



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District  
GOVERNING BOARD  
Minutes  
June 1, 2016**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Wednesday, June 1, 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  
Mr. Birdel Jackson, Treasurer  
Hon Buzz Ahrens  
Hon. Larry Owens  
Hon. Danny Dunagan  
Hon. Richard Oden  
Dr. Mark Berry  
Ms. Pamela Burnett

Mr. Brad Currey  
Mr. Gerald Pouncey  
Mr. Tim Thoms  
Mr. Steven Woodruff  
Clayton County Designee: Mr. Mike Thomas  
Douglas County Designee: Mr. Gil Shearouse  
Fulton County Designee: Nick Ammons  
Gwinnett County Designee: Kevin Farrell  
Henry County Designee: Tony Carnell

**Members Not Present**

Hon. Kasim Reed  
Hon. Mathew Santini  
Hon. Tim Lee  
Hon. Lee May

Hon. Edward Johnson  
Hon. Ford Gravitt  
Ms. Kit Dunlap  
Mr. Chuck Huling

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 February 24, 2016 meeting minutes was made by Hon. Richard Oden, seconded by Mr. Tony Carnell and passed without opposition.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Lake Level/Drought Conditions Litigation Update**

Ms. Katherine Zitsch provided an overview on the current drought conditions. According to the US Drought Monitor, the metro Atlanta region is currently in a moderate drought. Lake Lanier is

at 1069.16' (full pool is 1071'), Allatoona Lake is at 839.97' (full pool is 840') and West Point Lake is at 631.38' (full pool is 635').

Ms. Zitsch provided an overview the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' forecasted lake levels for West Point Lake as well as how the management zones in West Point Lake affect Lake Lanier releases. Ms. Zitsch presented a comparison chart of Lake Lanier elevations for 2016 and how they relate to the 2006-2008 drought period. The comparison demonstrated current lake levels are almost two feet higher now than in June 2006. A similar rate of lake level decline that was seen in 2006 is starting to develop. However, the Corps has changed their operating procedures for the system since the 2006 drought, so we would not expect the same decline. Metro Water District staff will continue to track water levels and trends.

### **FL v. GA - ACF Supreme Court Litigation**

Ms. Zitsch presented the status of the ACF Supreme Court litigation. This was based upon the information available to the public on the case website. Depositions of non-experts were completed on February 29, 2016. Expert reports were submitted by each state. The case is moving to the stage in which the experts are deposed.

At this time, the trial date has not been set.

The following question was received:

Q: What is the current status of mediation?

A: To the best of my knowledge, mediation is ongoing. The state is taking mediation seriously.

### **ACT Litigation**

Litigation is ongoing in two different venues related to the ACT Water Control Manual— one in the Northern District of Georgia and one in the DC District Court. Both of these cases are ongoing.

### **Congress**

The draft 2016 Water Resources Development Act has been released. As drafted, it does not include language that would be damaging to Georgia's water supplies. The Georgia delegation came together to help keep the bill clean. The House bill recommends removal of language in the 2014 Water Resources Development Act that has been used against Georgia in litigation.

Several appropriations bills, along with proposed amendments and committee reports, are currently moving through Congress that include language that could be detrimental to Georgia. Our delegation is working to defeat any potentially damaging amendments and to remove potentially harmful report language.

The following question was received:

Q: What is the status of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Water Control Manual for the ACF?

A: The Corps is currently reviewing comments. We anticipate the final manual will be released in late 2016 or early 2017. This will be followed by a formal public comment process and then a record of decision.

Chairman Austin reiterated the great work that has been done by the Georgia congressional delegation.

### **2016 Legislative Agenda**

Chairman Austin noted that the Metro Water District followed several bills through the Georgia legislative process in 2016 including:

- Senate Bill 206 - Counties and Municipal Corporations: revise provisions relating to water liens; procedures; passed substitute.
- Senate Bill 346 - Environmental Policy Act"; exempt projects for construction/improvement of public roads from environmental effects reports; passed and signed.

The Metro Water District was pleased to note that the WaterSense Sales Tax Holiday was extended for an additional year.

### **Education and Outreach Update**

Ms. Kostoula Vallianos presented an update on this year's Education and Outreach activities. The 2016 WaterDrop Dash 5K Race was another success and received positive media coverage. The High School Video Contest receive 116 videos from students around the Metro Water District related to this year's topic, "Don't Blow It," which focuses on the need to bag yard waste instead of blowing it down the storm drain. Ms. Vallianos noted other recent events, including the two children's water festivals held on the north and south side of the District, and announced the 2017 Calendar Photo Contest.

### **2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Audit**

Chairman Austin announced that a copy of the 2015 CAFR is available for members to review.

### **District's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

Chairman Austin noted that this year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> year since the legislation was passed that created the Metro Water District. Immediately following the board meeting, the District will hold the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. The event will be a celebration of our collective successes and accomplishments, our involvement in state water policy discussions and our role in bringing awareness to the importance of water resource stewardship. Our guest speaker will be US Representative Lynn Westmoreland as well as presentations by State Senator Frank Ginn and State Representative Lynn Smith, the chairs of their respective Natural Resource and Environment Committees.

