



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes
December 2, 2015**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. in the Allen S. Hardin Amphitheater at the R. Charles Loudermilk Center for Regional Community in Atlanta, Georgia.

Members Present

Hon. Boyd Austin, Chairman	Mr. Gerald Pouncey
Mr. Birdel Jackson, Secretary/Treasurer	Mr. Tim Thoms
Hon. Buzz Ahrens	Mr. Steven Woodruff
Hon. Greg Clifton	Clayton County Designee: Mr. Mike Thomas
Hon. Lee May	Cobb County Designee: Ms. Kelli Brownlow
Hon. Charlotte Nash	Douglas County Designee: Mr. Gil Shearouse
Ms. Pamela Burnett	Fulton County Designee: Nick Ammons
Mr. Brad Currey	Henry County Designee: Tony Carnell
Ms. Kit Dunlap	Rockdale County Designee: Dwight Wicks
Mr. Chuck Huling	

Members Not Present

Ms. Katie Kirkpatrick, Vice Chair	Hon. Larry Owens
Hon. Danny Dunagan	Hon. Mathew Santini
Hon. Ford Gravitt	Mr. William Thomas Craig
Hon. Kasim Reed	

Chairman Boyd Austin called the meeting to order.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Chairman Austin called for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the August 26 2015 meeting minutes was made by Ms. Kit Dunlap, seconded by Mr. Brad Currey and passed without opposition.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

ACF Water Control Manual/Litigation Update

Ms. Katherine Zitsch provided an update on the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Water Control Manual as well as an update on litigation status.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Army) released the draft EIS and water control manual in September 2015. The draft EIS is currently open for public comment. The draft EIS addresses Georgia water withdrawals as requested in the 2013 Governor's Water Supply Request. The Army proposes a recommended operations plan that would meet Georgia's request for water supply withdrawals out of the Chattahoochee River but falls short of satisfying the requested withdrawal amount from Lake Lanier.

The draft assumes that a combination of Lake Lanier and the proposed Glades Reservoir water storage volumes would be available to supply demands. The Glades Reservoir was likely included in the listed sources of the water supply volume because the State's request specifically listed it as a future supply source.

The draft EIS includes an impacts assessment and states that water supply withdrawals have a negligible impact on downstream flows in the Apalachicola River.

ARC will provide comments on the draft.

ACF Supreme Court Litigation

The discovery period is complete. Georgia and Florida are now entering the deposition phase that will continue through the winter of 2016. Expert testimony and then formal arguments will immediately follow the deposition phase.

A recent status report call included a request from Georgia that the two states begin mediation discussions. Florida representatives agreed.

The following questions were received:

Q: Does mediation timetable affect the trial schedule?

A: *At this time, neither state has asked for a stay.*

ACT Litigation

On November 14, 2014, the State of Georgia, the Cobb-County Marietta Water Authority, and the Atlanta Regional Commission sued the Army in the ACT Basin. The lawsuit is to ask the court to impose a timetable for the Army to make a decision regarding water supply at Allatoona Lake. This lawsuit is ongoing.

Appropriations Bill

Senator Shelby (AL) included language in the Senate Energy & Water Appropriations Bill to prevent the Army from addressing Georgia's water supply needs in the ACT Basin. Further, Alabama and Florida Senators have asked that the omnibus appropriations bill include language related to both the ACT and ACF basins.

The Georgia delegation is working to remove language from the bill. The entire Georgia congressional delegation signed a letter to congressional leadership last Monday strongly opposing any inclusion of state v. state issues in an appropriations bill.

The following questions were received:

Q: Is there anything they can do as board members to help?

A: *Thank our delegation for their continued diligence in protecting our water supply and reinforcing the importance of this issue.*

Presidential candidate Senator Marco Rubio was one of the Florida delegates who signed the letter related to the ACF. This certainly caused consternation from Georgia supporters.

There may be a time when we need to contact our congressional delegation again. The next likely involvement will be as the Water Resources and Reform Development Act moves through Congress, which is expected in 2016.

Chairman Austin requested board members to send a note to the Georgia delegation thanking them for their efforts and that staff would provide them with contact info and a copy of the delegation's letter. Chairman Austin praised the delegation for their non-partisan efforts.

Calendar

Ms. Sarah Skinner presented the 2016 Calendar Photo Contest winning pictures. Ms. Kit Dunlap noted that the grand prize winning photo was taken at the Dragon Boat Race competition at the Lake Lanier Olympic Venue. This venue is the only remaining viable Olympic venue still being used for its Olympic purpose.

Education and Outreach Update

Ms. Kostoula Vallianos presented the Education and Outreach Update.

The Water Drop Dash 5K Race and Fun Run will take place on March 19, 2016. This event highlights celebrates national Fix-a-Leak Week.

The annual Essay Contest winner's reception will take place at the State Capitol on December 16th. This year, the District received over 1,900 essays from middle school students across the 15 counties. Overall, 24 percent of all middle schools participated.

The 2016 High School Video Contest will focus on students developing public service announcements to reduce the disposal of leaf litter and debris into storm drains. The theme title is "Don't Blow It."

In October 2015, the Metro Water District won EPA's WaterSense Award for Excellence in Outreach and Education. This award is a tremendous national recognition for the great work the Metro Water District has done with its education and outreach program.

