



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes
March 7, 2013

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Thursday, March 7, 2013 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
Ms. Katie Kirkpatrick, Vice Chair
Hon. Pete Amos
Hon. Dick Mecum
Mr. Brad Currey
Mr. Chuck Huling
Mr. Tim Thoms
City of Atlanta Designee: Jo Ann Macrina

Bartow County Designee: Mr. Gene Camp
Cherokee County Designee: Mr. David Kubala
Clayton County Designee: Mike Thomas
Coweta County Designee: Mr. Eric Smith
Fayette County Designee: Mr. Greg Clifton
Fulton County Designee: Mr. Nick Ammons
Henry County Designee: Mr. Lindy Farmer
Rockdale County Designee: Mr. Lee Pope

Members Not Present

Mr. Birdel Jackson, Secretary/Treasurer
Hon. Tim Lee
Hon. Burrell Ellis
Hon. Tom Worthan
Hon. Charlotte Nash

Ms. Kit Dunlap
Mr. Reggie Prime
Mr. Gerald Pouncey
Mr. William Thomas Craig

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 December 6, 2012 meeting minutes was made by Mr. Brad Currey, seconded by Hon. Pete Amos and passed without opposition.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Austin recognized the following new members to the Governing Board: Hon. Steve Taylor (Bartow County), Hon. Jeff Turner (Clayton County), Hon. Bob Blackburn (Coweta County), Hon. Steve Brown (Fayette County), Hon. Pete Amos (Forsyth County), Hon. Dick Mecum (Hall County) and Hon. Tommy Smith (Henry County). The following designees have been reappointed by their Board member: Mr. Gene Camp (Bartow County), Mr. Mike Thomas (Clayton County), Hon. Greg Clifton (Fayette County) and Mr. Lindy Farmer (Henry County). Mr. Eric Smith (Coweta County) is a newly appointed designee. Chairman Austin welcomed all new and returning Board members and designees.

Chairman Austin introduced Ms. Katherine Zitsch as the new Natural Resources Division Manager with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and welcomed her on behalf of the Board.

Chairman Austin also recognized Mr. Doug Hooker, Director of ARC, and thanked him for his presence at the meeting.

The 2013 Legislative Breakfast, held on February 20, was a great success. In addition to the Board members and designees, many members of the District legislative delegation were in attendance, including Representative Lynn Smith, Chair of the House Natural Resources and Environment Committee. Chairman Austin thanked all those who were present at the event and reminded the Board of the importance of keeping our legislators informed of the work of the District.

On February 13, 2013, the District Legislative Committee met to discuss new bills of importance the District and adopted the 2013 District legislative agenda. Chairman Austin reviewed the agenda and updated the group on the most current status of each of the bills. Additionally, Chairman Austin brought to attention House Bill (HB) 515. This bill proposes to amend the code related to the Metro Water District and the Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan to allow for interbasin transfers from outside the boundaries of the District. Vice Chair Katie Kirkpatrick explained that since this bill was not discussed by the District's Legislative Committee, the Board has no stance. Although the bill is not expected to move this year, it may come up again next year.

Chairman Austin reminded the group that March 7 is crossover day and that bills that do not move before the end of the day would be tabled until next year. It was determined that the Legislative Committee would hold another meeting soon to discuss follow up on the legislative agenda.

Ms. Katherine Zitsch presented an update of current drought conditions for the state and current lake levels. The drought has lessened considerably throughout the state from December 2012 to present, and the seasonal drought outlook shows conditions improving through May 2013. February 2013 was the wettest February in the last 15 years. Lake Lanier is up almost 10 feet from December 2012. It is at three feet above the level of this time last year but still one foot below the historical average. Allatoona Lake is currently above the historical average. Other lakes and smaller reservoirs are increasing in storage, with many at or over 100 percent.

