

Minutes

Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee and
Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee Joint Meeting



Meeting date: January 9, 2024

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

MAWSAC members present:

- Chair, Wendy Wulff
- Jeff Berg, Dept of Agriculture
- Sandeep Burman, MDH
- Ellen Considine, DNR
- Valerie Nepl, Dakota County

- Mike Huang, City of Chaska
- Lisa Vollbrecht, St. Cloud PU
- Phil Klein, City of Hugo
- Todd Blomstrom, SPRWS
- Jamie Schurbon, Anoka County

- Kevin Watson, Vadnais Heights
- Brad Larson, City of Savage
- Annika Bankston, Minneapolis
- Erik Smith, MPCA
- = present

TAC members present:

- Chair, Scott Anderson
- Kristin Asher
- John Dustman
- Robert Ellis

- Dale Folen
- Elizabeth Kaufenberg
- Kim Larsen
- Matt Saam

- Jim Stark
- Jim Westerman
- Ray Wuolo
- = present

Call to order

A quorum being present for MAWSAC, but not for TAC, Committee Chair Wulff called the joint meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee and its Technical Advisory Committee to order at 12:04 p.m.

Agenda approved

Committee Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Huang, seconded by Berg to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2023 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Business items

1. 2024-2025 MAWSAC & TAC Work Plan (Lanya Ross 651-602-1803)

Ross recapped the 2023 accomplishments, reviewed the 10-year planning arc, and highlighted recent successes and accomplishments. The proposed 2024-2025 was presented and reviewed.

Huang noted that commutes are a challenge for in-person attendance and asked if there could be smaller virtual meetings to focus discussion on issues, perhaps in the evening, and keep the larger in-person meeting. Open Meeting law will be referenced for what might be possible. Nepl requested increased time to review materials ahead of the meeting.

The committees decided to wait to take action on approving the work plan until there is a quorum of TAC present for discussion.

Information items and committee work

1. 2050 Water Demand Projections (Greg Johnson 651-602-1016 and Dan Marckel 651-602-1548)

Johnson summarized the water demand projections and introduced Dan Marckel to further discuss the scenarios for the 2050 regional development guide process. Marckel noted that scenarios are useful for planning purposes to compare with the traditional way water suppliers have done business in the past.

Moeckel asked how the communities that have private wells factor into the per capita calculations. Johnson noted that there are water service population numbers and to get the private wells number the methodology takes the forecasted population and subtracts the water service population.

Huang asked if there is any differentiation between urban, suburban, and rural water consumption. Ross noted that communities are categorized using the community designations. Categorization could also be done by the forecasts as well. Huang noted it would be interesting to explore the different ways users use water and see if any trends become apparent.

Bankston asked if there was a number. Wulff asked if the increase was from additional wells or if the increase is from additional use at existing wells. Johnson noted that some communities are increasing their pumping, some staying the same, and some are decreasing. Wulff noted that this information would be useful on a regional level but that it has the potential to be way off for individual communities.

Ellis asked if there are any indicators that high water use industries may be relocating to water rich states. Johnson noted that there are forecasts for employment data. Marckel noted that the forecasting process makes broad assumptions and the approach doesn't make assumptions that businesses will leave due to water scarcity. Moeckel noted that he is hearing data centers and other large water users that would encourage a conservative approach, so we will have to plan for uncertainty.

Huang noted that from the policy perspective we need to decide if we want to drive business here due to cheap water or if we want to simply manage our water and let business make their own decisions. Moeckel noted that there are strong drivers but that people aren't seeing water as one of the first considerations for businesses relocating here. He asked what we could be doing to make the access to water easier across the entire metro area for economic growth. There is a lot of interest from the business community and there are a lot of options if we choose to do things proactively.

