



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
WASTEWATER SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
May 21, 2014**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Water Supply and Water Conservation Subcommittee of the Technical Coordinating Committee met on May 21, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. in the Amphitheater at the Loudermilk Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

Members Present

Nick Ammons, Fulton County
Jennifer Arp, CCWSA
Bob Bourne, Cobb County Water System
Tara Brown, Henry County WSA
John Clayton, Hazen and Sawyer
Charles Corbin, Keck & Wood
Bruce Coyle, Paulding County
Ernest Earn, Cobb County Water System
Kevin Farrell, Gwinnett County
Catherine Fox, Fox Environmental
Kristina Garcia, City of Atlanta
Mary Gazaway, Georgia EPD
Horace Gee, City of Gainesville
Keith Higgs, DDCWSA
Russell Kelly, Paulding County

David Kubala, Cherokee County WSA
Charles Lambert, DeKalb County
Barry Lucas, Forsyth County
Henry Moore, City of East Point
Guy Pihera, CCWA
Richard Randolph, City of East Point
Ken Reardon, Hall County
Russell Walter, Coweta County
Anup Shah, Metro Atlanta Chamber
Kelen Shostak, City of Woodstock
Brian Skeens, CH2MHill
Michael Thomas, Clayton County WA
Emily Wingo, Georgia EPD

Welcome and Introduction

Danny Johnson opened the meeting by welcoming the subcommittee, initiating introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda with the group.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments

Review of “Goals and Objectives” and Discussion of TCC Recommendations

Danny Johnson started his presentation by reviewing the TCC and BAC work during the March and April meetings in which these groups detailed their goals and objectives for the plan update. Throughout these five meetings we received 124 comments from the TCC and 183 comments from the BACs on Wastewater. [Displayed slide showing graph of relative interest based on number of comments].

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Technical Committee Meeting Notes Page 2

Mr. Johnson clarified that the goal of the day's discussion was to begin working with a small handful of these goals and objectives to receive clarification and feedback from the TCC so they can be packaged as a recommendation to the Governing Board for inclusion in the RFP for the Plan Update Consultant(s). Mr. Johnson also clarified that depending on the outcome of the conversation; the TCC might opt to detail the conversation and raise it to Board for discussion and further input or take that topic offline to a small working group for additional work and consideration.

The group reviewed examples of outcomes from the goals and objectives exercise that are central to the plan update that were not in need of further clarification for RFP development. These examples included:

- Updating wastewater projections and facilities planning, this will be done in concert with State guidance.
- Recommendations from Utility Climate Resiliency Study. Mr. Johnson updated the group on the progress on this project. Current status is that staff is currently negotiating the final scope with the selected consultant and expect to begin the work within the next few weeks. The Study is anticipated to be completed in early 2015 and will include recommendations for how utilities can become more resilient in the event of severe flooding and extended droughts. Recommendations from the study will be brought to the TCCs and Board for consideration and integration into the plan. The scope of work for the plan update will reference this process.
- Updated Funding Opportunities. The consultant will look beyond traditional programs and identify more creative funding options such as 1) new funding sources as well as existing funding options and 2) ways to develop projects that take advantage of a mix of funding sources.
- Septic and F.O.G. Education and Outreach. This element received extensive input during the goals and objectives exercises.
- Integrate EPD's Indirect Potable Reuse Guidelines. These guidelines are currently being drafted by a joint EPD/GAWP committee and may be ready for public review in late 2014.
- Updating "Chemicals of Concern" section of the plan. The District received several comments related to this topic and the consultant will be asked to update the current status of federal and state regulation and any recommendations for assessing and addressing concerns over their presence in both discharges and within the potable water supply.

Summary and Outcomes of TCC discussion of specific items from Goals and Objectives exercise:

- Item 1 Change the Management Plan Name to "Water Resource Recovery Plan":
 - The general benefit to this name change is that it recognizes the value to the recovery of wastewater.
 - By law what is the name of the plan that we are supposed to produce? Mr. Johnson: The law does not say that you need a "wastewater" plan; it just says you need a plan for wastewater.
 - Is a change of name really going to change our focus? It's just a name.
 - The infrastructure is wastewater infrastructure not recovery infrastructure. Mr. Johnson: The infrastructure is part of the means for recovery but one potential problem is with septic and groundwater, it does not really address that.
 - The point I think is to get rid of the waste part of it, getting rid of it gets rid of the connotation that it is cheap, it has no value, it can be thrown away. So I can see the reasoning in changing it for a mindset change for the value of water over time, overall though the content of the plan will be the same.
 - What if it was called "water reclamation plan"?
 - We all understand the point of the change, but how does it affect the accessibility of the name to the public?

