

**SOAH DOCKET NO. 582-22-0585
TCEQ DOCKET NO. 2021-1001-MWD**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE
APPLICATION BY THE CITY OF
GRANBURY FOR
TPDES PERMIT NO.
WQ0015821001**

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**BEFORE THE STATE OFFICE

OF

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS**

**DIRECT EXAMINATION OF RICK CROWNOVER
BY THE CITY OF GRANBURY**

FEBRUARY 18, 2022

DIRECT EXAMINATION OF
RICK CROWNOVER

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1 I. INTRODUCTION

2 Q. Mr. Crownover, what is your full name?

3 A. Rick Crownover.

4 Q. You are currently employed with the City of Granbury, correct?

5 A. That is correct.

6 Q. What is your position at the City of Granbury?

7 A. I am the Director of Public Works.

8 Q. How long have you worked for the City of Granbury?

9 A. I have worked for the City of Granbury for approximately six years.

10 Q. What are your duties as Director of Public Works?

11 A. I oversee the strategic and day-to-day operations of the City of Granbury's
12 Public Works Department as it relates to electrical, streets, water, and
13 wastewater system operations.

14 Q. Can you please explain to the judges what the Public Works
15 Department is and what it does?

16 A. The Public Works Department is the main administrative office providing
17 supervision, direction, engineering, and coordination in overseeing the
18 electrical, streets, water, and wastewater system operations.

1 **II. EXISTING WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT**

2 **Q. Mr. Crownover, from your vantage point of the Public Works**
3 **Director, how has the city’s wastewater treatment capacity changed**
4 **since the beginning of your tenure?**

5 A. The growth has been significant. We have an existing wastewater treatment
6 plant, what we refer to as the South Wastewater Treatment Plant, that has met
7 the City’s needs for years. When I arrived in May of 2016, though, the system
8 was already feeling the strains of increased wastewater treatment demand.
9 Those demands have increased significantly since then, so much so that we find
10 ourselves in desperate need for expanded capacity.

11 **Q. Explain the process that the City’s gone through to address the**
12 **wastewater treatment capacity problem.**

13 A. We commissioned a wastewater system study back in 2017. That study looked
14 at our existing demands and what we anticipated seeing as far as demand
15 growth into the future. The study also identified several existing wastewater
16 collection issues within the system that were causing problems for the City’s
17 wastewater treatment system overall.

18 **Q. What kind of collection issues?**

19 A. One of the biggest issues was the condition and capabilities of several key lift
20 stations. The wet well for lift station number seven was no longer capable of
21 handling system surges, causing backups in the collection system upstream of
22 it. But the gravity flow downstream of the lift station was overwhelmed during
23 big storm surges. Lift station number 23 was also having trouble. It simply was

1 not big enough to handle the capacity of the service area it was serving. We
2 need more pumping capacity at lift station number 23, but it's upstream of lift
3 station number seven. We can't improve lift efficiencies and capacity upstream
4 of lift station number seven unless we address the capacity issues at that lift
5 station first. The main lift station is also nearing capacity due to system growth.
6 A substantial part of the capacity strains on lift station number 23 and seven
7 and the main lift station is coming from demand growth on the east side of the
8 city. More effluent is coming from that area than what the lift stations were
9 designed to accommodate. That creates backups and overflows when the
10 system is taxed even more in wet weather. We learned that we weren't going to
11 be able to solve these problems with band aids or even just line improvements.
12 We had to do something about the growing demands stemming from rapid
13 growth on the east side of town.

14 **Q. That's in addition to the capacity challenges at the South**
15 **Wastewater Treatment Plant?**

16 A. That's right. The collection system is overwhelmed by the growing volumes of
17 effluent that have to be moved from the east part of Granbury all the way across
18 town to the South Wastewater Treatment Plant, only to arrive at a treatment
19 plant that doesn't have the capacity to handle more growth in demand.

20 **Q. What did the City conclude at the end of the wastewater system**
21 **study?**

22 A. The study analyzed several alternative solutions, ranging from upgrading the
23 existing plant capacity to replacing it entirely to expanding with a new facility.

1 We looked at the costs, environmental issues, and practicalities of each.
2 Ultimately, we decided to proceed with the option of expanding treatment
3 capacity by constructing the East Wastewater Treatment Plant. By treating
4 wastewater at the East plant, we would be treating the effluent much closer to
5 the source of demand and also taking a great deal of capacity strains off of the
6 collection system downstream of the new plant. At that point, we worked with
7 our engineering consultants to put together our application to the TCEQ for a
8 TPDES permit for the East Wastewater Treatment Plant.

