

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION OF MCCREARY)
COUNTY WATER DISTRICT PURSUANT TO 807) CASE NO.
KAR 5:071, SECTION 7(4) FOR APPROVAL OF) 2017-00246
PROPOSED INSPECTION PROCEDURES)

ORDER

On June 30, 2017, McCreary County Water District (“MCWD”) filed an Application pursuant to 807 KAR 5:071, Section 7(4), requesting approval of its proposed procedures for the inspection of its sewage collection and treatment operations to permit inspections of certain mechanical equipment and facilities on a non-daily basis.

MCWD responded to one round of discovery in this matter. There are no intervenors in this matter and the case now stands submitted to the Commission for a decision.

MCWD currently has 1,139 active simplex grinder/pump stations and 75 active duplex grinder/pump stations that pump wastewater from the customer’s residence or business to MCWD’s main lift stations.¹ The water district employs three people in its sewer operations. MCWD inspects its manholes annually and the main lift stations and

¹ Application at 4, paragraph 13.

sewage treatment facility daily. It does not inspect the grinder/pump stations daily, and last inspected the grinder/pump stations between July 2014 and November 2015.²

MCWD does not deny that the grinder/pump stations are mechanical equipment under 807 KAR 5:071, Section 7(4), which provides in part, “[u]nless otherwise authorized in writing by the commission, the sewage utility shall....make inspections of all mechanical equipment on a daily basis.”³ MCWD does not deny that it is not in compliance with this requirement and that it has not received authorization from the Commission to inspect the grinder/pump stations on a different schedule than other mechanical equipment.⁴

MCWD asserts that it lacks the personnel to conduct daily inspections of the grinder/pump stations, as required by the regulations. It estimates that performing daily inspections of all grinder/pump stations would require hiring 58 additional employees at an estimated yearly cost of \$2,525,727. There would also be a cost of \$570,000 to provide the new employees with vehicles. If MCWD were to contract for the labor required for daily inspections, it estimates the annual cost would be \$6,728,775.⁵

MCWD provided information to the Commission regarding the safety features of the grinder/pump stations and the alerts that are in place in the event of a failure of a grinder/pump station. Each grinder/pump station is equipped with an in-line check, a collection or storage tank for holding wastewater, and a sewer relief valve. They are designed to bypass water to the area surrounding the station in the event of an overflow. Each station is also located below the ground level of the serviced residence to prevent

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* at 5, paragraph 15.

⁴ *Id.* paragraph 17.

⁵ *Id.* at 6, paragraph 19.

any backflow into the residence.⁶ If a grinder/pump station fails, a red alarm light activates when high water levels are reached in the storage tank. Most stations are also equipped with an audio alarm. These alarms can be seen and heard from a considerable distance to alert the property owner, adjoining property owner, or local law enforcement to notify MCWD about the alarm.

807 KAR 5:071, Section 7(4), provides that the Commission may authorize a different inspection schedule than the one set out in the regulation. MCWD is proposing an alternative inspection schedule of once every three years for simplex grinder/pump stations, and once annually for duplex grinder/pump stations.⁷

Based upon a review of the evidence and being otherwise sufficiently advised, the Commission finds that although an alternative schedule is appropriate in this case, MCWD has not presented an alternative inspection schedule of grinder/pump stations which ensures that “the commission’s safety requirements are being met,” as required in 807 KAR 5:006, Section 26(8).

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

1. MCWD’s Application requesting an alternative inspection schedule for its grinder/pump stations pursuant to 807 KAR 5:071, Section 7(4), is approved in part and denied in part.
2. The proposed inspection schedule set forth in MCWD’s application is denied.
3. Simplex grinder/pump stations shall be inspected annually.

⁶ Response of McCreary County Water District to Commission Staff’s First Request for Information, (“Staff’s First Request”), Item 2.

⁷ Application at 7, paragraph 22.

4. Duplex grinder/pump stations shall be inspected annually.

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By the Commission

ENTERED
FEB 01 2018
KENTUCKY PUBLIC
SERVICE COMMISSION

ATTEST:


Executive Director

Case No. 2017-00246

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