

Minutes

Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: July 19, 2022

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

Members Present:

- Chair, Wendy Wulff
- A Jeff Berg, Dept of Agriculture
- Sandeep Burman, MDH
- A John Gleason, DNR
- Catherine Neuschler, MPCA
- Valerie Grover, Dakota County

- A Mark Daleiden, Wright County
- A Susan Morris, Isanti County
- Mike Huang, City of Chaska
- A Tonja West-Hafner, Bklyn Park
- A Lisa Vollbrecht, St. Cloud PU
- A Phil Klein, City of Hugo

- A Patrick Shea, SPRWS
- Jamie Schurbon, Anoka County
- A Kevin Watson, Vadnais Heights
- A Brad Larson, City of Savage
- A Annika Bankston, Minneapolis
- = present, E = excused

Call to Order

Committee Chair Wulff called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee to order at 1:05 p.m.; there was not a quorum for the meeting.

Agenda Approved

Consensus; **approved.**

Approval of Minutes

The approval of the minutes was moved to the next meeting as there was not a quorum.

Information Items and Committee Work

1. Introduction to the master water supply plan update (Lanya Ross, 651-602-1803; Ali Elhassan, 651-602-1066)

Lanya Ross noted that the update of the Master Water Supply Plan (MWSP) is part of the committee's 2022 workplan and is required by Minnesota Statutes 473.1565. It is one piece of a larger regional planning effort which includes the Regional Development Framework, the Water Resources Policy Plan and connects to local water supply planning. She outlined why Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee (MAWSAC) and other advisory committees are doing this regional planning work, which is shaped by Met Council Environmental Services vision for our region's water supply: clean water for future generations.

The approach and content of the MWSP reflect the fact that water supply is not a regional system. Water supply system operation is a local responsibility and planning is done locally in partnership with cities and state agencies. However, water supply sources are interdependent and local decisions can impact each other. Collaboration is a great way to pool and pull from our shared experience, expertise, and expectations. Articulating the value of participation will be important in our work as well.

Through her presentation, Lanya shared:

- The required content of the MWSP, per Minnesota Statutes 473.1565.
- Some staff observations about the last process to update the MWSP and ideas for this

coming update.

- Proposed contents for the next MWSP update – a chapter articulating a regional vision and goals, a chapter providing region-wide water supply information/context, and subregional chapters. She acknowledged that These contents are different than the last version of the MWSP to support the feedback provided by our working groups, advisory committees, etc. We want those at the local level to be able to have ownership. Lanya noted that the proposed subregional chapters will likely be the bulk of the work; MAWSAC could be a steering committee to keep the work going and engaging the subregional groups in developing their chapters.
- A draft schedule for the different components of the proposed MWSP update – Lanya highlighted that, at the end of the day, MAWSAC has to approve the MWSP in 2024. There is much work – which is broken down over the next two years – to do before and leading up to that point. She asked committee members to make sure to get their leadership up to speed and onboard before they have to vote on it.

DISCUSSION:

Committee members asked about plan implementation (Neppl) and how subregional areas would be defined (Thompson and Huang).

- Many townships and rural area partners do not have the bandwidth to send staff to our joint meeting (in November). Committee members were encouraged to work with their contacts within these groups to ensure their perspective is captured.
- Staff noted that subregions have not been finalized and are being drafted based on existing subregional groups along with information about groundwater conditions, landscape characteristic and other factors. Definition of subregional areas will not be too prescriptive; this is a conversation to be had with the participating communities. While certain water supply issues exist everywhere, *how* they exist is viewed differently based upon place.

Committee member Neuschler asked about expanding the proposed Chapter Two to include information about any shared issues that pops up that we aren't expecting. As work continues, we may identify some common themes, drivers, or values to capture here.

2. Proposed content for the introductory chapter of the master water supply plan (Lanya Ross, 651-602-1803; Ali Elhassan, 651-602-1066)

Lanya Ross outlined the proposed content for Chapter One of the MWSP and asked for committee input with the goal of sharing an updated document at a planned workshop on November 1 for the subregional water supply work groups and MAWSAC and TAC.

REQUESTED ACTION: MAWSAC members are requested to review draft proposed content for Chapter One, circulating to the appropriate persons within the organization to receive / provide feedback by October 15, 2022.

3. **Subregional chapters of the master water supply plan** (Lanya Ross, 651-602-1803; Ali Elhassan, 651-602-1066)

Ali Elhassan gave an overview of a proposed approach for subregional planning, with the goal of developing a framework for how subregional water supply planning groups could shape more customized content in the MWSP. This approach recognizes that each subregion has their own issues and values; there will be a local focus, and support for empowering communities to develop their own solutions / tackle the issues. This approach would generate content that was developed, owned, and implemented by the local communities to obtain and



sustain water stability. Ali noted that this is the first time the Council would be taking this type of approach, which is a learning exercise in and of itself; this will allow for us to see how we can improve it during this round of regional planning and moving forward.

To support this effort, the Council may bring in or hire someone to assist us with the challenge of not having staff to be available for all of the pertinent conversations taking place across the region.

