

## Winkler Water Supply turned 50 in 2018!

For 50 years a small community of neighbors has succeeded in performing an amazing task. They have created, sustained and expanded a nonprofit organization that provides safe drinking water to an area not served by municipal or district water utilities. And all of this has been and continues to be accomplished with volunteers. *Neighbors helping neighbors: what a story!*

At last year's annual member meeting, you elected four new Directors who had never served on the board, and I speak for the others when saying we greatly appreciate the knowledge and leadership Betsy Metcalf provided during this transition year.

We are also fortunate that previous Boards and Members understood aging infrastructure would need increased maintenance, repairs, and even replacement. They wisely followed the financial and operating guidelines furnished by regulatory agencies responsible for water supply corporations. Over the decades, Winkler Water Supply accumulated reserve or restricted-use accounts from equity buy-in fees, developers and infrastructure depreciation. The purpose of these accounts is to provide for future infrastructure needs.

In order to better understand the needs of our aging infrastructure, Winkler Water Supply contracted with an engineering firm to perform a system-wide Hydraulic Pressure Study. That engineering study is now complete and we are using it to create a 20-year strategic plan as well as a shorter-term maintenance/replacement plan. As information becomes available it will be posted on [www.winklerwater.com](http://www.winklerwater.com).

Many of you may have noticed the work being done on the metal building that housed the old treatment plant. This building deteriorated to the point that it was in danger of collapsing. Repairs were made and the board is evaluating the feasibility of creating a new administrative office and maintenance area within the facility. This project is an example of the type of infrastructure upgrades that reserve/restricted funds can be used for. If approved, the expenditure will "buy" Winkler Water Supply another asset – a capital improvement.

In addition to reserving the appropriate funds needed to address aging plants, lines and equipment, the Board of Directors and Members are responsible for managing operating income (monthly water sales and fees) and operating expenses. Restricted or reserve funds cannot be used to make up for losses if

operating expenses are greater than operating income. Instead, expenses need to be cut and/or rates need to be increased. Winkler Water has not increased the amount charged for water since August 2007, but during that same period the costs of chemicals, supplies and other operating items have continued to increase. Since 2007, Tarrant Regional Water District increased the amount they charge us for water by 98.25%.

No decisions have been made about rate increases, but we believe we would be remiss in our duty if we do not examine water rates and fees in the near future. We understand that water from Winkler Water Supply is more expensive than the water others receive from neighboring providers. Please keep in mind when making comparisons that Winkler Water Supply must pay TRWD to pump water from the lake, treat it and distribute it over miles of water lines – some of which have few customers on them. Treating surface water is more expensive than treating ground water, and providing water to 354 connections over a large service area is more expensive than providing water to a smaller, more densely populated area.

You are always welcome at board meetings! They are usually held at the Southern Oaks Volunteer Fire Station on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Please check our website at [www.winklerwater.com](http://www.winklerwater.com) for each month's notice and agenda. If you cannot make the meetings, you can read the minutes on the website as soon as they are approved and signed. As your representative, the Board of Directors seeks to be as transparent as possible in its decisions and procedures and we encourage you to attend meetings and check the website often.

Respectfully yours,

Glenn E. Walser, President

Winkler Water Supply Board of Directors

Bob Cornish, Vice President

Elizabeth (Betsy) Metcalf, Secretary/Treasurer

Barbara Kubinski, Director

Lisa A. Tynes, Director