Ms. Zitsch updated the Board on EPD revisions to lake standards. Georgia EPD has been actively looking at revising nutrient standards on Georgia lakes for several years, with the primary focus on Chlorophyll-a limits. Draft TMDL's were developed for Lake Lanier, West Point Lake and Allatoona Lake and the District worked with local governments and utilities to provide comments. EPD revised the proposed standards, incorporating District input and the DNR Board is set to take action on March 26. The revised standards do not include nitrogen.

Additionally, Ms. Zitsch updated the Board on scoping comments submitted to the Corps on behalf of the District and ARC regarding revisions to the Water Control Manual for the ACF Basin. Comments from both the District and ARC support Georgia's request for water supply as well as the state's proposal for better operational rules based on best management practices for the ACF projects that benefit all stakeholders. The Corps will publish a scoping report based on the comments received. The development of the draft Water Control Manual and environmental impact statement will be a multi-year process.

On Friday, March 1, the Corps released the ACT Water Control Manual and environmental impact statement for a 60 day public comment period. The District plans to provide comments. Mr. Tim Thoms commended the District and ARC for providing well-crafted comments during scoping on the ACF Water Control Manual.

In an effort to garner more participation from the elected officials, Chairman Austin introduced the idea of changing the meeting date schedule of the District Board to coincide with that of the ARC Board. District staff will send a letter regarding the date change and will ask for feedback. If it is more convenient for those District Board members who are also ARC Board members, the meeting date change may take effect as soon as August of this year. District staff will take into account member comments and will inform all Board members of any change to the Board meeting date.

The Metro Water District was created under state statute, therefore all members of the board are required to adhere to the state code of ethics for boards found in O.C.G.A. § 45-10-3. As public officials, Board members and designees are required to file an affidavit with the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission. Chairman Austin reminded all members to submit affidavits as soon as possible. To avoid noncompliance, all designees (elected officials and non-elected officials) have submitted affidavits in the past. District staff will check with the Commission to determine whether or not Board designees who are non-elected officials legally have to file an affidavit.

Climate Variability and Water Resource Planning

Dr. Aris Georgakakos, professor at the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech, provided a synopsis of climate variability and implications on water resources planning. Using historical data for precipitation and hydrology, trends show that the ACF basin, as well as the entire state, will continue to experience dryer conditions and become increasingly vulnerable to drought and climate variability. Precipitation and soil moisture are decreasing, while lake temperatures are increasing. Dr. Georgakakos projected that climate trends indicated potentially deeper and more frequent lake drawdowns and that metro Atlanta may be vulnerable to water supply shortages beyond 2050. With time, extreme events such as flood and drought will become more extreme. Water providers may need to adopt more proactive and adaptive approaches to more effectively respond to a changing and more variable climate.

Alternative Business Models for Water and Wastewater Planning

Ms. Stacey Isaac Berahzer with the University of North Carolina Environmental Finance Center provided an overview of three alternative business models for water and wastewater planning: 1)

Volume-Based Tiered Base Charge, 2) PeakSet Base Model and 3) Customer*Select* Model. The communities of Austin, Texas and Davis, California have had great success with the Volume-Based Tiered Base Charge by increasing revenue stability and promoting steady customer water use. Additionally, using real data from local utilities in an educational exercise, Ms. Isaac Berahzer explained how the PeakSet Base Model and the Customer*Select* Model can also provide financial stability for water utilities in addressing current and future fiscal challenges. With a large national infrastructure gap, variable revenue and less predictable weather patterns, utilities cannot rely on the status quo.

Water Drop Dash 5K Race

Ms. Lora Amedu, District staff, updated the Board on the progress of the first annual Water Drop Dash 5K Race. The race, presented by The Home Depot, is being held Saturday, March 16 at the Chattahoochee Nature Center. Other sponsors include the Atlanta Regional Commission, Big Peach Running Co., Garney Construction and ATS Graphics. Over 160 people have signed up for the race, exceeding the initial goal. A children's fun run and water festival will accompany the race. The District is looking forward to a successful event.

Other

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.