



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes
August 26, 2015

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Wednesday, August 26, 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

Ms. Katie Kirkpatrick, Vice Chair

Hon. Buzz Ahrens

Hon. Greg Clifton

Hon. Tim Lee

Hon. Charlotte Nash

Hon. Richard Oden

Hon. Larry Owens

Ms. Pamela Burnett

Mr. Brad Currey

Ms. Kit Dunlap

Mr. Tim Thoms

Mr. Steven Woodruff

Clayton County Designee: Mr. Mike Thomas

Douglas County Designee: Mr. Gil Shearouse

Forsyth County Designee: Mr. Jon Heard

Hall County Designee: Mr. Kelly Randall

Henry County Designee: Mr. Tony Carnell

Members Not Present

Mr. Birdel Jackson, Secretary/Treasurer

Hon. Kasim Reed

Hon. Lee May

Hon. John Eaves

Hon. Mathew Santini

Mr. William Thomas Craig

Mr. Chuck Huling

Mr. Gerald Pouncey

Chairman Boyd Austin called the meeting to order.

Drought/Lake Level/Water Litigation Update

Katherine Zitsch gave a brief overview of what we can expect because of El Nino conditions across the southeast in the upcoming year. This causes Georgia weather to typically trend toward a wetter than normal winter and cooler than average temperatures. Lower hurricane activity is anticipated. During the 1997 El Nino, however, the southeast had higher precipitation but not cooler temperatures. In fact it was one of the warmest and wettest winters on record.

Ms. Zitsch noted that there is not much to update on the ACF Supreme Court case as all parties are currently in the discovery phase. In the ACT basin, multiple parties have filed lawsuits against the US Corps of Engineers. The courts are hearing motions to transfer the cases to Georgia. A decision is expected soon.

EPD is updating its triennial water quality rules. A fact sheet is available to board members upon request.

New District Website Launch

Sarah Skinner provided an overview of the new District website and highlighted the new key features that will make navigating meeting information and searching planning documents more user friendly. The web address will remain www.northgeorgiawater.org.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Chairman Austin called for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the June 16, 2015 meeting minutes was made by Ms. Kit Dunlap, seconded by Mr. Brad Currey and passed without opposition.

2015 Middle School Essay Contest

Chairman Austin announced the 2015 Middle School Essay Contest. Students will be asked “Why is stormwater pollution a problem and what can you do to prevent it?” The City of Atlanta and each County winners’ prize is \$100. The entry deadline is October 16th. An awards reception will be held in the South Wing of the Georgia Capitol on Wednesday, December 16th from 10 am -12 pm. District-wide winner and runner-up will be announced at the awards reception.

Water Sense Sales Tax Holiday

Chairman Austin noted that Friday, October 2nd to Sunday, October 4th is a sales tax holiday for WaterSense and ENERGY STAR labeled products. All WaterSense and ENERGY STAR labeled products with a sales price of \$1,500 or less purchased for non-commercial home or personal use will be Georgia state and local sales tax-free. The current sales tax holiday will be sun setting this year so new legislation will be needed in the 2016 session.

Vice Chair Kirkpatrick asked if the state knows how much state tax is not collected during the sales tax holiday weekend.

Schedule for 2015 and 2016

Chairman Austin noted the scheduled dates for District Board Meetings in 2015 and 2016 as follows:

- December 2, 2015
- February 24, 2016
- June 1, 2016
- August 24, 2016
- December 7, 2016

State Grant Opportunity

Chris Faulkner provided an update on a recent grant opportunity for the District. Georgia EPD has issued a request for proposals for 319h grant funds that will provide up to \$400,000 to communities with a 60:40 cost share requirement. District staff will explore opportunities to

apply for funding to meet District initiatives. Additionally, District staff is available for technical assistance to help communities with their applications. The deadline for proposals is November 2, 2015.

Water Demand Forecasting

Ms. Zitsch provided an overview of the water demand forecasts prepared for the 2016 Water Management Plan Update. The forecasts for the year 2050 align with the same timeframe as being prepared by the other 10 regional water planning councils. Two inputs for population projections were used including the ARC projection that was completed for the entire 15 county District and projections provided by the Georgia Office of Planning and Budget. When compared to the 2009 water forecasts for 2050, the 2050 forecasted demands are 25 percent lower. The forecasts included an uncertainty factor of 13 percent for 2050 that was generated from a 65 percentile demand forecast. The new estimates assume a region wide 2016 per capita water use of 108 gallons per day.

