

## Minutes of the

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

#### Committee Members Present:

Sandra Rummel-Chair, Wendy Wulff-Vice Chair, Marie McCarthy; Harry Melander, Gary Van Eyll; Lona Schreiber; Edward Reynoso

#### Committee Members Absent:

None

#### Council Member Visitor:

Steven Chavez

### CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Rummel called the regular meeting of the Council's Environment Committee to order at 4:02 p.m. Tuesday, February 10, 2015

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Gary VanEyll, seconded by Edward Reynoso to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Wendy Wulff, seconded by Gary VanEyll to approve the amended minutes of the Tuesday, January 13, 2015 regular meeting of the Environment Committee. **Motion carried.**

### BUSINESS

#### Consent Items

Motion to approve consent agenda items 2015-33 and 2015-36 by Wendy Wulff, seconded by Marie McCarthy.

**Motion carried.**

#### **2015-33: Authorization to Award and Execute a Contract to Purchase Polymer for the Blue Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant**

That the Metropolitan Council authorize its Regional Administrator to issue a purchase order to Polydyne, Inc. of Riceboro, GA not to exceed \$2,830,000 to provide Clarifloc polymers at a unit price of \$1.25 per pound to the Blue Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant for the period April 1, 2015 through March 31, 2020.

#### **2015-36: Authorization to Implement the Upgrade to the Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Fire Alarm/Mass Notification Systems**

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes its Regional Administrator to execute a sole source procurement contract not to exceed \$675,000 for the upgrade of the MCES Empire WWTP Fire Alarm/Mass Notification system by Simplex Grinnell.

#### Non-Consent Items

#### **2015-34: Authorization to Increase Delegated Construction Contract Change Order Authority for Contract 13P184 & Ratification of Increased Amount for Emergency Repair of Interceptor 7113**

It was moved by Edward Reynoso, seconded by Wendy Wulff that the Metropolitan Council increases the delegated construction change order authority for contract 13P184 and ratifies the increased estimated amount for the emergency repairs to Interceptor 7113. **Motion carried.**

#### **2014-35: Disposition of Surplus Fee Title Property Located at 7240 Rolling Acres Road in the City of Victoria**

It was moved by Gary VanEyll, seconded by Wendy Wulff that the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to proceed with the sale of two fee title properties located at 7240

Rolling Acres Road within the City of Victoria to the adjacent property owner for an amount equal to no less than the appraised value of \$750. **Motion carried.**

## INFORMATION

### 1. University of Minnesota and Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Collaborations –

This presentation transpired from a newspaper article published on January 18, 2015 on water research that prompted a question about our involvement in water research. Presenters included Dr. Paige Novak and Amy Prok both of the University of Minnesota and Larry Rogacki, Assistant General Manager of Support Services at the Metropolitan Council. The agenda for this presentation is to discuss the MCES internship program, the U of M research collaborations, and the graduate research project. Staff member Larry Rogacki indicated professional internships have been occurring at the Council for nine years. He stated 76 internships have been completed with another 15 planned for 2015. During this time 14 former interns have been hired by MCES. Positions have included engineers, scientists, geographical information systems specialists, technical writers, business analysts and control technicians.

Dr. Novak stated there has been a long history of cooperation and collaboration between MCES and the University of Minnesota. Examples of collaboration have included fate of compounds of emerging concern (such as triclosan, antibiotic resistance, estrogens, plant-based estrogens) as well as hydrogen generation from wastewater. Larger scale support, such as pilot-scale and research funding, include algae production / biodiesel potential as well as conversion of scum to biodiesel.

This partnership continues to expand by way of a wastewater “think tank” that is funded by the State of Minnesota to envision the future of wastewater in the state and is in partnership between utilities, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the U of M as well as outside subject matter experts. MCES and the U of M have engaged with respect to the MnDRIVE initiative and a possible water technology business cluster.

A new research partnership has evolved on MCES identified projects. The initial contract is set for 2013 through 2017 and consists of two projects. The first is enhanced methane generation which has an anticipated completion of summer of 2015. The second project is currently under development and should run from fall 2015 through 2017.

The first project identified is currently treated, industrial wastewater that exerts an energy demand at the treatment plant and generates solids that require disposal. The potential solution is to treat industrial wastewater anaerobically, removing aeration requirements and generating methane as a natural byproduct. The research need consists of how candidate wastes should be targeted to identify toxicity and degradability issues with the outcome to develop a method to determine possibly toxicity or degradability issues. The process in place currently identifies why issues occur.

In summary, there is a critical continued leadership need in the State and in the nation. MCES is supporting real innovation in applied science. Minnesota could be the next hub of wastewater and water treatment/reuse innovation by being a strong water technology industry and increasing interactions and cooperation between the U of M, the industry, state and localities. The wastewater think tank could potentially be used as a national model.

Questions/Comments resulting from this discussion:

- What kinds of things is the “think tank” thinking about? Dr. Novak stated broad thinking has been occurring. Specific technologies for total nitrogen and phosphorus removal; Research surrounding contaminants of emerging concerns; public perception and interacting with the public have also been discussed including possible exhibits at the State Fair as part of the Eco-Experience; regulatory flexibility and how to help reduce nutrients cost-effectively.

- What is MnDRIVE? Large initiative between State of MN and the U of M where the State has funded \$18 million per year to address economic issues in the State, food and safety, environment, neostimulations of the brain and robotics.
- How many students/faculty are in place in this department at the U of M? There are 7 faculty with 5-10 students per faculty member.
- Are there other projects outside of the think tank that address the general water issue? Yes. The think tank is one area that is an example of communication, collaboration and cooperation. Research on other single projects is occurring.
- Council Member Chavez stated he saw the newspaper article and encouraged those present to think about this effort as a global model and to think big. He stated additional press is needed pertaining to this subject and encouraged the efforts to continue.
- Chair Rummel indicated interest exists from local units of government on reuse of storm water and other ways to capture water potential. Feedback received at a local meeting reflected how to accelerate understanding to individual citizens that is currently seen at the government level.

## 2. General Manager's Report –

Leisa Thompson stated there are two public meetings for the water resources policy plan. Open house, public meetings are set for February 12 from 9-11 a.m. at Maplewood Community Center and the other February 23, 1-3 p.m. at Ridgedale Library in Minnetonka. They are open house sessions to look at the policy plan before the public hearing. Invitees include October meeting invitees. RSVP's are currently 15 for February 12 and 23 from the February 23rd. Chair Rummel requested the Water Consortium participants be included in the invitees. The watershed districts and watershed organizations are currently on the list. Judy Sventek will send the information to the head of the Consortium to have the invitation circulated to assure additional collaboration if they were not already invited. The date for the public hearing may need to be adjusted. An email will be circulated once determined. Current public hearing date is scheduled for March 10.

Affordable housing support and development task force. Jason Willett and Leisa Thompson have met with individuals to begin the process of recommending the task force formation, participants, and charge of the group. Further information is forthcoming.

Leisa attended the NACWA Winter Conference. Utilities are looking at more resource recovery and integrated water resources. Partnerships are being looked at in a different way than in the past.

Wastewater treatment plants are still in compliance with no break in the record.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Susan Taylor  
Recording Secretary