvement, appreciate the involvement
6 of the committee, and we'll go forward from here.

7 And the meeting is adjourned.

8 (Meeting concluded at 12:31 p.m.)
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1 CERTIFICATION

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4 I, JAMES DeCRESCENZO, a Registered Diplomate
5 Reporter and Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of
6 Pennsylvania, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true
7 and accurate transcript of the deposition of said witness
8 who was first duly sworn by me on the date and place
9 herein before set forth.

10 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither attorney nor
11 counsel for, not related to nor employed by any of the
12 parties to the action in which this deposition was taken;
13 and further that I am not a relative or employee of any
14 attorney or counsel employed in this action, nor am I
15 financially interested in this case.

16
17
18 _____
19
20 JAMES DeCRESCENZO
21 Registered Diplomate Reporter
22 and Notary Public
23
24
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