

## Concerning Reservoir Cleaning

email from Jim Patton - 6/6/2014

Folks – FYI .... in preparation for cleaning our reservoir tank once a year King Water shuts off our well pump two or three days before they enter the tank to clean it. The tank has to be nearly empty when they go inside. We don't want to waste 20,000 gallons of filtered water so we "gradually" lower the water level through normal daily use after the well pump is turned OFF. We typically use about 5,000 gallons a day and that is considered "normal" by King so they left at least a two day supply in the tank early this week. Unfortunately, the letter that they sent to our members advising them about the cleaning date, etc. didn't discourage water use beyond "normal."

The use of water during the two days before cleaning was well above normal and the tank went completely dry on Wednesday night. Distribution pressure dropped to near zero and whatever "sludge" that had accumulated just above the standpipe in the bottom of the tank was pumped into the system. King had disabled the red warning light on the south side of the pump house that would have alerted that the tank was running dry. That is routine procedure – assuming normal usage just before cleaning. The water level marker on the north side of the tank had been disconnected for repairs to be made when they got inside the tank. There was no external indication that we were running completely out of water.

Responding to the drop in water pressure, Rudy Deck, Robert Elphick and I entered the pump house at midnight to find that even the water in the pressure tank had been pumped out – and all four distribution pumps were running "on air!" The safety electrode that is supposed to protect the pumps by turning them off when there is no water to pump had failed. The distribution pumps were immediately turned OFF and the well pump was turned ON to restore at least the water in the pressure tank and some minimal pressure in the distribution lines. Very fortunately, the distribution pumps were not damaged (at least we hope not!). King quickly responded to our night-time trouble call and took over the job of restoring the system to normal operating condition. Their team cleaned the tank yesterday and repaired the external water level marker and the pump protection electrode.

Power is ON to the red warning light. I met with Sandra (King's owner) today and she agreed to modify their notices about reservoir tank cleaning to emphasize the need to keep water usage to "normal" in the few days just before scheduled cleanings.

Warm regards, Jim