



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes
February 24, 2016**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Wednesday, February 24, 2016 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. Edward Johnson
Hon. Charlotte Nash
Ms. Pamela Burnett
Mr. Brad Currey
Mr. Chuck Huling
Mr. Gerald Pouncey

Mr. Tim Thoms
Cherokee County Designee: Mr. David Kubala
Cobb County Designee: Ms. Kellie Brownlow
DeKalb County Designee: Mr. Charles Lambert
Douglas County Designee: Mr. Gil Shearouse
Fulton County Designee: Nick Ammons
Hall County Designee: Bryan Lackey
Henry County Designee: Tony Carnell

Members Not Present

Mr. Birdel Jackson, Secretary/Treasurer
Hon. Kasim Reed
Hon. Mathew Santini
Hon. Jeff Turner
Hon. Larry Owens

Hon. Ford Gravitt
Hon. Richard Oden
Mr. William Thomas Craig
Ms. Kit Dunlap
Mr. Steven Woodruff

Chairman Boyd Austin called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

A motion to amend the agenda for a public comment that did not pertain to an agenda item was made by Mr. Tim Thoms, seconded by Hon. Charlotte Nash and passed without opposition.

Steve Williams – Mr. Williams provided an overview of water savings achieved through a water audit and water systems update of the Bank of America Plaza in Midtown. Programs such as the City of Atlanta’s Better Business Challenge were discussed as methods to incentivize others to participate in similar water use reduction initiatives in the commercial sector.

Laura Hartt – Ms. Hartt commended the Metro Water District on its renewed commitment to water conservation toward the commercial sector and transparency during the water forecasting work. Ms. Hartt also requested that references to the Glades Reservoir be removed from the

District Plan and that the District partner with the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper to discuss flows on the Chattahoochee River at Peachtree Creek.

Ben Emmanuel – Mr. Emmanuel thanked the District for its progress to date in water efficiency and urged the development of economic analysis for new action items on a utility level but that it not inhibit regional planning progress.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Chairman Austin called for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the December 2, 2015 meeting minutes was made by Hon. Nash, seconded by Mr. Gerald Pouncey and passed without opposition.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Lake Level/Litigation Update

Chairman Austin provided a brief overview on the lake levels, stating that Lake Lanier is slightly below 1071 which is one foot above full pool elevation.

Water Control Manual comments were provided to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by ARC at the end of January. We expect the Corps to finalize the Water Control Manual by the end of the year or early 2017. The Supreme Court case is still ongoing. Witness depositions are to be completed by Monday. Expert reports are also due Monday. The ACT court case is also still ongoing with no particular update at this time.

District STREAM Awards

Chairman Austin reminded the Board that in June 2015, a panel of national experts on commercial water conservation spoke with the Governing Board and led a workshop for TCC members. One of those experts spoke about an awards program they initiated as a way to recognize their member utilities for programs and projects of excellence.

At the December Governing Board meeting, it was recommended that we look into starting an awards program of our own. Therefore, the District will begin the inaugural STREAM Awards for Programs and Projects of Excellence that will coincide with the 15-year anniversary celebration of the Metro Water District on June 1st.

The STREAM awards will look at programs and projects in the four planning areas that:

- use SUSTAINABLE practices,
- are THOUGHTFUL and innovative,
- have a REGIONAL approach,
- ENGAGE the community,
- can be APPLIED by other jurisdictions across the District and
- can show MEASURED success.

The District will also be presenting an award for Excellence in Integration and Coordination. Projects and programs will be nominated by the jurisdictions. The nomination form will be

emailed to TCC members this week. The nominations will be open for one month and at the end of the nomination period, we will have a committee of the Board make the selection.

Chairman Austin noted that the work our utilities and authorities have done over the last 15 years is truly extraordinary and he hopes this will be a good way to recognize the great things the jurisdictions and utilities are doing.

2016 Legislative Breakfast Recap

Chairman Austin provided an overview of the Legislative Breakfast stating that it was a great success. Several state legislators from within and outside the metro area dropped by. The District engaged in a lot of good conversation regarding our region's water conservation with our legislators. Some did not know about the District, so it was a great opportunity to share with them who we are and what we do. We also had a draft resolution on display recognizing the District for its 15 years of water stewardship. After the event, the group took a picture with Governor Deal.

Chairman Austin expressed thanks to everyone who attended the breakfast and noted that it is imperative we help our legislators understand the importance of the work we do. The following legislators were noted in attendance:

- Senate Natural Resources Committee Chairman, Frank Ginn
- Rep. Debbie Buckner
- Rep. Paulette Rakestraw
- Rep. Dee Dawkins-Haigler
- Rep. Mike Glanton

Chairman Austin noted that Sen Ginn reached out to Nick Ammons to set up a tour of a treatment plant for the Senate Natural Resources Committee. This would provide a great opportunity for the Committee to get a glimpse of what we do and a reminder to keep water resources in mind.