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Technical Committee Meeting Notes

Page 3

- I think then we should go back to wastewater.
- Result: The TCC voted to leave the name the same and not change it.
- Item 2 Integration of Plans
 - This topic was discussed during the Water Supply and Water Conservation Sub-committee where it was decided that a small working group would be identified to discuss what level of plan integration would be recommended by the TCCs to the Governing Board.
 - Result: Additional volunteers were added to the group including Kris Garcia, Kelen Shostack, and Ernie Earn.
- Item 3 Septic Management
 - There was a septic sub-committee in 2005, they met 5 times and developed a white paper on septic. That group began by discussing how septic systems could be further regulated. Ultimately, the group did not push for further regulation but instead proposed a plan to identify critical watersheds and put processes into place that would promote better planning amongst the Department of Health, local planning department and local wastewater providers to reduce the impact of septic development on the critical watersheds.
 - The county board of health is not allowed to mandate septage pumping, and so there is very little that can be done unless the law changes. There were a lot of suggestions that didn't really see the light of day from the legislature.
 - Any suggestions of what the utilities can do beyond better planning processes?
 - It's really more about how we plan for the treatment capacity for controlling that waste rather than thinking about specific water bodies, but more so do we have enough capacity to handle that extra load from septic that is coming in, not sure how good of a job we did of this last plan.
 - Mr. Johnson: The last plan looked at the projected BOD loading from septic and assessed if there was sufficient capacity to manage the waste within each county. The questions I've heard from folks in the past is how can we improve our ability to treat that waste and manage it better? Suggestions?
 - Mr. Johnson: There is a need to get a baseline of how much we are currently treating at these plants and where the need exists for better management.
 - Some issues are inconsistent from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, there may be problems with haulers not knowing where to take it, and in one county they may be charging more or less for the amounts. Ernie Earn and I sat down with EPD and created a questionnaire, where is it going, who is accepting it and what are your costs?
 - Ernie Earn: We have four plants in Cobb County and only one accepts septic waste, but it is not in the north, so those people might be taking it to another jurisdiction to dispose.
 - The plan says that every county must have the capacity to process all the septic that is produced in that jurisdiction. We should not let this become a conversation of what the cost is and make sure we don't get drawn into it, but a better handle of who is processing it and what plants have that capacity.
 - It will be important to look at the effects of climate change and whether the plants will even be able to handle the septic waste in the future.
 - You have to be careful of setting ordinances, for example, a jurisdiction might not have capacity to accept septic loads but now might be required to.
 - But that might be part of the plan that those jurisdictions who don't have the capacity to accept septic waste have to take the septic waste to a neighboring jurisdiction.
 - The previous plan recommended that newly designed facilities consider constructing receiving facilities or storage facilities to hold it until they are able to process it.

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Technical Committee Meeting Notes

Page 4

- Potentially we could promote a public private partnership where there is a central receiving facility who handles sludge on a regional basis. Consider asking jurisdictions whether that is something they would want to entertain at all.
- These things may be less technical and more political and may be something to go in front of the governing board
- Mr. Johnson: Late august governing board we can get some more clear thoughts together to put before the board. Danny will reach out to Ernie and Keith Higgs to get info about the survey they created for GAWP.
- Item 4 Potable Reuse vs. Non-Potable Reuse:
 - Suggest that reuse is considered in water conservation issues as well. Right now it is treated as a separated source and it's not. Non-potable reuse needs to be priced in a way that considers conservation. Is the priority to return the water to the stream or to keep the water in a loop internally? There are some competing interests there that we need to figure out what we are doing.
 - Danny: EPD is also involved in this because we are required to meet a certain percentage goal for reuse across the District which includes both indirect potable return flows and non-potable reuse. If there was a push to split these two competing issues apart, should this group promote the goal only for returns to indirect potable reuse and not for consumptive reuse purposes?
 - I think it's an important thing to revisit this.
 - We clearly need to make a distinction to the two because the state is going to take a very different approach to the two down the road.
 - I don't know if I consider putting reclaimed water on a golf course as a water conservation measure.
 - Look at it if it is offsetting a potable water use.
 - A golf course watering in reuse should not be allowed to use more than they would be permitted from the hydrant. All water is the same water and should be treated in the same way.
 - We need to go back to the state on this issue and get some clear direction so that we do not get mixed signals down the road.
 - Mr. Johnson: If the guidance from EPD was different, do you think you would see a shift to specific types of your permits?
 - We are getting mixed signals because of what our permits say. We are not able to get discharge permit because the EPD still says there should not be discharge.
 - The definition of Reuse is when it is used to replace potable water use and not just indiscriminate use. We may need to get a better definition from EPD on what they mean by reuse.
 - Result: District staff will work with EPD to obtain clear guidance on this issue for the plan update.
- Item 5 TCC's Work with the Consultant During the Plan Update:
 - TCC needs to be involved in scope development, with adequate time to review.
 - Result: More intensive TCC involvement with both scope preparation and the on-going work of the consultant.

2013 Implementation Report Results

Sarah Skinner provided an overview of the 2013 Implementation Review. The report was published electronically this year in order to provide the user with more accessibility to the information and to enable the user to do more personal analysis with the data. Additionally, she went over the results for wastewater survey.

Proposed 2014 Implementation Survey

Mr. Johnson reviewed the proposed questions for the 2014 Wastewater Implementation Survey. The comment period will be open for two weeks until June 4th. There were no immediate questions or comments.

Other Items

Kostoula Vallianos announced the My Drop Counts water conservation videos won two Telly awards. The Telly Awards honors the very best film & video productions, groundbreaking online video content, and outstanding local, regional, & cable TV commercials and programs.

Ms. Vallianos also announced the winners of the 2014 High School Video Contest entitled “F.O.G. Clogs”. The winning video was shown to the sub-committee. The TCC was encouraged to watch the 2nd and 3rd place winners on their own on the www.northgeorgiawater.org website.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.