

Landfill payment dispute leaves Appomattox water agreement in limbo



(WDBJ)

By Tim Saunders

Published: Mar. 4, 2020 at 5:53 PM EST

A large blue tower sits along Route 460 in Spout Spring, filled with water Appomattox County has purchased from Campbell County.

Appomattox may have to find a different source for its water soon, because of an action taken by Campbell County leaders.

"It's regrettable that we've reached this point," Campbell County administrator Frank Rogers told WDBJ7 Wednesday.

Tuesday night, Campbell County's Board of Supervisors voted to retaliate against their neighbors in Appomattox.

In a unanimous decision, they voted not to renew an agreement that allows Appomattox County to buy water from the Campbell County Utilities and Service Authority.

The action was taken after Appomattox and Nelson county leaders voted to withhold a payment of more than \$900,000 to Campbell County last year; money county leaders say they're owed for hosting a regional landfill near Rustburg.

"Those payments have been forthcoming to the county for 10 years," Rogers said. "Those ought to continue for the lifetime of the landfill."

Campbell County leaders signed an agreement to sell its water to Appomattox County in 2011. It doesn't expire for another 10 years, which gives Appomattox County time to make other arrangements for its water needs.

Still, Rogers says filing a notice of intent to end the agreement now will have negative consequences for Appomattox.

"Obviously, it's not the economic development narrative that Appomattox would want to put out there, that there's uncertainty around their long-term water supply."

Appomattox County administrator Susan Adams issued a response late Wednesday, saying in part her vote to deny Campbell County's payment was not meant to harm the landfill authority in any way. Instead, she wanted to enhance its services, pay off debt and generate savings for all member localities.

Her response did not mention how the county might handle the water dispute.

Here is the full statement Susan Adams sent to WDBJ7:

"The Authority Member Agreement states that the excess revenues can be distributed to Campbell County and the City of Lynchburg if it is the favor of the Authority via annual approval. It also states that the excess revenues can be utilized for other Authority expenses and if there is a balance after these expenses are deducted, the Authority Board can vote to disburse those funds to the two entities. In fairness and respect to the entire membership and since the Excess Revenues are generated through an additional \$10 fee that is charged to the solid waste hauling businesses on the commercial side, I feel as the FY2020 Excess Revenue budget should be utilized to offset current and future expenses of all of the member localities by the following: 1) Appropriated to a designated Landfill Closure Fund that will offset the burden of future landfill closure costs to the member localities. 2) As a Board member, I have received repeated complaints from the businesses that they are losing money at the Regional Landfill because of the way their trucks are damaged due to needed landfill road repairs. Perhaps the excess revenues generated through these businesses can be utilized for infrastructure improvements. 3) The Authority receives repeated odor complaints from the surrounding neighborhoods. We should be utilizing the Excess Revenues for odor reduction capital improvements, respectively, to the neighbors and improving their quality of life. 4) Campbell County and the City of Lynchburg were paid for all of their assets when the Authority assumed operations of their landfills, creating the Regional Landfill. Supporting reports are available. 5) Since 2009, Campbell County and the City of Lynchburg have received over \$11.5 million.

(Campbell County has been paid approx. \$8 million and the City of Lynchburg has been paid approx. \$3.5 million.) NONE of the Excess Revenues have been utilized for any of my stated purposes. The intent of the development of an Authority is not to generate revenue to its members, but to generate cost savings to the members and is why everyone contributes during the Authority's inception to purchase the assets. 6) Reduce member tipping fees per ton and utilize the Excess Revenue funds to offset the cost of operations to the member localities. Each locality's savings would be based on the disposal percentage. My "no" vote, as I assume Nelson County's "no" vote, was certainly not meant to harm the Authority in any way, only to enhance its services, pay off debt, add additional funding to the post closure fund, and possibly reduce tipping fees which in return would generate savings for ALL the member localities. Copyright 2020 WDBJ7. All Rights Reserved.”