Legislative Update

Mr. Chris Faulkner provided an overview of the legislative agenda. Mr. Faulkner announced that today is day 27 of the legislative session and referenced the following bills that are of relevance to the District.

- **SB 321 – Commerce and Trade; state government; protections against public disclosure of certain information:** The original bill would prohibit the public disclosure of utility bill information by establishing them as trade secrets. This bill appears aimed at a 2015 City of Atlanta ordinance relating to sustainable buildings by requiring the public reporting of utility usage of buildings over 25,000 sq. ft. A substitute bill was introduced prohibiting, without consent, publicly releasing a person's utility use data. A "Person" would be defined as "any individual or corporation, partnership, association, or any other legal entity." This substitute does not claim this information as a trade secret. There could be an impact on collecting data for planning and implementation purposes by the District and its utilities. The District's Legislative Committee recommends the District Board oppose this bill.

Status: Feb/22/2016 – Passed Committee by Substitute

- **SB 206 – Counties and Municipal Corporations: revise provisions relating to water liens; procedures:** This bill was introduced last year and GAWP officially opposed the original bill and has provided testimony on the 1st substitute. The original bill proposes that if a property changes hands, water supply to all properties, not just single family, must be turned on even if there are outstanding charges. This would likely force utilities to take a strong role in applying liens to properties and enforcing them to obtain back payment and could add administrative burden. Senator Bethel introduced a substitute that appears to address many of our utilities' concerns. However, there still may be concerns over language involving requirements to supply water to commercial accounts irrespective of outstanding water bills. The District's Legislative Committee recommends the District Board continue to track this bill.

Status: Feb/23/2016 – 2nd Substitute discussed, final action 2/25/16

Other bills of moderate interest to the District:

- **SB 326 – Soil Erosion and Sedimentation; shorten the time period before permit issuance/denial by local issuing authorities:** This bill would shorten the required review period for soil and erosion control plans from 45 days to 14 days with the Local Issuing Authority and proposes changes to qualifications for plan review from a Level II certification to being professionally licensed such as a PE, PG, etc. It has been said this bill has more to do with Soil and Water District reviews, though could have implications for local reviews.

Status: Feb/04/2016 - Senate Read and Referred

- **HB 966 – Conservation; soil erosion and sedimentation; provide buffer along all state waters:** This bill proposed to refine the point from which buffers are measures by establishing the ordinary high water mark rather than wrested vegetation as the point where the 25 foot buffer is measured. Per the proposed bill “Ordinary high water mark” means the line of demarcation along state waters established by the fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics such as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank, shelving, changes in the character of soil, destruction or wresting of terrestrial vegetation, the presence of litter and debris, or other appropriate means that consider the characteristics of the surrounding areas.” There appears to be many questions surrounding how the “ordinary high water mark” will be established and what the implications of such a law may be.

Status: Feb/11/2016 - House Second Readers

Schedule for remainder of the session:

- Crossover Day is scheduled for Monday, February 29.
- Sine Die is scheduled for Thursday, March, 24.
- Legislative Committee session wrap-up call will be scheduled soon. An earlier call prior to the end of the session may be scheduled as needed.

A motion was made to adopt the legislative agenda by Vice Chair Katie Kirkpatrick, seconded by Mr. Thoms and passed without opposition.

Education and Outreach Update

Ms. Kostoula Vallianos provided an overview of Education and Outreach activities. The Metro Water District has entered into a partnership with the UGA Extension to prepare education and outreach materials for a WaterWise Landscape Guide and to merge our separate water conservation pledges. This will help leverage the District's resources and share data through co-branding materials and co-promoting of programs.

The partnership looks forward to expanding the WaterWise Landscape program to include advanced training for Master Gardners and may include a UGA-led Master Gardner water-wise certification.

The Metro Water District has completed the 2015 Residential Water Survey and is currently analyzing the data. Ms. Vallianos plans to present the results during the June 1, 2016 Board meeting.

Ms. Vallianos reminded the board that the 2016 Water Drop Dash will be held on March 19, 2016 at the Chattahoochee Nature Center.

Water District Video

Chairman Austin introduced a new video prepared by the Metro Water District. The video is intended to connect the dots between water stewardship and the need to continually invest in our water infrastructure. The video is being debuted in partnership with the Council for Quality Growth at a series of many of the state of the county events that gather a great audience of political, business and community leadership in our region. Chairman Austin encouraged Board members to use the video as they meet with various audiences around the region and state.

Remaining Schedule for 2016

Chairman Austin reminded the Board of the remaining meetings for 2016 as follows:

- June 1, 2016
- August 24, 2016
- December 7, 2016

Following the June 1, 2016 Board Meeting, the District will hold a 15-year Metro Water District Anniversary Reception. The Board meeting will be held in the Loudermilk Amphitheater followed immediately by the reception in the old Youth Arts Museum on the Auburn Avenue side of the block.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Plan Amendments

Forsyth County Plan Amendment

At their December meeting, the Executive Committee voted that the Forsyth-requested amendment to the Wastewater Management Plan be categorized as minor. The amendment was released for the required 15-day public comment period. One comment was received supporting the amendment. The Executive Committee voted to recommend the approval of the amendment at their meeting earlier this morning. A motion was made to adopt the plan amendment by Hon. Charlotte Nash, seconded by Mr. Tony Carnell, and passed with no opposition.

