

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

Tuesday, June 27, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Kristin Asher, Bob Cockriel, Dale Folen, Mark Maloney, Chris Petree, Lih-in-Rezania, James Stark, Jamie Wallerstedt, and Bruce Westby.

Dean Lotter, MAWSAC Liaison

Committee Members Absent:

John Dustman, Klayton Eckles, Jennifer Levitt, G.H. Crystal Ng, Lon Schemel (resigned – vacant position), and Ray Wuolo.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Mark Maloney convened the meeting of the Council's Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at 1:34 p.m. on Tuesday, June 27, 2017.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

The agenda was reviewed with those present and approved unanimously with the following addition:

Bob Cockriel asked that succession planning be added to the agenda.

The minutes of the May 2, 2017 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Committee were reviewed and approved unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1A. Succession Planning – Bob Cockriel, All

Bob Cockriel indicated that he will be retiring soon and that this may be his last TAC Meeting. At the last MAWSAC meeting, MAWSAC indicated that for vacant TAC positions, the departing TAC member should recommend a replacement from the same geographical area. The subcommittee who evaluated the initial applicants would evaluate the recommended replacement and present a final recommendation to MAWSAC.

Bob Cockriel indicated that his recommended replacement is Scott Anderson, who attended the last TAC meeting in his stead. Scott is a member of the AWWA Water Utility Council, which is fitting due to the AWWA's stated intent to take more of an interest in the TAC. Staff will work with Scott to get the application filled out and the appropriate information to the MAWSAC subcommittee.

Motion by Bob Cockriel, Second by Kristin Asher to recommend Scott Anderson as Bob Cockriel's replacement. Motion carried unanimously.

1. MAWSAC Update – Dean Lotter, MAWSAC Liaison

A brief update from MAWSAC was provided and included succession planning for TAC members.

2. Update on Legislative Water Related Activities – Lanya Ross, Metropolitan Council

A brief synopsis was given regarding legislative activities related to water supply planning. Discussion centered on the Legislature's denial of funding for MCES's Water Efficiency grant program. Staff encourage members of both MAWSAC and TAC to advocate for future funding of this program.

3. Water Conservation and Efficiency Presentations - Rick Wahlen, City of Eden Prairie and Mark Maloney, City of Shoreview

Eden Prairie – The City of Eden Prairie began its water conservation program in 2000 and one of the biggest lessons learned is that building a culture of conservation takes time. Eden Prairie is seeing success across the board and will continue working on conservation efforts. Some of the most effective methods include leading by example, participating in external groups to encourage collaboration and education. Education focused on younger generations proves especially effective in the long term.

Eden Prairie conducts rate studies every five years and determines rates based on the cost of system repair and replacement combined with usage in a five-tier rate structure, which is adjusted based on the results of each study. Additional areas of focus have been promoting the use of conservation (native, natural) landscaping and water reuse projects. Lessons learned about rebate programs include that irrigation rebates must be substantial to make a difference and that local appliance retailers will help drive the water efficient appliance rebate program. The TAC can support conservation efforts by recognizing opportunities.

Shoreview – The City of Shoreview has seen a downward trend in water use and has been diligent about reducing unaccounted for water through leak detection and metering. Water use restrictions have been extended to cover private wells and new drilling of private wells is prohibited. Another tool the City is exploring through a pilot project is a software solution called WaterSmart.

WaterSmart uses customer data to generate “water score” reports, which are similar to Xcel Energy’s energy efficiency reports. The reports compare customer use to that of their neighbors, make suggestions for further reductions and provide additional information. The reports are available via mail, online and mobile access. The software is helping the City identify conservation opportunities, providing leak detection assistance and provides a platform for ebilling.

There is not enough data yet to establish an actual level of water savings due to this program, but it has been a resounding success in terms of customer satisfaction, customer engagement and getting residents thinking about conservation. Approximately 20% of customers are actively engaging with WaterSmart at this point and the City is studying the difference between users and non-users.

Discussion - Much of the focus of conservation efforts has centered on residential use, due to the general opinion that businesses will do their best to limit costs wherever possible. MCES is working with the MNTAP program to focus on industrial and commercial water use. That collaboration has identified a surprising amount of water saving potential which suggests that non-residential uses should not be overlooked.

