

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAWSAC)

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Committee Members Present:

Wendy Wulff, Chair; Jeff Berg; Mark Daleiden; Valerie Grover; Mike Huang; Phil Klein; Susan Morris; Catherine Neuschler; Jamie Schurbon; Kevin Watson; Tonja West-Hafner, Sandeep Burman; Brad Larson; Michael Robinson; Patrick Shea

Committee Members Absent:

Annika Bankston (George Kraynick on behalf of Annika); John "Jack" Gleason; Lisa Vollbrecht

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Wulff called the regular meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Council Water Supply Advisory Committee to order at 1:03 p.m. on Tuesday, July 20, 2021.

READING OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDER STATEMENT

NOTICE: Governor Walz has declared a peacetime emergency (Emergency Executive Order 20-01) in response to COVID-19 and the Metropolitan Council Chair has determined it is not practical or prudent to conduct an in-person meetings for reasons stated in the Governor's Emergency Executive Order. Accordingly, committee members will participate in this meeting via telephone or other electronic means and the meeting will be conducted under Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021 at the date and time stated above. We encourage you to monitor the meeting remotely. If you have comments, we encourage members of the public to email us at public.info@metc.state.mn.us. We will respond to your comments in a timely manner.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Without objection the agenda was approved. Without objection the minutes for the May 18, 2021 of the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) were approved.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

Staff gave a presentation on the following:

- a) Draft problem statement and recommended actions
- b) Regional information: potential contaminants by land use type, source water protection areas, and changes in planned land use development
- c) Process and next steps to develop a statutorily-required 2022 report from MAWSAC to the Council and MN Legislature

As part of the presentation, Valerie Grover and Emily Steinweg (Dakota County and Met Council respectively) were invited to speak about their experiences related to the topic.

The Council must consider MAWSAC's work and recommendations as it prepares its regional development framework, and TAC's role is to inform MAWSAC's work by providing scientific and engineering expertise (M.S. 473.1565).

Discussion:

Metropolitan Council staff led the Committee in a discussion centered on water resources planning in a time of drought, and strategies by which to gain compliance from community members. The following contributions were made by Committee members:

- Committee Member Burman:
 - Commended the work of Metropolitan Council on the Multi-Community Wellhead Protection Plan (WHPP)
 - In the metro area, it is a challenge to have effective plans due to the density of communities, and their tendency to be heavy water users
 - There needs to be a collective understanding that groundwater is a shared resource and should be managed as such
 - The Met Council is well situated to lead this project and efforts and hopes it can set the tone for the next generation of WHP planning, and that Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will continue to provide value to the Council and support this work
- Committee Member Klein: He learned at the Land Use Advisory Committee that residents of communities which have stormwater ponds for lawn irrigation have been generously watering their lawns and that watering restrictions will even apply to those using stormwater ponds for a water source; some residents have been seen filling those ponds with their own watering hoses.
- Committee Member Berg: Shared that the State Drought Task force will be meeting
- Staff Member Paske:
 - Ali Elhassan will be representing Met Council on the Drought Taskforce which will address reducing water use to prioritize water use for 1) humans and 2) industries
 - The last drought of this level was in the 1980's
 - The Met Council wastewater group gets involved when the Mississippi River flow is below 4000 cubic feet per second and dissolved oxygen level is 5.5 milligrams per liter (the amount needed in the river to support aquatic life). The Met Council will begin oxygenating effluent when dissolved oxygen gets too low. That has already been done twice this summer and will be done again.
- Staff Member Ross: Shared comments on how land use and water supply can be related to and impacted by drought. She shared that the water efficiency grants from Met Council were born from previous conversations about managing drought.