District 2016 Management Plan Update Status

Mr. Danny Johnson provided a status update on the 2016 Plan Update. Mr. Johnson stated that the plan approval timeline has been extended to January 31, 2017 in order for the District to coordinate planning activities with neighboring regional water councils who are also updating their water management plans. Draft documents will be provided to the TCCs, BACs and EPD in the spring of 2016 and then a draft will be provided to the Governing Board for review in the summer.

Governing Board Working Group Report Out

Vice Chair Kirkpatrick provided a report out from the Governing Board Working Group. Vice Chair Kirkpatrick acknowledged the 10 board members for their participation in the group and thanked them for their service.

The Board Working Group met on February 2, 2016. The discussion focus was on septic management planning. The group reviewed proposed revisions that would expand the requirements of existing septic management action items. Following the review, the group determined there is a need to assess the relationship of septic system and water quality before recommending additional required septic management action items moving forward.

Information is limited on the impacts to surface water quality in the Piedmont region from septic use, particularly in relation to phosphorus. Additionally, recent studies have identified a weak connection to bacteria in higher septic-concentrated watershed. Advanced studies will help further define the local relationships.

Because there is a lack of data available to support new septic management initiatives, the Governing Board Working Group recommends that the Metro Water District participate in and support additional monitoring and research in partnership with academic institutions and its member jurisdictions. In addition, the GBWG also recommends the following: 1) Maintain the current set of septic management practices from the 2009 Management Plan, 2) Include a recommendation in the Water Resource Management Plan Update that member jurisdictions implement either or both of the following voluntary programs: a) Septic system inspection and pump out incentive program and/or b) Program to require septic inspections and sizing criteria evaluation when issuing building permits for home renovations. The District's Technical Assistance Program could play an enhanced support role to target the areas, at least anecdotally, that would most likely benefit from these voluntary programs.

The Working Group also discussed how the Plan Update would address policy recommendations to the State. The Governing Board Working Group recommends that this section be pulled out of the District Plan and placed on the District website as a living document that could be updated as necessary based on Governing Board approval. The document would be reviewed by a

committee each year prior to the annual legislative session and presented to the Governing Board at the December meeting for approval. This move could also serve as a guide to the District's work focus between planning cycles. The Board voted to approve the recommendations of the Governing Board Working Group without opposition.

Integrated Decision Support Tool

Mr. Robert Osborne with Black and Veatch provided an overview of the Integrated Decision Support Tool (IDST) developed in parallel with the District Plan Update. The tool will allow the District and its stakeholders the opportunity to leverage existing and projected data, visualize and better understand the interdependencies of water resource management decisions and provide scenario planning. The IDST is built using GoldSim where model elements are represented graphically. The IDST assesses changes in watershed flow and phosphorus loading based on a variety of input options representing alternative management strategies. Mr. Osborne stated that the tool should only be used as a comparison tool to assess various alternative management strategies. The IDST is not a precipitation-runoff model, a hydraulic model or a water quality model.

Mr. Osborne presented a few example scenarios and discussed the inputs and outputs from the simulation and how the results could be used to compare two alternative management strategies.

One board member noted that the tool does not include a cost/benefit analysis and does not look at what loadings are coming into the District from outside sources.

Role of Land Use Community in Non-point Source Discussion

Mr. Faulkner gave a brief overview of how District Staff have been working with and engaging counterparts who work in land use on water issues. Mr. Faulkner reminded the Board of an earlier request for better coordination particularly between stormwater / watershed and land use.

Mr. Faulkner highlighted a presentation he gave at the December 2015 Land Use Coordinating Committee (LUCC) meeting on the water plan update. In that presentation he stressed the need for LUCC members to be aware of the plan's action items as they too have a role in implementation. Mr. Faulkner indicated the presentation was well received and that he would be working with the appropriate ARC staff to plan and conduct a joint Watershed TCC sub-committee / LUCC meeting during the summer of 2016. They would also work together to develop a workshop for local planning and land-use staff on stormwater management.

H2OTech Cluster and Water Opportunities

Mr. Daniel Deocampo with Georgia State discussed the H2OTech Cluster and opportunities for local involvement. Georgia State has been approved by Georgia EPA to serve as the region lead for the EPA Water Cluster Program in EPA Region Four. A Water Cluster is defined as a dense regional network of companies, universities, research institutions and other stakeholders involved in a single industry. Mr. Deocampo requested input from the District Board on the critical issues faced by local stakeholders and what potential technological solutions could be explored to meet those challenges. The cluster program provides a means to incubate ideas and develop solutions that both benefit the water industry and support economic growth.