Barb Huberty of the Minnesota Legislative Water Commission posed the following question: As regional leaders in water conservation, if the DNR implements a tiered drought appropriation permit process, what would you like to see? Members were in agreement that their primary concern is that credit is given for all of the work that has already been done rather than penalizing those who have been leaders in water conservation efforts.

4. Water Conservation and Efficiency Discussion – Lanya Ross, Metropolitan Council
Staff asked members to break out into small groups to discuss how better conservation and efficiency can improve regional water supply planning. Visitors in attendance were invited to discuss the questions among themselves, with MCES staff to facilitate as needed. A list of

questions was provided to shape discussion. Due to limited time, attendees were asked to focus on questions two and four.

2. What aspects of water conservation or efficiency do you think are most important to focus on (regulatory, incentives, community engagement, collaboration, etc.)?

Key comments included that you can never do enough enforcement to make much of a difference. Community engagement, outreach and education are key as well as a strong message focusing on stewardship of resources and infrastructure.

4. How do you measure the success of a water conservation or efficiency program? This could be water saved, community engagement, or other factors.

The consensus on this question was that we need to collect and analyze data in order to tell the story.

A full account of the answers collected at the meeting is included at the end of these Minutes, under the heading “Notes from Group Discussion – TAC Meeting, June 27, 2017”.

5. Information to Provide to MAWSAC – Dave Brown, Metropolitan Council

Staff asked TAC members what they would like to share with MAWSAC, based on the contents of this meeting. Members agreed that the report out of the main topics of discussion should be shared with MAWSAC, including:

- Make sure that the agencies are acknowledging all of the progress already made.
- Understand that a one size fits all approach does not work.
- Focus on the why – stewardship of resources and infrastructure (vs. conservation).
- Develop consistent messaging around stewardship.
- Advocate for a unified approach to water supply between the agencies and the municipalities.

Dean Lotter noted that MAWSAC will look to the TAC to define these issues more thoroughly.

NEXT TAC MEETING

Staff indicated that according to the agreed upon schedule, the next TAC meeting will be held on September 5, 2017 and the main topic will be funding.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Jinger Pulkrabek
Recording Secretary

NOTES FROM GROUP DISCUSSION, TAC MEETING JUNE 27, 2017

Considerations for MAWSAC RE: Conservation and Efficiency

TAC Members responded to two questions related to water efficiency and conservation as follows:

What aspects of water conservation or efficiency do you think are most important to focus on (regulatory, incentives, community engagement, collaboration, etc.)?

Comments on what to focus on:

- Community Engagement Important – 3 members
- Regulatory/Compliance not effective
- High level of communication with residents with incentive focus to create a sustainable culture
- Signs and conversations with residents
- Missing a unified message
 - Is a unified message on water conservation needed?
 - Consider an approach from a “wise” water use basis
 - Not all communities in the same situation
- Range of city approaches
 - Some cities have no regulations, others do
- Some approaches have multiple benefits, building relationships between citizens, utility, police, etc.
- Focus on individual behaviors, interactions
- Lots of available educational content to use
- Conservation is not the goal, stewardship is (and may lead to conservation) – which is regionwide
- Impact of conservation on infrastructure and water quality
- Different conservation ethic for base versus summer demand

How do you measure the success of a water conservation or efficiency program? This could be water saved, community engagement, or other factors.

Comments on how to measure success:

- Identify the story that will tell the story – critical opportunity with use of app – also supports greater engagement
- Be cautious about the application of per capita use
 - Need to consider the water use and water user profiles or types
- Single value goals for water use not the best approach (ex. gpd)
- Need to collect data to tell the story; leverage technology to engage & track
- What data is relevant?
 - Agencies might help here

After discussion on the two questions, TAC Members addressed the following questions

What do you want to spend time on?

- Acknowledging progress already made and build on it.
- Understanding targets and how they vary
- Why? What is water stewardship for the region? How do local efforts support this in various ways?
- Uniform message about goal for sustainable water supply

Key information?

- How to document how local efforts support regional wise use/stewardship progress.
- Which cities have common issues?

What to operationalize?

- Coordinate business/land use, drillers, public water suppliers, agencies
- When decisions to approve water use expansion are made.