GROUP EXERCISE USING MURAL, DIGITAL WORKSPACE FOR VISUAL COLLABORATION

The committee participated in an exercise to gather input on:

- Level of support for the draft problem statement
- Improving committee member support through suggested revisions and additions
- Revising and prioritizing proposed actions based on ease of implementation and potential impact
- Actions that could be taken sooner rather than later, including:
 - Examples of existing efforts to learn from
 - Key stakeholders (potential leaders and partners)

Discussion:

Staff asked committee members to consider the recommendations shared with a drought-focused lens, and shared the following insights:

- Committee Member Schurbon: Drought is only one type of emergency; others, like contamination, also need our response.
- Committee Member Huang:
 - Groundwater sources and precipitation are finite and water in the atmosphere is decreasing over time
 - We will need to decrease usage and increase reserves. One way to increase reserves is building storage for water which requires large capital and serious land planning; this lies within the purview of Metropolitan Council.
 - Can we better understand weather patterns to predict if we will need storage like this in 10-20 years? Can we assess water capacity against anticipated uses? California, for example, is a desert, with a huge population. To support the population, they build dams. Does Minnesota need to plan ahead to not be reactive?
- Committee Member Watson: How do you incentivize political bodies that are less interested in enforcing stricter rules for conservation?
- Chair Wulff:
 - Lakeville City Council dealt with residents not complying with conservation efforts despite increased fines
 - Inconsistent water conservation efforts and restrictions among neighboring townships
 - Farming and time-of-day restrictions worked well for Lakeville; still saw agricultural water running in the middle of the day. Why doesn't the State have those restrictions for farmers and time of watering?
 - Committee Member Grover: Sometimes it takes 24 hours for a farmer to irrigate their land. As an aside, when developing groundwater plans, each city has their own plan and results in inconsistencies across the county.
 - Committee Member Berg (in WebEx chat): "... you gave one of the reasons you see ag. irrigation during the day. i.e. sometimes it takes more than nite hours to cover the field. Another reason is that 1 well may provide water more than 1 pivot."
- Committee member Klein: Hugo has asked developers to install water conservation measures (irrigation with stormwater). Developers like that it is a good selling point for buyers. You can often get better results when you work with rather than penalize.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Staff shared information about Metropolitan Council water supply planning-related actions at the Minnesota legislature. The Legacy bill was approved the week of June 21 with the following language:

The total Clean Water Fund appropriation for 2022 was \$126,711,00 in SFY2022 and \$130,081,000 in SFY2023. Metropolitan Council was appropriated \$1,544,000 in SFY2022 and \$1,544,000 in SFY2023 (1.2% of the total CWF appropriation). Art. 2, Sec. 8. METROPOLITAN COUNCIL:

(a) \$919,000 the first year and \$919,000 the second year are to implement projects that address emerging threats to the drinking water supply, provide cost-effective regional solutions, leverage interjurisdictional coordination, support local implementation of water supply reliability projects, and prevent degradation of groundwater resources in the metropolitan area. These projects must provide communities with:

- (1) potential solutions to leverage regional water use by using surface water, storm water, wastewater, and groundwater;
- (2) an analysis of infrastructure requirements for different alternatives;
- (3) development of planning-level cost estimates, including capital costs and operating costs;
- (4) identification of funding mechanisms and an equitable cost-sharing structure for regionally beneficial water supply development projects; and
- (5) development of subregional groundwater models.

(b) \$625,000 the first year and \$625,000 the second year are for the water demand reduction grant program to encourage municipalities in the metropolitan area to implement measures to reduce water demand to ensure the reliability and protection of drinking water supplies.

Chair Wulff called on individual committee members to share final comments before the end of the meeting. Creating efficiency within systems and with tools was the main point of discussion; the Committee noted the Water Smart program, use of radio [meter] read system, and programs to promote the use of indigenous plants in landscaping in order to build-in incentive into the regions water conservation efforts.

NEXT STEPS

1. Staff begin drafting MAWSAC report using committees' input (due early 2022)
2. MAWSAC members update agency leaders to expect a report with this information
3. Plan for 9/21/21 meeting (topic: groundwater/surface water interactions)

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Tessa Wegenke
Recording Secretary