

Rep Urged On Water Plan

Ralph Kelly Says Authority Means Economy, Efficiency

Ralph Kelly, president of the Chamber of Commerce, yesterday urged City Council to pass promptly a pending ordinance which would establish a Water and Sewer Authority.

In a lengthy presentation, Frederic D. Garman, the chamber officer called for the holding of a public hearing "at an early date." The ordinance was introduced and referred to Council Committee on Public Works several weeks ago.

Kelly stressed that he is certain an authority would give the city and its people "all the advantages of a businesslike administration and still retain public control."

"It will relieve Council and the Mayor of the day-to-day problems of this vast utility operation," Kelly wrote, "and still keep vested in them a large measure of overall responsibility."

"It will give us an improved water and sewer system, better water and more security against disaster, all with no risk to any city property, credit or revenues."

POINTS TO ADVANTAGES

Kelly, in his letter, asserted that the city and its residents are committed to public rather than private control of the system. And he pointed to the advantages that setting up authorities have brought to other governments.

Investigations by the chamber have indicated various reasons for a publicly controlled, privately financed and independently operated authority representing "the best possible way of operating these services which are so vital to the health and well-being of every one of us."

ONLY AS A METHOR

"First of all, the authority represents the best and, to my knowledge, the only way in which we can be sure to get now and in the coming years needed repairs, replacements and improvements will not be held up because funds "cannot be made available promptly," Kelly emphasized.

"Repairs and replacements now required in excess of \$84,000,000. An authority can raise the necessary funds quickly and in far less time than a city.

"The advantages of an authority in this respect are equally clear from the standpoint of long-term requirements. An authority can control the time and issuance of its bonds in the same manner as does private enterprise."

INCENTIVE FOR ECONOMY

"It can take advantage of favorable money market conditions and refund when circumstances are favorable. It will not suffer the severe handicaps concomitant with normal legislative budgets.

"Moreover, since its bonds are payable only out of water and sewer revenues, there will be every incentive to economy in operation. It will have to be met. There will be no deficit financing."

"Finally, water and sewer revenues will of necessity be applied only for water and sewer expenses, capital additions, or debt service and retirement."

REPAIRS ARE NEEDED

Regarding the present system, Kelly said that it needed repairs, replacements, and management improvements and extensions. And he added, the unmet half of the city's water system has to be met.

Action is needed promptly, he reiterated, saying that whoever is to be responsible will have to raise money, plan the work, procure materials, allocate equipment and personnel and continue the routine operations meanwhile.

"It is an amazing suggestion, coming from responsible people, that the answer to this concededly pressing and serious problem" caused by delay "is more delay," Kelly said.

"The reasons that impel the chamber to urge the action "are grounded on a civic problem of a very vital nature which affects the well-being of every citizen."

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50,000 Water Meters a Year Being Installed in Homes

By WILLIAM F. FEIST

New and re-conditioned water meters are being installed in Philadelphia homes at the rate of 50,000 annually, with prospects this figure will be increased substantially in the early part of the year, Elbert J. Taylor, chief of the Water Bureau, announced yesterday.

He said that during the last year, 25,000 meters were metered for the first time about 7000 of them being new dwellings. This leaves fewer than 200,000 homes to be metered in the city-wide metering campaign.

METERS REPAIRED

In the same period, Taylor said, 25,000 reconditioned meters were installed in homes which previously had been on meter schedule. As a result of the speed-up, the number of defective meters awaiting repairs has been reduced, although the number of such machines is still—and will remain—quite large.

"At present," said Taylor, "we have about 8000 meters undergoing repairs at the Meter Division shops. In an ordinance of City Council, installed that householders applying for meters prior to last Nov. 1 would automatically go on meters water service this year."

QUESTIONS CONTINUE

"That provision" he said, "re-sulted in a flood of applications, and are still working on those applications. Although new requests for meters have been reaching us in considerable numbers."

He said that in spite of the large number of new homes being erected here, the total number of dwellings now without meters was under 200,000 for the first time in many years.

"The report, prepared by Mrs. Tina V. Wettrub and James D. Patterson, staff members of the bureau, was released last spring and formed the basis of the present stand on the proposed Philadelphia Water and Sewer Authority. At that time the bureau urged a more thorough exploration of the proposal before it was carried out."

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Charter Meters Told Need to Tread on toes

Commission Starts Its Job with Many Ideas Proposed

The city's new Charter Commission was given a formal start, and a score of suggestions, last night as it started its job of drafting a new basic rule for Philadelphia.

