

**Avoyelles Parish Drinking Water Protection Committee Meeting  
June 29, 2004**

In attendance:

*Carolyn Bordelon – Mansura*

*Connie Ducote – Mansura*

*Mike Gonzales – Bunkie*

*Janet Gros – Marksville*

*Joyce Prier – Marksville*

*Micaela Marchand – DEQ*

*Jesse Means – DEQ*

*Frank Palermo – Southwest Avoyelles*

*Jerry Smith, Chairman – Marksville*

1. Meeting called to order.
  
2. Ordinance Discussion –  
Jerry Smith informed the Committee that the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury passed the drinking water protection ordinance. He then told the Committee how the town council meeting in Moreauville went and that there will be three public hearings on the ordinance in Moreauville. The Committee then discussed the ways different municipalities conduct their business. Jesse Means brought up the fact that there is a pretty busy schedule of town council meetings and public hearings where the ordinance will be brought up for Moreauville, Mansura, and Simmesport. He expressed the opinion that the Committee should try to have someone at each meeting. Connie Ducote asked if Mansura's town attorney knows that the ordinance will come up again there and if she understands it. Mr. Means said that DEQ did speak to her about it and that she had indicated that she understood what the ordinance was about and that she supports it. Ms. Ducote said that the town attorney for Mansura was concerned with the administration of the ordinance. Mr. Smith said it shouldn't be a problem for Mansura. He said that his office (Department of Health and Hospitals or DHH) would assist the various towns in the parish with oversight of the ordinance. He then went over the Department of Transportation and Development's (DOTD) well registration process. He said that there are well regulations in place and that he'll contact DOTD and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) about the Avoyelles Parish ordinance. He said

that he wants to work out a way to notify people that install new wells in the parish about the ordinance's requirements with DOTD and/or DNR. He stated that he believes that Avoyelles Parish can use DOTD's well registration form and asked the Committee's opinion on this. Everyone state that they liked the idea. He said he'd call DOTD to see if they can help. Mike Gonzales asked how the local DHH office will know when a new well is being installed to which Jerry Smith replied that he hopes that DOTD or DNR's Office of Conservation will help. Frank Palermo said the location of the wells is the main concern. Mr. Gonzales asked how the parish DHH would get this information. Mr. Smith said that they get it now for electricity connections, which is after the well is drilled, but that he hopes working with the DOTD well registry would help find out this information prior to drilling. Micaela Marchand said that the ordinance says that the parish must be notified of new well locations, but how will people drilling wells know this? Mike Gonzales said that people probably wouldn't know of these requirements, but that ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Jerry Smith said that the public must be informed of the requirements and that he thinks talking to DNR's Office of Conservation will help. Jesse Means said that someone at DNR or DOTD must be willing to help, because it may take someone from those agencies adding something to their normal operating process. He expressed a concern that someone at the state level may not be willing to do this. Jerry Smith said that Chip Johnson with the Avoyelles Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness is aware that he may be doing something extra and is willing to take on the added responsibility. Micaela Marchand asked if DEQ could talk to someone at DNR or DOTD. Jesse Means asked for clarification on which one of those two agencies are doing exactly what with regards to water wells because they've both undergone some changes. Ms. Marchand and Mr. Smith explained that DOTD is still administering well registration and that DNR is looking at well placement. Ms. Marchand what DNR is doing is new, so this could be a good time to get with them about Avoyelles Parish. Mr. Means said that DEQ should contact them as well as Mr. Smith. Ms. Marchand asked if there are construction permits for new businesses and Mr. Smith said that there were parish permits. Jesse Means said that with two agencies working with water wells (DNR and DOTD), between the two the Committee and DEQ

should be able to find someone that would cooperate. Micaela Marchand said that DEQ should go to the meetings of DNR's new commission dealing with ground water. Jerry Smith asked if there could be any other ways to enforce that ordinance, like maybe having a parish well registry, that would inform his office about new wells. He said this issue will come up soon 'cause Marksville will have new wells soon. He, Mike Gonzales, and Janet Gros then spoke about the new wells that will be drilled in Odenburg and how the bid process is going. Jesse Means then asked if DEQ and Committee attendance of the upcoming town council meetings could be split up. The Committee agreed and worked out who would go to which meetings, in addition to whoever else could make the meetings. Frank Palermo would attend Moreauville's July 5th meeting. It was brought up that this is a state holiday and that the meeting may not be held that day. On July 12, Mr. Palermo and Micaela Marchand would attend Moreauville's meeting, Jesse Means and Jerry Smith would attend Mansura's meeting, and Howard Fielding would attend Simmesport's meeting. The Committee also decided to contact Frank Bordelon about the Simmesport meeting. On July 19, Mr. Smith, Mr. Means, and Ms. Marchand would attend the Moreauville meeting.

3. Open Discussion – Janet Gros asked if the Committee would still meet after all the ordinance work is complete. Jerry Smith said that he'd like the Committee to continue working because there are always other things that can be done. Mike Gonzales would like signs to be put up at the main entrances to the parish that read something like "We Are A Safe Drinking Water Parish." The Committee agreed that this would be a good idea and DEQ said they could look into this matter. Jesse Means went over the list of accomplishments the Committee has achieved so far and brought up the idea of having a celebratory meeting for the next meeting. He suggested having a cookout, and the Committee agreed. The date of July 26 was chosen (this was later changed to July 27) and Jerry Smith said he'd try to get the Cottonport Bank Camp for the event. Mr. Means next informed the Committee that he and Micaela Marchand would be starting another drinking water program in another parish soon and that they may not be able to attend all of the Committee's meetings due to time constraints. He stated that

DEQ would like the Committee to continue to operate and that he and Ms. Marchand would like to continue attending meetings as much as possible. He said that DEQ will always be available for support. He also asked the Committee to consider the mechanisms by which it could continue to meet and to think about fully taking over keeping the minutes, sending out reminders, setting the meeting time and agenda for each meeting. The Committee considered this and decided to try and become part of the Avoyelles Parish Water Operator's Group. Connie Ducote expressed the opinion that it's important for the Committee to continue because it's getting people from different areas of the parish together. Mike Gonzales said he'd like DEQ to get an article together about the work done in Avoyelles Parish that can be published in the Louisiana Rural Water Association magazine. The Committee then discussed where they could put signs up around the border of the parish that say Avoyelles Parish is a safe drinking water parish, or something to that extent. Mr. Means asked the Committee to go ahead and set a time for the next working meeting, and it was set for Tuesday, September 21 and 6:00 PM in Moreauville. The Committee then discussed who would bring what for the upcoming cookout.

4. Meeting adjourned.