The following questions were received:

Q: Do the per capita numbers include commercial?

A: *Yes, and industrial if supplied by municipal facilities.*

Q: Does this mean that we are attracting a less water intensive industrial mix?

A: *This is generally a function of efficiency and conservation driving down water usage.*

Q: What impact will this have on the ACF Supreme Court case?

A: *We can't speculate how the case will play out. This update was performed because we are required by state law to update the projections with the plan update.*

Q: Do these numbers consider return flows?

A: *No, but note that in 2009, we returned 82 percent of our withdrawn water to surface waters.*

Board member statement – I am concerned with the baseline population numbers. Additionally, to generate water availability for newer systems, we need to push on older systems to do more to conserve water. The challenge is to get more efficiency with jurisdictions that are above the average with efficiency.

Q: Do these numbers consider lost water?

A: *Yes. We looked at both water withdrawals and the amount of water sold.*

Q: Are we looking for any compensation to address old infrastructure?

A: *There is a new state requirement that all communities over 3,300 in population perform a water system audit. The audit helps those utilities identify their greatest contributing factors to system losses. There is an inherent bottom line of system loss percentage that can be attained. The District can play a role in helping communities achieve reductions in system loss.*

Board member statement – I think we should all give ourselves a big pat on the back based on these results. We need to tell the Governor that we have spent our money wisely. As there is still room for conservation, we can continue to make ourselves a leader in wise water use.

Board member comment – The 65 percent uncertainty factor seems low. If we are trying to hit a reasonably conservative mark, we should consider using a higher factor.

Q: Could we look at updating the forecasts on an annual basis?

A: *We could do as the Board wishes, but consider it takes significant resources to update water demand forecasts.*

Q: What do we know about available supply?

A: *We have not quantified available supply because of the uncertainty of supply due to the lawsuits, but without uncertainty due to lawsuits we expect there is ample supply available to meet these needs and beyond.*

Board Member comment – What level of contingency do we need? We will eventually need the supply that was planned for in past years, but the date may be further into the future.

Board Member comment – We have a great story to tell. We still project strong economic growth. We can see that conservation is starting to take effect and all of the elements of withdrawals and returns play a part.

Utility Climate Resiliency Study Results

Shayne Wood and Kirk Westphal, with CDM Smith, provided an overview of the Utility Climate Resiliency Study results. Mr. Wood noted that the goal of the study was not to be predictive of future climate conditions but to assess the potential vulnerability of water resources and related infrastructure given a range of potential climate conditions in the future. The range of future climate conditions included historic trend patterns as well as multiple global climate models. Trends ranged from an increase in temperature between 1 to 7 degrees F and changes in precipitation between -2 to +11 inches per year. Generally, the climate trends depicted a tendency toward increased drought conditions coupled with more intense rainfall events.

Mr. Westphal provided examples of the risk assessment for various types of water resources and infrastructure and demonstrated how adaptation recommendations were presented for each. The report recommends communities and utilities incorporate preemptive adaptation measures such as drought management planning and installation of green infrastructure. Additionally, the report recommends that utilities consider recommendations from the study when updating local master plans. The report also recommends that communities and utilities establish climate tracking protocols and identify trigger levels for adaptive measures.

2016 Water Management Plan Update Status

Rick Brownlow with CH2M provided an update on the status of the 2016 Water Management Plan update. Mr. Brownlow presented the schedule for plan completion and explained that District Staff and CH2M have just completed a round of TCC and BCC stakeholder meetings

where the updated, revised, consolidated and new action items were presented for discussion. Additionally, a Septic TCC subcommittee has been formed to perform a deeper dive into septic planning issues of interest such as finding ways to encourage maintenance of septic systems, assessing available facility capacity to accept septage, and discussing future septic system planning and coordination. A Board Working Group has also been formed to discuss District initiatives and discuss specific issues of interest to the Board. The plan update is on track for board approval and submission to EPD by November 2016.