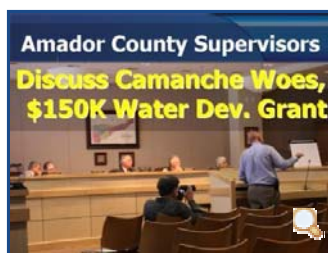


Friday, 16 March 2012

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SUPERVISORS DISCUSS CAMANCHE WATER SYSTEM ISSUES

Friday, 12 August 2011



Amador County – Amador County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday discussed a potential \$150,000 grant to Amador Water Agency to help fix deficiencies at Camanche water system that dated to when the county owned the systems.

AWA General Manager Gene Mancebo said “incorrectly installed” lines run through residents’ yards, and the county “put rocks back into the hole,” which rub holes into pipes.

Mancebo said Well 14 is off-line, needing rehabilitation from bacteriological and turbidity problems, and had the system “on the edge of meeting demand,” though that was helped by a milder than average summer.

Bill Condrashoff read a letter from Camache Board member Vera Ferguson, who questioned a water caution. Condrashoff said “there is skepticism that there’s any problems there at all” in Well 14. Condrashoff remembered at a past AWA board meeting, a staff member “kept shaking the water because it was settling so fast.”

Mancebo said “Bill’s wrong” and test results showed bacteria problems and suspended solids, and “it took days to settle out.” There was also an odor. Supervisor Richard Forster said: “To me, that’s fear mongering” and people who doubt the issue should go to the Agency to see reports and test results. Supervisor Ted Novelli said Well 14 problems began a year after it went on-line.



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Debbie Dunn questioned the “drop dead urgency” about Well 14 last October and said “the majority of customers are unhappy with the Agency and they do not trust them.” Condrashoff said “they can’t get the water agency to show them where the money’s going.”

Mancebo said annual audits are available, but analysis is “not always down to the level” requested, and they can’t show sensitive staff information. He said at a Camanche workshop, a community group “had a list of issues they wanted addressed. Some were staff issues.” He asked where they learned the information to request, and was told that it came from “two previous board members.”

Mancebo said AWA replaced 80 connection lines; put roofs and hatches on storage tanks; and built Well 14. System expenses have dropped from \$400,000 to about \$250,000 a year. Forster said “the cuts are commendable” but it was “late in coming.”

Camanche resident Craig Walling asked about protocol if AWA stopped operating Camanche, and if the state would take over. Novelli said that is exactly correct. Forster said at a workshop, he heard a non-Camanche resident say that maybe “the state can do it cheaper.” Forster said “the state doesn’t do anything cheaper,” and “you will still get mandated rate increases.”

“It was hardly a workshop,” Forster said, with 6 or 7 ratepayers. Everyone else was from “out of the area” with nothing positive to say.

Story by Jim Reece jim@tspntv.com

Last Updated (Friday, 12 August 2011)

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