9 **Q. What engineering consultants are your referring to?**

10 A. The City of Granbury retained enprotec / Hibbs & Todd, Inc., also known as
11 eHT, to conduct the wastewater study and to assist with the application for the
12 wastewater treatment plant.

13 **III. NEW WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT TPDES APPLICATION**

14 **Q. Please look at the document marked COG Exhibit 101. Do you**
15 **recognize this?**

16 A. I do. It's an update presentation given to the Granbury City Council in August
17 of 2021 regarding the wastewater system study and the status of the City's
18 TPDES permit application for the East Plant. It bears a seal of the City of
19 Granbury indicating that it's a certified copy of the presentation.

20 **Q. Does COG Exhibit 101 fairly and accurately represent the**
21 **presentation given to the Granbury City Council on August 3, 2021?**

22 A. It does. I was there when it was presented.

1 **THE CITY OF GRANBURY OFFERS COG EXHIBIT 101 FOR ADMISSION INTO**
2 **EVIDENCE.**

3 **Q. Mr. Crownover, COG Exhibit 101 contains what appears to be a**
4 **comprehensive summary of the wastewater study results,**
5 **alternatives analysis, and permitting effort. Is this an accurate**
6 **summary?**

7 A. It is. It accurately describes the process that the city went through from the
8 start of the Wastewater System Study all the way through last summer. It also
9 provides an accurate summary of the proposed East Wastewater Treatment
10 Plant design, the application process, the City's efforts to provide information
11 to the public, as well as the status of construction at the South Wastewater
12 Treatment Plant.

13 **Q. I'd like for you to take a look at a document that has already been**
14 **admitted as Admin Record Exhibit A, and specifically look at the**
15 **pages marked Admin Record-0209 through the end at 512. Is this**
16 **part of Admin Record Exhibit A what you are referring to as the**
17 **City's application to TCEQ?**

18 A. It is.

19 **Q. On May 4, 2020, the TCEQ Executive Director issued a draft permit**
20 **in response to the application. Have you reviewed the draft permit?**

21 A. I have, several times.

1 **Q. I'm handing you a document taken out of Admin Record Exhibit A,**
2 **specifically the pages marked Admin Record-0113 through 0183.**
3 **I'm marking it as COG Exhibit 102. Do you recognize this document?**

4 A. I do. It's the draft permit that the Executive Director issued in response to the
5 City's application.

6 **THE CITY OF GRANBURY OFFERS COG EXHIBIT 102 FOR ADMISSION INTO**
7 **EVIDENCE.**

8 **Q. Can you describe the East Wastewater Treatment Plant project to**
9 **the judges?**

10 A. I can. The City of Granbury is proposing to construct a new wastewater
11 treatment plant at 3121 Old Granbury Road. The project will be located on
12 property owned by the City of Granbury to the southeast of Rucker Creek and
13 Lake Granbury. Until February of 2020, the facility property and the properties
14 around it were zoned either heavy commercial or light commercial. On
15 February 4, 2020, the City Council approved a change in zoning for the Bennet
16 RV Ranch property to multi-family with specific use. The East Wastewater
17 Treatment Plant will be located on the eastern bank of an unnamed tributary
18 of Rucker Creek. It will discharge treated wastewater effluent from an outfall
19 into that unnamed tributary that flows into Rucker Creek, then on to Lake
20 Granbury. The East Plant will be constructed in two phases. The first phase
21 will be designed to discharge up to 1.0 million gallons of treated wastewater
22 effluent per day. The second phase will expand the project to discharge up to
23 2.0 million gallons of treated wastewater effluent per day.

1 **Q. Please look at the document I've marked as COG Exhibit 103. Do you**
2 **recognize this document?**

3 A. I do. It's the survey of the proposed facility property at 3121 Old Granbury
4 Road, Granbury, Texas 76049. This bears the seal of Timothy G. Martin, a
5 Registered Professional Land Surveyor, and it bears the seal of the City of
6 Granbury indicating that it is a certified copy.

7 **Q. Is COG Exhibit 103 a true and correct copy of the survey of the**
8 **proposed East Wastewater Treatment Plant property site?**

9 A. It is.

10 **THE CITY OF GRANBURY OFFERS COG EXHIBIT 103 FOR ADMISSION INTO**
11 **EVIDENCE.**

12 **Q. Turning back to COG Exhibit 101, there's a reference on page 21 to a**
13 **"non-required" meeting held by the city with who are referred to as**
14 **"affected landowners". What type of meeting is this referring to?**

15 A. We felt that it was important to visit with the property owners around the
16 facility property and give them an opportunity to ask questions, express
17 concerns, and also just learn about the project.

