

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Sandy Rummel, Chair, Patty Acomb, Jeffrey Berg, Jeanne Daniels, Randy Ellingboe, Georg Fischer, Glen Gerads, Todd Gerhardt, Phil Klein, Susan Morris, Catherine Neuschler, Michael Robinson, Steve Schneider, Jamie Schurbon, Barry Stock

Committee Members Absent:

Mark Daleiden, Dean Lotter, Lisa Volbrecht

Guest Presenters:

Vanessa Demuth, Dakota County
Nikol Ross, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Brennon Schaefer, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Rummel called the regular meeting of the Council's MAWSAC Committee to order at 1:02 p.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Susan Morris, seconded by Steve Schneider to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Philip Klein, seconded by Catherine Neuschler to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2017 regular meeting of the MAWSAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

TAC UPDATE

Staff member David Brown, Senior Engineer from the MCES Water Supply Planning group provided an update of the Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee in place of Chair Mark Maloney who was unable to attend. The topic for the May 2, 2017 TAC Committee meeting was collaboration. The participants discussed in small groups some good examples of local collaborations, reasons for collaboration, factors they have seen in successful collaboration, room for improvement, challenges and barriers to collaboration, and opportunities for water supply collaboration in the Metro Area. Staff shared information from a May 2012 American Water Works Association report regarding water and wastewater collaboration across the nation. The group discussed examples of collaboration in the Metro area which included the Minnesota Suburban Utilities Superintendents Association who meet monthly, the Inflow and Infiltration Task Force, the Minnesota City Stormwater Commission and the Metropolitan Council Water Supply Workgroups. Reasons for collaboration included mutual understanding of emergent issues. It was stated there is great benefit to share ideas, common goals, and responding to regulations. There was also a benefit to having a common voice while discussing topics with agencies, the legislature, and the Governor. Factors for successful collaboration included agreement on goals and outcomes, funding, good leadership, and good communication. Areas for improvement included developing and maintaining common goals, conclusive solutions, big challenges and barriers, preconceived differences between facts and risks, defensive partners, busy people which makes it challenging to get up to speed on subject areas being discussed, developing trust, and funding constraints. Suggestions for improvements that could be considered for subregional water supply work group collaboration frameworks included learning why some stakeholders are not participating, focus on having outcome-based

work in order to see goals and outcomes, identifying a trust organization to serve as a clearing house for resources to be shared.

Questions/Comments:

No comments or questions at this time.

INFORMATION

1. Dakota County Groundwater Monitoring: Collaborating for Results –Vanessa Demuth, Dakota County and Nikol Ross and Brennon Schaefer, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Vanessa Demuth from Dakota County and Nikol Ross and Brennon Schaefer from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture presented drinking water quality results from the ongoing Ambient Groundwater Quality Study, the Targeted Township Study (a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture) and the WIISE (Wells and Increased Infant Sensitivity Study and Exposure) Study, a pilot project with the Minnesota Department of Health.

Since 2013, the MDA's Township Testing Program has collaborated with local partners to sample private drinking water wells for nitrate. The nitrate results will be used to determine the next steps. During follow-up sampling, both nitrate and pesticides are sampled for. The 2015 pesticide results from the community public water supply reconnaissance will also be discussed.

Questions/Comments:

A Committee member inquired if city water wells were ok. Ms. Demuth stated for the most part they are, except Hastings wells where there are high levels of Nitrogen detected.

If we didn't have chemicals as a result of human interaction, would there be natural contamination from natural sources? Yes, there would be naturally occurring manganese and there are also arsenic levels above the drinking water standards. Residents have been made aware and are sampling to monitor.

What is being done to educate those who have private wells since water is unable to be treated? Part of the project is educating home owners. If a private well owner decides to test through the program, a letter is sent with treatment advice and recommend a licensed installer for water treatment devices (reverse osmosis, carbon filters, manganese water softeners). No financial assistance is provided.

Is there a sense of how many homeowners have installed treatment? Many homeowners do not understand the question when asked if they have installed. Surveys have been inconclusive.

The data shown today shows concerns with water coming directly out of the ground. When looking at concentrations and pollutants they differ geographically and in neighborhoods. There are many private wells in the Metropolitan area, some need a system installed to meet health criteria.

Has Dakota County considered before property is transferred that the water is tested with proper installation of treatment? At this time, Dakota County is the only county that requires water testing at the time of property transfer for nitrate and coliform bacteria. When a new well is drilled it is required that testing is done before activation of the well. It is unknown if compliance has been 100% at this time.

Committee Member Ellingboe clarified that compliance levels for testing of private wells has a high rate and is required by state law. The vulnerability of aquifers is important data and reflects a need

to continue discussions related to information gathered. We need to talk regularly about wellhead protection for private wells as well where the contaminants are moving from the land surface to the aquifers to private well systems that adds cost and potential health impacts for private homeowners.

Chair Rummel directed a question at Committee Member Ellingboe - When discussing wellhead protection for a private well, how far out does that extend and are the contaminants coming in and contaminating the entire aquifer? Committee Member Ellingboe stated it depends on the soils and geology and water use at the sight.

Has there been a tracking to the manganese high in certain areas as far as the tracking of neurological connection in infants? Committee Member Ellingboe stated this is outside of area of his expertise, but could inquire with the Environment Surveillance and Assessment area. Would be interested to see if there is a correlation.

Targeted township participation rates are 30% statewide. With the follow up letter there is a 47-50% participation rate. For pesticides and nitrates, are you seeing a close association between pesticide and nitrate levels? Yes, we see a general trend as nitrate concentrations increase the overall pesticide concentrations increases as well. Seems to be a correlation without regard to what the source would be.