He suggested that the Department of Public Utilities take over the water and sewer systems as well as transit and electric operations. Another of his proposals was for concentration of all recreational facilities in a separate department.

Speaking on financial management of the city, Elbert Taylor, president of the Citizens Council on City Planning, also recommended a lightening-up of present charges provisions concerning use of capital funds for maintenance work of temporary improvements.

Two Fields of Thought

Dr. J. C. Phillips, associate professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, attributed "the present spirited drive" for new charter to "two diametrically opposed political philosophies."

One, he said, is the "spoils system" adherence of the typical party organization. The other is represented by "good government" associations, is characterized by faith in the merit system and free participation by the people in government, he added.

White Urges City Manager

The suggestions heard by the guests ranged from one for the abolition of the city-manager plan of government here to the proposed elimination of the City Transit and City Architect's Department. Also recommended was the revamping of the municipal personnel system through establishment of a system centralized under the mayor.

Thomas Raeburn White, one of the authors of the 1919 charter now in effect, urged the charter Commission to consider the city-manager plan. The present "strong mayor" type, he pointed out, was adopted here in 1888 when the population was less than one million population. Its annual expenditures were only a little more than \$11,000,000.

"Under the present system," White said, "it is impossible for a mayor to give a purely business administration. He is bound to recognize the political associates who assisted in electing him."

"In other words, the administration is essentially a political administration and for that reason mistakes are made such as have been made in the last few recent months in Philadelphia."

Smaller Council Asked

In connection with the city-manager proposal, White also recommended the election of committees-at-large, instead of by districts, and suggested that guarantees be placed in the new charter to provide minority representation. "He also asked for a smaller council, suggesting 15 as the maximum membership."

Receiver of Taxes W. Frank Marston said "that his opinion on the real trouble" when he recently answered critics of his administration by saying that the city "in his office were "due to the fact that he could not select his subordinates."

Marston said he was obliged to accept the recommendation of politicians."

Frank C. Roberts, president of the Council of Municipal Research, suggested a reorganization of the city's service system with a committee composed of members elected by the presidents of the city's leaders' colleges. This would aid him in "divorcing the selection of a civil service commission from ordinary political considerations."

City to Construct New Water Plant

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Plans for installation of a \$2,400,000 water treatment plant on Fox street in the Queen Lane district, which will be a six-story high and house chemicals and feeding equipment. Contracts for this work will be awarded in the near future.

The new treatment plant should give Philadelphia in the water department of the City improved drinking water.

The plant will receive Schuylkill River water and will thoroughly prepare it for entrance to filters, which will be financed by the plant. The plant will be a normal capacity of 120 million gallons every 24 hours. Its overload capacity, however, will be 25 percent above this amount.

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The City has signed a contract with Progressive Builders, Inc. for construction of the plant and for the erection of two stories of an administration building at the site, Queen Lane and Fox st. The expenditure is \$240,000.

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When completed, this will be the most thoroughly modern plant and will be one of the largest in the eastern United States," Samuel said.

The contract provides for the construction of tunnels connecting under Fox st. to the present plant, chemical feeders with mechanism for chemicals and equipment for removal of settled sludge.

Bids for construction of the treatment plant were received in 1942 but were delayed because of the war.

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12 Million Asked For City Water

Buckley Asks Council For Funds from Loan

A request by Director of Public Works for approval of a \$12-million loan fund for improvement of the water system, was forwarded today to City Council by Mayor Samuel.

Approval of the funds would enable the department to go ahead with its large-scale capital improvement program of the water system, Buckley said. The funds are to be used for all phases, from planning to construction.

Buckley also asked authorization to enter into contracts to extend the main Castor av. sewer from the end of the avenue at Delaware av. to the bulkhead line of the Delaware River.

Permission to lay water pipes in Monument av. from Ford road to City av. and along City av. to a point 1300 feet eastward, also was asked by Buckley.

Residential development in that area makes the water pipes necessary, Buckley said.

The department has exhausted funds for improvement of Eslington av. from the Delaware County line at Bow Creek to Island av. A part of the Industrial forms Buckley asked authorization to transfer other loan funds to the work.

A request by Earle N. Barber, chairman of the Redevelopment Authority, for passage of several resolutions making application for preliminary and final advances of \$200,000 from the Federal Housing and Home Agency, was forwarded to the council by the mayor. He said the resolutions are "necessary steps in the city's participation in the federal program."

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