

Minutes of the

JOINT REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

MAWSAC Committee Members Present:

Wendy Wulff, Chair, Jeff Berg, Karla Peterson, Mark Gleason, Valerie Grove, Mike Huang, Phil Klein, Brad Larson, Catherine Neuschler, Steve Schneider, Jamie Schurbon

MAWSAC Committee Members Absent:

Mark Daleiden, Glen Gerads, Susan Morris, Mike Robinson, Lisa Volbrecht, Kevin Watson, Tonja West-Hafner

TAC Committee Members Present:

Mark Maloney, Chair, Scott Anderson, Kristin Asher, John Dustman, Robert Ellis, Dale Folen, Jason Moeckel, Jim Stark, Bruce Westby, Jim Westerman, Ray Wuolo

TAC Committee Members Absent:

Crystal Ng, Maat Saam, Jamie Wallerstedt

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, MAWSAC Committee Chair Wendy Wulff began the joint regular meetings of the Council's Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 25, 2020.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES BY MAWSAC AND TAC

It was moved by MAWSAC member Huang, second by Berg and moved by TAC member Ellis, second by Stark to approve the agenda of the August 25, 2020 joint MAWSAC and TAC meeting. Motion carried by roll call vote.

It was moved by MAWSAC member Klein, second by Neuschler to approve the minutes from the August 21, 2018 and October 16, 2018 regular meetings of the MAWSAC committee. Motion carried by roll call vote.

INTRODUCTIONS

There being new committee members on both committees, introductions were completed for both committees as well as Council water supply planning staff.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Council's 2020 Report to the Minnesota Legislature:

Lanya Ross, Environmental Analyst shared information regarding the upcoming report to the Minnesota State Legislature. In 2005, the Metropolitan Council was directed by Minnesota Statutes 473.1565 to carry out planning activities addressing the water supply needs of the metropolitan area. The Metropolitan Council fulfills this role by developing and maintaining a base of technical information; developing and periodically updating a metropolitan area master water supply plan; and making recommendations for clarifying roles and responsibilities, streamlining decision-making and approval processes, and funding. The Metropolitan Council does this work in consultation with Metropolitan Area Water Supply Policy and Technical Advisory Committees (MAWSAC and TAC) and in collaboration with municipalities in the metro area. The Metropolitan Council submits reports to the legislature regarding its findings, recommendations, and planning activities to be included in the Minnesota Water Plan, and five-year interim reports are provided as necessary. The proposed report outline was

presented, and MAWSAC and TAC members were asked to 1) share their perspectives about how water supply planning changed because of Met Council and partners' activities (guided by the committees), and 2) recommend what messages to highlight – what should legislators and Council members know so that they are more informed when you communicate with them?

Discussion:

Recommendations for messaging can be shared with Lanya.ross@metc.state.mn.us.

MAWSAC Member Klein suggested including information on how much water has been saved due to the Metropolitan Council's water supply planning-supported projects, to illustrate that the money we spend is well spent. In addition, highlight emerging issues/next steps such as exploring wet periods/too much water and how to keep pollutants out of water.

TAC Member Stark suggested considering how the projected demands for water have been changing over time.

Due to audio technical difficulties, TAC Chair Maloney stated he would share his feedback via email to staff.

TAC Member Moeckel shared that the DNR is required to submit a report to the legislature every 5 years. The report is called the Water Availability and Assessment report. This report is in draft form now and will be submitted September 15 this year.

TAC Member Asher noted the good in now considering groundwater and surface water interactions and water supply planning being more integrated into comprehensive planning. She also shared the challenge that Richfield faces because the city's wellhead protection area extends into the City of Minneapolis. There is a need to open lines of communication among communities and others related to source water protection. Understanding groundwater-surface interaction continues to be a challenge, as well. Dr. Ali Elhassan commented that there are several other metro communities who are experiencing challenges with wellhead protection areas extending beyond their boundaries and are having discussions with MN Department of Health to address. Dr. Elhassan will schedule time to discuss with Ms. Asher.

TAC Committee Member Anderson stated the City of Bloomington does not have data available on conservation at this time. He also discussed some financial challenges of supplying local demand/utility operation, particularly as water use goes down during wet periods and from efficiency measures. Historically, utilities' revenue issues are typically addressed through rate changes, but they are beginning discussions about affordability. Data is needed about the impacts of rates, to help understand how to balance revenue versus affordability.

MAWSAC Committee Member Peterson has not seen comprehensive studies about what water utilities are doing to address equity; it may be a good role for Metropolitan Council to provide this kind of information. Federal resources are available and may be helpful.

TAC Committee Member Asher stated that she agreed with what MAWSAC Committee Member Peterson said. Her city struggles with rate increases, but they are not selling much water as the cost to produce grows annually.

Update on Work to Develop Committee Plans for 2020-2021:

Emily Steinweg, Senior Engineer share an update on the work that has been done to prepare a work plan for the MAWSAC and TAC groups for the coming year. The Metropolitan Area Water Supply Policy Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) is responsible to assist the Council in its water supply planning work. The Metropolitan Area Water Supply Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) informs MAWSAC's work by providing scientific and engineering expertise. A work plan is being developed with the goal of

producing, by 2022, a set of recommendations and supporting information around high-priority water supply topics to support the update of the regional development guide and related policy plans. The process to develop this work plan was presented, work so far was summarized, and MAWSAC and TAC members were asked to 1) participate in interviews to shape work plan, and 2) commit to future meetings to delve deeper into work plan topics and develop policy recommendations.

Discussion:

Comments or feedback can be directed to emily.steinweg@metc.state.mn.us.

Ali Elhassan stated he appreciates the time invested by MAWSAC and TAC members for feedback that has been provided to date. Information shared is preliminary and will be shared again once it is close to final.

CLEAN WATER FUND UPDATE

Dr. Ali Elhassan, Manager, Water Supply Planning shared an update on the Clean Water Fund. In State Fiscal Year 2022-23, the Metropolitan Council is requesting an appropriation from the Clean Water Fund to support the Council's water supply sustainability work and water demand reduction efficiency grants, which was shaped by input from MAWSAC and TAC. MAWSAC and TAC members were asked to support this request by sending support letters, providing personal testimony to the Budget and Outcomes Committee (BOC) and Clean Water Council and/or supporting the request in the 2021 legislative session.

Discussion:

Support letters were requested of the committee members. Examples are available with submissions requested in time for the September meetings.

Personal testimony to the Budget and Outcomes committee and the Clean Water Council are available for the virtual September meetings as well as December meetings.

Legislative session support is needed for the 2021 session. Support is needed and appreciated at the sessions. Committee members are encouraged to communicate with their legislators to make them aware of the need.

TAC Chair Maloney asked if the water efficiency grant program is a good example of what the funds impact. Staff stated the water efficiency grant program has been a focus in the past 6 years to increase funding.

MAWSAC Chair Wulff stated budget and rankings may be in conflict. Staff agreed.

TAC Chair Maloney stated that program has been wildly successful. Chair Wulff suggested members prepare and submit letters of support or if they wish to testify to notify staff.

Further comments can be submitted to Dr. Elhassan at ali.elhassan@metc.state.mn.us

Interviews will be conducted with committee members by staff for input.

ADJOURNMENT

Information items being completed, the meeting concluded at 10:47 a.m.

Susan Taylor
Recording Secretary