Board Meeting Schedule for 2016

Chairman Austin announced the Governing Board meeting dates for 2016 as follows:

February 24, 2016

June 1, 2016

August 24, 2016

December 7, 2016

Recognition of Kelly Randall

Chairman Austin recognized the retirement of Kelly Randall from the City of Gainesville Department of Water Resources. Kelly was hired by the City of Gainesville in 1987 as an Environmental Engineer and became Interim Director in 1999 and Director in 2000.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

2015 Year End Budget Revision

Mr. Birdel Jackson presented the Finance and Executive Committee's recommendations on the 2015 year end budget revision. Chairman Austin explained that recommendations of a committee do not require a second. The 2015 year end budget revision was approved unanimously.

Forsyth County Plan Amendment

Chairman Austin announced that the Executive Committee voted to approve the Forsyth County amendment request as a minor amendment, requiring a 15-day public comment period. The Governing Board will be voting on the Forsyth County amendment request at the February meeting.

Henry County's Septic System Pollutant Hot Spot Analysis Tool

Mr. Chris Reagan and Mr. Jeb Holder with Henry County presented the County's Septic System Pollutant Hot Spot Analysis Tool. The goal of the tool is to assess pollution of aquatic habitat as part of the County's MS4 program requirements. The County is trying to highlight those septic systems at greatest risk of affecting water resources if failure occurred and not to identify actual failures.

The following questions were received:

Q: What is the percent failure rate reported by the Henry County Health Department?

A: *We do not have that information.*

Q: Have your assessments controlled for natural versus human coliform? We need to be careful to ground truth the source before committing to large investments in actionable measures.

A: *The assessments have not differentiated but we would like to in the future.*

Q: Do you use the Health Department using this information in the future? Will it help for future planning of infill?

A: *Yes, it will help identify critical areas before they are developed.*

Q: How do the counties and cities coordinate with the Water Authority?

A: *We hold meetings quarterly.*

Q: Do you inform homeowners on the status of their septic system?

A: *Not yet. We would like to put this information on a web map to make it available to all.*

Q: What is your minimum lot size?

A: One half an acre or one acre in small drinking water supply watershed.

Q: Do you intend to upload your data to the State of Georgia's WelSTROM mapping system?

A: That would be a good idea.

Q: What is your standard sampling cycle?

A: We have not established a standard cycle yet. We are working now to identify the best times to sample.

Chairman Austin noted that this project highlights the innovation that is happening around the District. Over the last 12 years that I've been involved in the Governing Board, we have been discussing septic in a vague manner. This project highlights a useful tool that can help others see how they can make use of their data.

District 2016 Management Plan Update Status

Mr. Danny Johnson provided an update on the 2016 Management Plan Update. Mr. Johnson noted that the deadline for plan approval will be November 2016. Since 2014, the District has held eight rounds of Basin Advisory Committee Meetings, held 14 Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Meetings, received over 1,000 specific comments and reviewed over 100 individual action items for consideration in the updated plan.

Water supply forecasting was completed in August 2015 and wastewater forecasting is currently being finalized. Draft action items are currently under review by the TCCs. The first draft of the management plan will be available for Governing Board members in late spring of 2016.

Governing Board Working Group

On behalf of Vice Chair Kirkpatrick, Ms. Zitsch provided an overview of Governing Board Working Group, its members and issues discussed to date. The group is guided by the need to strike the right balance between building on our successes while minimizing burden where possible on our jurisdictions, and providing the flexibility across the District so those who want and need to do more can test and implement new ideas and programs. The group met twice this fall to discuss key elements of the 2016 management plan update including the expansion of action items related only to Chattahoochee and Lanier watersheds to the entire District, commercial water conservation opportunities, assisting the TCC Septic Sub-committee on septic issues, and EPD audit development. Board members were encouraged to join the committee if they would like to participate.

Ms. Zitsch discussed another topic the Governing Board Working Group has discussed that involves the District's technical assistance offerings. Up until now, the District has lacked a formal technical assistance program, given its limited resources. The District has always played an important technical assistance role through coordinating with and supporting local governments' plan implementation activities. At the June 2015 Board Meeting, the Governing Board heard from our peer agencies around the nation to talk about their conservation programs.

Across the board, they talked about their own organizational approaches to incentives and providing technical assistance to their member governments. At that time the Governing Board directed staff to prepare a recommended technical assistance approach that makes sense for our member governments, geography, circumstances and needs. The working group has reviewed and provided feedback on the initial staff recommendations over the past three months.

Mr. Bennett Weinstein provided an overview of the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) recommendation. The District's TAP should be cost effective and impactful. The focus should be on where we have the best return on investment. It is important that involvement in the TAP should remain voluntary. Doing more would require more resources. Limited resources will generate prioritization. The TAP should focus on need, identification of funding options, include a recognition program, include sun setting provisions, and include staff to staff learning initiatives. Next steps for the program would include an advertisement of potential assistance offerings, recognition program in the summer of 2016, annual assessment of member governments through the implementation survey and new targeted offerings and incentives.

Mr. Brad Currey emphasized the importance of the recognition program. We need to recognize the fine job we have done related to water conservation. Conservation requires continuous improvement. Recognition and incentives are critical, and when all else fails, try money. Mr. Currey noted that Kathy Nguyen, with Cobb County, has developed information on reduced capital projects and delayed rate increases due to water conservation.

The Board voted to direct District Staff to continue to work with the Governing Board Working Group to refine and add additional details, based on the presented recommendation that will guide the appropriate enhancement of the District's technical assistance program.

Other

Chairman Austin noted that the Legislative Breakfast will be on February 12, 2016 and the next meeting will be February 24, 2016.

Chairman Austin thanked Mayor Greg Clifton for his service to the board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.