18 **Q. The reference notes that the meeting was not required by TCEQ.**
19 **How did you communicate the nature of the meeting to the nearby**
20 **landowners?**

21 A. I sent out letters to about 15 property owners letting them know about the
22 application and the project and inviting them to a meeting at City Hall to
23 discuss it.

1 **Q. I'm handing you what has been marked as COG Exhibit 104. Do you**
2 **recognize this document?**

3 A. Yes. It is the collection of a copy of the letters I just referred to. It has the seal
4 of the City of Granbury indicating that it's a certified copy of the letters.

5 **Q. Are the copies of letters in COG Exhibit 104 each a true and accurate**
6 **copy of the letters you mailed to each of the noted property owners?**

7 A. They are, yes.

8 **THE CITY OF GRANBURY OFFERS COG EXHIBIT 104 FOR ADMISSION INTO**
9 **EVIDENCE.**

10 **Q. It looks like you mailed each of the letters to surrounding**
11 **landowners on October 28, 2019. Is that correct?**

12 A. It is.

13 **Q. And the letters report that the meeting was scheduled to be held on**
14 **November 14, 2019, at 6:00 PM. Did that landowners' meeting**
15 **actually occur?**

16 A. It did. We had two landowners attend. I was hoping for more.

17 **Q. Did you organize the meeting?**

18 A. The City Manager, Chris Coffman, and I organized it with the help of the project
19 engineers from eHT.

20 **Q. Who at eHT is part of the East Wastewater Treatment Plant project?**

21 A. The project manager for the application at eHT is Luci Dunn. Joshua Berryhill
22 is the primary engineer responsible for designing the overall project. He was
23 closely assisted by Chris Hay.

1 **Q. Why did the City of Granbury retain eHT to apply for the TPDES**
2 **permit on its behalf?**

3 A. The City of Granbury and I, as the Director of Public Works, take our
4 obligations to serving the citizens of Granbury seriously. We want to ensure
5 that everything about this new wastewater treatment plant is done correctly,
6 from the design of the plant to ensuring the health and safety of the community
7 to properly applying for the TPDES permit. We defer to experts in the field to
8 aid us in these efforts.

9 **Q. How important is this project to the City?**

10 A. It is very important. The project is absolutely necessary for the City of Granbury
11 to meet its obligations as a municipal retail sewer service provider to serve our
12 rapidly growing customer base. The lack of capacity has brought development
13 in this city to a halt. It's forced the Granbury City Council to pass a building
14 moratorium in 2020 and extend it three times since then. Building
15 development is not allowed across the city now, and it's a direct result of waiting
16 on the draft permit to get issued and waiting on the East plant to be built and
17 come online.

18 **Q. Take a look at the documents I've marked as COG Exhibit 105, COG**
19 **Exhibit 106, COG Exhibit 107, and COG Exhibit 108. Do you**
20 **recognize each of these documents?**

21 A. I do. These are the four different building moratoria that the Granbury City
22 Council has passed to restrict development on account of our wastewater
23 treatment capacity limits. COG Exhibit 105 was the first building ban that

1 prohibited development in the eastern part of the city. COG Exhibit 106
2 extended the time of the building ban and extended the ban to cover the entire
3 city. COG Exhibits 107 and 108 are the most recent extensions of the city-wide
4 building ban. These each bear the seal of the City of Granbury indicating that
5 they're certified copies.

6 **THE CITY OF GRANBURY OFFERS COG EXHIBIT 105, COG EXHIBIT 106, COG**
7 **EXHIBIT 107, AND COG EXHIBIT 108 FOR ADMISSION INTO EVIDENCE.**

8 **Q. Mr. Crownover, speaking as the Director of Public Works for the**
9 **City of Granbury, does the City of Granbury intend to comply with**
10 **the terms and conditions of COG Exhibit 102 if it were to be issued?**

11 A. Of course it does.

12 **Q. Does the city have the technical capability to safely and effectively**
13 **operate and maintain the East Wastewater Treatment Plant that is**
14 **proposed in the draft permit?**

15 A. It does. I have some of the finest employees of any public works department I
16 know. My plant operator is very good at what he does. The struggles the city
17 has faced with overflows historically can be attributed as much to our
18 constraints on collection and treatment capacity as anything else.

19 **Q. Thank you, Mr. Crownover.**

20 **THE CITY OF GRANBURY HAS NO FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR THIS**
21 **WITNESS AT THIS TIME.**

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IV. EXHIBITS LIST

- 2 COG Exhibit 101
- 3 COG Exhibit 102
- 4 COG Exhibit 103
- 5 COG Exhibit 104
- 6 COG Exhibit 105
- 7 COG Exhibit 106
- 8 COG Exhibit 107
- 9 COG Exhibit 108