In suburbanized areas, might expect to see a declining trend in nitrate or pesticides as land converts from more agricultural to suburban. Are these degradedates persistent in how they are breaking down? When the pesticides break down it breaks down in the soil layer then through the sandy soils, eventually to the water table. Some pesticide use was discontinued in 2000 and is sticking around. It has decreased slightly but is going deeper in to the aquifers. Nitrate break down will convert within the soils, especially heavier soils. Areas focused on were sandy soils so they are vulnerable to contamination and not converting in the soil layer as well.

Has compounding degradedates been looked at in different wells for health affects? There have been some different studies, but it unknown how the different chemicals will affect individuals. Committee Member Ellingboe stated this is a complex issue. He stated a good job was done explaining how these affect different parts of the body and act differently at different stages of life. There have been some limited reviews of the effects of additivity for some compounds and is limited. If additional information is desired, the Minnesota Department of Health Toxicologist could be contacted.

What will we do with the data? That is a policy determination that would need to be made and discussions occur.

How many other counties have the same profiles that Dakota has with a large number of households on private wells? MAWSAC is a policy committee and we will be working on policy and could help recommend what can be done.

2. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Chloride Strategy– Catherine Neuschler, MPCA

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has developed an internal strategy for dealing with chloride issues in all its agency programs. The presentation focused on two programs: groundwater monitoring and wastewater permitting.

Questions/Comments:

A Committee Member expressed concern with chloride getting in to water system presumably through salt. Is chloride versus chlorine similar? Catherine stated these are separate issues. The concern on chloride has an impact on aquatic life.

Does it have a tendency to connect with other elements? It does tend to travel with other ions.

Most of the metro area sends waste water to Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant. Are they discharging higher chloride? Data is unknown as of this meeting.

Is there technology in place to filter chloride when it comes out of the water softener before it gets in to the system. Elise Doucette, Wastewater Unit of the MPCA stated the Metropolitan Council Wastewater Treatment Plants discharge to water bodies that have large flow. Therefore, the reasonable potential is not as evident as it is in smaller cities with smaller flow discharging to smaller receiving waters. For treatment, reverse osmosis after water softening can remove chlorides and is an option for some in-home systems. Price is a concern.

Committee Member Ellingboe stated there are some communities that have chosen to go to centralized lime softening to reduce chloride impacts to their wastewater systems. St. Peter is one community who looked at a large comprehensive approach to their drinking water system and they have seemed to reduce chloride to their system but was a big ask of the community to move away from their softeners.

3. Policy Discussion: Collaboration for Successful Water Supply Planning– Ali Elhassan, Metropolitan Council

Due to time constraints, this item was postponed to a future meeting.

4. Legislative Update – Ali Elhassan, Metropolitan Council

Staff provided an update about the 2017 legislative session including possible impacts to water supply planning in the metro area.

A special session began May 23, 2017. A concern was raised regarding the request from the Clean Water Fund submitted last year. An email was circulated to MAWSAC and TAC members and subregional groups as the conference committee for the legacy fund zeroed out the fund. A total of 19 communities had previously been allocated funds for water efficiency programs. This is a cost share program. Met Council has received \$500,000. By losing the funding, we are losing the cost share in the amount of \$400,000. At this time, funding will not be available to communities.

Requested \$2 million, received \$1.9 million for our water supply sustainability support programs. It is hoped this will remain status quo through the approval of the Legacy Bill.

Questions/Comments:

No comments or questions at this time.

5. Appointment Process for New TAC Members – Ali Elhassan, Metropolitan Council

Staff led a discussion of the process to appoint new Technical Advisory Committee members. Three options were presented for input.

TAC members have indicated they are unable to continue serving on TAC due to work load or retirement. There is currently one vacancy with another possible due to pending retirement.

1. Follow similar approach used to appoint TAC.
2. Select new member from the remaining pool of applicants from the initial application process.
3. Recommendation from the departing TAC member on who could replace from the same geographical area.

A subcommittee would make the final recommendation to MAWSAC.

Questions/Comments:

If applications are available from the previous process, could they be vetted to determine geographical area? The departing member does not have a suggestion for a replacement from his geographical area.

Recommendation to staff to have the departing TAC member suggest a replacement from their geographical area that follows the criteria established for TAC membership. Following this process will be less burdensome to address the need over time versus identifying a formal process.

The subcommittee who evaluated the initial applicants will present the final recommendation to MAWSAC.

Committee Member Randy Ellingboe shared information about a news report related to the Minnesota Department of Health Environment Assessment and Surveillance group who have been working on an evaluation of two chemicals the EPA had previously sent health advisories on last year (PFOA and PFOS). The re-evaluation was completed prior to this meeting and numbers are lower than what EPA shared last year which has potential effects on communities and private wells where these substances have been found previously. Monitoring results were reviewed and showed 6 communities had levels above new numbers. Communities were contacted and they all had solutions in place. Communities included Cottage Grove, Woodbury, St. Paul Park, Oakdale, Lake Elmo. Bemidji also has an issue related to firefighting foam at their airport.

UPCOMING MAWSAC MEETINGS

1. Next meeting date, future meetings and topics

July 26 – collaboration, funding
Sept 27 – efficiency and conservation
Nov 29 – work plan for 2018

Location is typically at the Metropolitan Council. Alternate meeting locations may be considered to allow tours of facilities. If there are conflicts with these dates, please notify Lanya Ross, lanya.ross@metc.state.mn.us.

2. Upcoming agenda items

Committee members wishing to have items added to future MAWSAC agendas should forward them to Lanya Ross, lanya.ross@metc.state.mn.us.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

Susan Taylor
Recording Secretary