Huang noted that if we use water as an incentive for businesses, we may need to change the mindset of other consumers. This would not be because we are in shortage but because we want to conserve some water for growth. The question is how do we want to use the water we have? Marckel noted that there is a conversation going on about how much we are passive providers vs. actively shaping policy to steer investment. Huang noted that cheap power is used as an incentive to bring in industry. Cheap water could also be an incentive for specific industries. Kostrzewski noted that if we undervalue or don't know the value of water that it could give currency to what water means. Wuolo noted that the analysis could be done to determine the true cost of water. Kader noted that the priority of use and impacts water supply has on ecosystems also need to be considered to be proactive. Wulff noted that the controversy in Elko-New Market is a recent example. Stark noted that per capita use is trending down. Huang noted that setting a target per capita would be useful and comparing to European uses would also be useful. Bankston noted that the trend down for the metro is due to the building of higher density residential use and due to efficiencies and lower irrigation.



2. Subregional Engagement for Metropolitan Water Supply Plan (Jen Kader 651-602-1114)

Kader reviewed the purpose of the subregional engagement and summarized the engagement effort and early feedback received.

Stark asked if feedback was varied. Kader responded that there are some areas that have different priority issues and some issues are being raised across the board. Johnson noted that for the Central subregion source water protection, aging infrastructure, and public education on the safety of water supply were the main issues. Kader noted that the differences between the subregions will show up in prioritization. Huang noted that identifying funding is a major comment across the subregions. Neppi noted that there is a lot of value in hearing from the different perspectives and how they align to the goals. Kader noted that the February 29th workshop will allow the subregions to hear from each other.

3. Water Supply Plan / Water Policy Plan connections (Lanya Ross 651-602-1803)

Ross and Kostrzewski updated the committees on the status of the Metro Area Water Supply Plan and the Water Policy Plan.

The committees participated in a group feedback activity. Considine noted that the things she worries about at DNR also showed up for others in their roles. Ross noted that considering the role for Met Council and the role for others is on her mind. Kostrzewski noted that the objectives need to make sense for water supply, surface waters, and wastewater and the meaning of sustainability can be nebulous. Huang noticed that many of the comments on the water supply objective could also apply to the #2 climate objective. Bankston asked if #2 needs to be a stand-alone objective or if it could be incorporated into all the others.

4. Input on 3 Plans Coordination (Jen Kader 651-602-1114)

Kader shared background on the participant make up, scope, and goals for the 3 Plans project.

Bankston noted that she was recently asked to provide comments on the Drinking Water Action draft plan and asked for clarification on how these initiatives fit together. Burman noted that is a legislatively mandated state drinking water plan, is on a statewide scale, and has a 10-year schedule. Attempts will be made to ensure that these efforts are not duplicative and that they complement and supplement each other.

Folen asked if there was any goal for jurisdiction changes. There are no restrictions on what can be proposed. Sventek noted that the goal is not jurisdictional changes but process improvement. Huang asked if overlapping processes could be improved. Kader noted that the difference of timelines is a challenge but the inputs are being considered.

5. Water Efficiency Grant Program Update (Henry McCarthy 651-602-1946)

McCarthy summarized the Water Efficiency Grant Program and noted that a new grant cycle begins this year. He requested committee input on desired changes for the next round of grants.

Folen noted that in the 1990s an intern calculated the amount of energy saved by improved showerheads simply from not having to heat the larger amount of water the inefficient showerheads use and it was a huge savings. Ellis asked whether the monitoring for the AMI leaks was done by SPRWS or if the homeowners can log in to monitor. Right now, SPRWS monitors this.

6. Water Resources Manager’s Update (Judy Sventek 651-602-1156)

Sventek thanked MAWSAC and TAC members for their commitment. She gave an update on the governor’s appointment process for MAWSAC and how that affects the TAC vacancies.

7. Chairs’ Update (Wendy Wulff 952-484-3353 and Scott Anderson 952-563-4867)

Wulff thanked MAWSAC and TAC members for their commitment.

8. Check In

- Bankston asked for some flags on the action items in the meeting preparation packet so that members can better direct their attention to the meeting materials.
- Huang noted that the small group discussions at tables were very helpful in past meetings.

Next steps

- Attend the February 29th meeting
- Attend subregional meetings
- Watch for a scheduling poll/survey
- Provide input on draft work plan and 3 Plans project

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the joint meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee and Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee meeting of January 9, 2024.

Approved this xxth day of xx 2024.

Council contact:

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