

LOCAL

WATER: Water restrictions could be lifted in two weeks, all depends on electricity, TCEQ tests

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placed a \$5,000 sod job in Whitehouse recently. However, now water restrictions are causing the sod to dry up.

"We're getting ready to sell our house on the market and I think it hurts the appearance to sell," Dyess said. "What do you do when your grass dies, do you till it up and start over?"

Dyess also said it would be better to water in the morning when the grass is dewy, which is about 5:30 a.m.

But city officials have said that peak times for water use are when residents are getting ready for work, which is from about 5:30 a.m. to 8 a.m.

City Manager Larry Morgan said he is hoping that the water restrictions will be lifted in two weeks, at the very least. A new water well near Peach Tree Oak Hurst Golf Course should be online and send pressurized water to the water tower.

Morgan said the new pump will give enough water to Bullard residents for the next

five to 10 years, considering there is not an unprecedented growth spurt in Bullard.

What is happening right now is the three pumps that are online cannot pump enough water during peak periods, City utility director Mark Barker said.

"If we had a water main break or a big fire, we wouldn't have any water left."

But Morgan said water levels are a little higher, but the city is going to continue to take preventative measures until well six is online.

The well still needs electricity and the water will need to be tested by TCEQ. Morgan also said that the new well will have clearer water with less iron content because it is a deeper well.

But looking into the future, Morgan said water could be bought from a neighboring city like Tyler or Jacksonville.

"There are less overhead costs involved," he said.

But this approach con-



Photo by Jim Epperson

The storage tank at the city's new waterwell will be online soon, once the well receives electricity and TCEQ approval.

cerns some residents like Dyess.

"Isn't that what happened to Whitehouse?" he asked.

The Tri-County Leader

reported that Whitehouse commitment to water wells after renegotiating its water contract with the City of Tyler.

After a review of its rate struc-

ture, Tyler initially presented the city with a new contract with dramatic increases.

"If we had signed the first agreement they put in front of

us, it would have more than doubled the cost of water ... and locked us in for 40 years," Jed Dillingham, financial director told the Tri-County Leader.

MAYOR: Direction of council unknown, but special election unlikely

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election.

Will the mayor pro tempore be mayor?

Bullard Mayor Pro Tempore Rodger Johnson has been endorsed by a city council woman Pam Frederick as mayor, a position that is vacant after A.W. Hines resigned from the post early on Aug. 1.

Just because Johnson has been endorsed and holds the mayor pro temp position does not mean he is a shoe in to the mayor spot. Johnson's election as mayor might not happen because of a recent split in the council.

In May, Council woman Stacey Thompson nominated Council woman Teresa Adams-Wilks as the mayor pro tempore, but Wilks did not receive a second on the motion, which was needed for her to be con-

sidered.

Pam Frederick, Rodger Johnson and Lindsey Bradley did not give the second. Johnson then was nominated and remained the mayor pro tempore.

If this split continues—between Thompson and Wilks and the rest of the members—then action on a new mayor could be halted in the city council meeting Aug. 12. Thompson has been outspoken saying she would rather vote for Wilks than Johnson as mayor. According to state law, a candidate for mayor cannot vote for him or herself. Since Johnson cannot vote for himself the votes would be two for and two against Roger Johnson, assuming Wilks would vote against Johnson.

"They need a majority vote

for mayor," City Attorney Charles Morton had said in a previous interview.

But the council can vote to take no action on the mayor. According to the Texas Municipal League this is common practice among cities.

"Many cities do not have a mayor right now," said Bennett Sandlin, general council for the league.

Special Election

Former mayor Connie Vaughan said he can since Bullard citizens are uneasy and predicted to the Bullard Banner News that a special election might be coming.

"From what I am hearing from citizens on the street, I'm getting an idea that there will be a strong possibility of a special election," Vaughan said.

State law allows a group of

26 citizens to call a special election by signing and filing a petition with the county. But according to Sandlin, the law is not on the citizens' side. He said that the special election clause in state law can only be used in cases when the council is practically paralyzed.

"We interpret," Sandlin said, "that it's really used when the council cannot act because they do not even have a majority to vote."

City Councilwoman Pam Frederick said she does not think there should be a special election in November. She said it would be a waste of taxpayers' money to pay for an election so close to the end of Mayor Hines' term. At the end of Hines' term in May, there would be another election.

"That's not fair," Frederick

said. "I think we (the counsel) should make the decision together, but we're all going to do what is best for our city."

Council woman Stacey Thompson disagrees. Thompson said if the council cannot agree then there should be a special election.

Thompson said the cost for a special election is \$4,000 and she asked the city financier if there was money in the next budget for it. She said there is.

"If the city can afford an Eagle Bluff membership; we

can afford a special election needed to elect a mayor," she said.

Former mayor John Lofton and former council member Gerald Jessup both questioned why a special election should be called. They both said in separate interviews that the more natural choice would be to allow the mayor pro tempore to take over the position.

Next Budget meeting set for Aug. 11

The city of Bullard is able to free up some money in the general fund after property and sales taxes increase over the last three years.

More than two years ago, the city was paying debt out of the general fund because taxes were not high enough to cover the cost, city accountant Randy Gorom said. But with a tax increase Gorom said the extra money in the general fund will be sucked up by higher gas and electricity prices.

Salary increases of five percent have for most city employees.

The next budget workshop will be 6 p.m. Aug. 11 at city hall.

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