4. Draft content in water supply planning atlas (John Clark, 651-602-1452 and Henry McCarthy, 651-602-1946)

John Clark gave an overview about a project that could be used to support the work of this group, the Water Supply Planning Atlas. The atlas is a compendium of water data and information presented in a visual and narrative way. Its purpose is to assist with outreach and engagement and to promote a shared understanding of water supply and its issues. The regional story is a culmination of the individual, local stories.

John talked about:

- Potential audiences
- How the atlas can be used
- Challenges to developing such an atlas
- The design of the atlas
- Draft atlas contents at a regional scale and for different subregions
- Next steps

DISCUSSION

A committee member asked if there is a link to the atlas.

- John clarified that, because this is still an early draft, there is not a link yet. He offered to send the draft documents to MAWSAC members to look at; it has not yet been reviewed or finalized.

Committee member Huang suggested including information about best practices and noted that investment and strong will would be necessary for a more consistent set of data across the region. A committee discussion followed, including the following points:

- Could we pool resources for smaller, rural areas such as grants and other places we can point them to in order to have better resources?
- Metro GIS could be a group to facilitate that work.
- Creating a library of resources for folks in each subregion to use is part of the intent of this project.
- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and other agencies are overhauling their websites; they are looking for input as to how to improve their data visualization and what is needed for constituents and their work.
- Regarding the process – the “who”: governance, operations, consumers. How do you engage these different groups of people?
- Who drives the how / where / what?

BREAK

5. Group discussion to shape proposed approach for developing subregional chapters of the master water supply plan (Lanya Ross, 651-602-1803; Ali Elhassan, 651-602-1066)
 - Lanya reconvened the group and asked the teams to address the big question: How can we approach this project in a way that works? This question is broken down into five (5) smaller areas of focus:
 - How (to effectively bring people together)?
 - Who (participates with what roles)?
 - What (is useful in subregional chapters; are the common themes; value to government vs. operations vs. consumers)?
 - So that... (what do people get out of it?)
 - Resources & challenges

Groups were given 10 minutes to discuss, and 10 minutes to create their recommendations to add to the board. The exercise was followed by discussion and clarification of points and questions proposed by the committee members.

Figure 1 illustrates the group discussion.

Committee members identified these considerations for how to bring people together:

- Clarity about what subregions people are part of and why
- Acknowledge the tension between current regulation and consideration of changes in regulation, who it is still to be determined
- Recognize that subregional groups exist beyond regional plan scope, use local leadership, and include public notice and comment period
- Use surveys, work sessions, focused discussions based on a sound framework for consensus building
- Facilitate a data-driven approach with consistent sources, use stories/narratives based on sound data
- Have a framework/process for decision-making and roles -> for plan update and local/subregional implementation
- Clear illustration of what is pushed down from MAWSAC and what is pushed up from locals and subregions
- Support intra-organizational collaboration, information sharing, and support by upper leaders
- Support a process where local ask for information from agencies, with time to digest and identify questions, then work on implementation iteratively

Committee members identified these considerations for who should participate:

- Communities (including townships, water suppliers)
- Watersheds
- Agencies (State, county)
- Planners (local, Met Council)
- Residents (farmers, conservation groups)



- Tribes
- Have local communities drive participation in the process, not state agencies – to build trust
- Some businesses, particularly big water users; perhaps chambers of commerce (what roles?)
- Different groups have different roles: Agencies are subject matter experts (consultatively role) and regulatory – they should share information. Who should be a core planning group versus who are SMEs?

Committee members identified these considerations for what is useful:

- Question: what is the value of a subregional approach to government versus operations versus consumers?
- A clear story for champions: We are doing [this], which will help the people in your area accomplish [this] important thing.
- A library of graphics to support local plans and updates (also available as GIS data)
- Ability to elevate shared issues to a higher level
- Coalition of support for funding
- Creating a prioritized to-do list for the region (projects, programs, etc.)
- Locals get direction locally instead of Met Council telling them what to do – locals decide their own future instead of having someone else decide
- Communities better connect water supply to changes in their community; communication

Committee members identified these considerations for what people will get out of it:

- Better information available locally and subregionally that the region pays for (data, research)
- More influence – communities get to decide their own future
- Reduces duplication of effort/inefficiencies
- Better problem solving – potential for innovation in solving local problems
- Local programs, identified by local stakeholders, are supported
- Local values align with one another and with regional values; policy works better
- Suggested policy initiatives with support behind them (and a documented process)

Committee members identified these resources and challenges:

- Identify resources that the local level, who can champion the work and engagement. Champions could use: topics/speakers, easy communication, resources, tools, appreciation, commitment from agencies to support them
- Need neutral facilitators (consultant)
- Need data
- Need a straightforward process
- Need access to experts
- Training for champions, support group/cohort





Figure 1. Poster to support MAWSAC discussion about a subregional approach.

6. Metropolitan Council updates (Ali Elhassan, 651-602-1066; Sam Paske, 651-602-1015)

7. Member updates

Next Steps

- Plan for the next committee meetings and fall workshop with subregional work groups
- Agency review (input from leadership) for chapter one, to support MAWSAC endorsement in December 2022
- Finalize proposal for subregional approach to master water supply plan update, to receive input/revision at fall workshop with subregional work groups

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee meeting of July 19, 2022.

Council Contact:

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