During the celebration, there will be a special presentation of the inaugural STREAM Awards for Programs and Projects of Excellence.

### **Schedule for 2016 and 2017**

Chairman Austin noted that the scheduled dates for District Board Meetings in 2016 and 2017 are as follows:

- August 24, 2016
- December 7, 2016
- February 22, 2017
- June 7, 2017
- August 23, 2017
- December 6, 2017

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **2017 Budget and Work Program**

Secretary/Treasurer Birdel Jackson provided an overview of the 2017 Budget and Work Program. For the 2017 Budget, the Finance Committee proposes increasing the per capita dues from the current 16 cents to 20 cents to fund a study to evaluate the impact of septic systems on water quality.

The following question was received:

Q: How long would the 20 cents be in effect?

A: *Just for 2017.*

Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve the 2017 budget and work program. Chairman Austin explained that a recommendation of a committee of the Board does not require a second. The 2017 budget passed without opposition.

### **BAC Membership Drive**

Chairman Austin noted that every two years, District staff holds a BAC membership recruitment drive in an effort to increase the membership in BACs that lack the 20-member minimum and to maintain a balance of interests among members. Through the recruitment drive, 25 new and 11 existing applicants applied for BAC membership. All applications were approved during the Executive Committee meeting this morning.

### **Water District Residential Survey Results**

Ms. Vallianos provided an overview of the 2015 Residential Water Survey. This county level telephone and cell phone survey reached over 4,800 households and was conducted in the fall of 2015 to provide the District better insights about metro Atlanta's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding water quality and water conservation. This information will drive education and outreach efforts in the District for the next several years. The District plans to revisit the survey in 2020 and every five years thereafter.

### **Georgia EPD Update**

Ms. Gail Cowie provided an update on activities at the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Ms. Cowie announced that Georgia EPD will have a new Director, Richard Dunn, and Assistant Director, Lauren Currey, starting in June 2016. Ms. Cowie covered a range of topics including statewide water audits, safe drinking water supply, the triennial review, anti-degradation review changes, EPA's new health criteria for constituents, the Georgia Stormwater Manual update, MS4 permits, Safe Dams permitting, regional water planning.

Chairman Austin requested volunteers to participate in an Emerging Issues Committee that will discuss recent and trending dry conditions in the District.

Mr. Brad Currey noted that 15-years ago, the Georgia legislature appointed a Water Resources Study Committee that included himself and five other citizen members. The committee, which included the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, recommended state water planning. Harold Reheis was the hero of the legislation who got the Governor and the legislature to pass three bills: the creation of the Metro Water District, the Flint River Drought Protection Plan, and the Coastal Plan. The work of the Metro Water District sets the standard for water conservation and

implementation. Mr. Currey hopes that all will applaud Mr. Reheis for his accomplishments 15 years ago.

### **Local Response to National Issues – Lead in Pipes**

Ms. Pam Burnett introduced a panel of local utility members to discuss how their utilities have and are addressing customer concerns in response to the Flint, Michigan lead in pipes crisis. Ms. Burnett discussed the economic difficulties faced in Flint and how the state government took over receivership of the Flint water system and became the emergency manager. In an effort to save money on purchased water from Detroit, the emergency manager transitioned the water supply to a new source in 2014. Customers immediately began complaining about the taste and smell of the water. The treatment plant operators expressed concerns but they were not taken seriously by the state. The new water supply was more corrosive to pipes than the finished water from Detroit. The increased corrosivity of the water allowed lead to leach out of the customer's lead water service lines which ultimately led to current health crisis.

Ms. Burnett introduced the four panelists:

Michael Thomas – Clayton County Water Authority

The Clayton County Water Authority has always used a corrosion inhibitor. Following the Flint, Michigan news, the Authority did receive a couple of calls from customers. In response, the Authority transitioned its required three-year sampling protocol to once every two years. The Authority believes it important to demonstrate confidence in our tap water and built a portable water container to be used at events for free drinking water. The stories like Flint, Michigan make it difficult for us to maintain that confidence.

Kathy Nguyen – Cobb County Water System

The southeast is different from the types of system seen in Flint, Michigan in that we do not have shared water service lines. Additionally, the Cobb County Water System (CCWS) does not have lead in the main water system pipes, but it can be found in older homes built before 1985 on the customer side of the meter. The CCWS's lead sampling program focuses on homes built before 1985. The CCWS created a two sided document for customers discussing the issues related to lead in service pipes, what CCWS does to protect the water supply and what customers can do if they have concerns. The CCWS has received more calls in recent months and is placing more attention on customer service.

Eric Osborne - Henry County Water and Sewer Authority

The Henry County Water and Sewer Authority (HCWSA) has not received many calls about lead in pipes but always tries to spend extra time with customers who do call as this is our best early warning that we may have a problem. The HCWSA has not seen any evidence of lead in their service water lines and continues to maintain protocols to ensure corrosion control in the system. Mr. Osborne discussed proposed changes to EPA regulations and noted that in the future, HCWSA customers will be the first samplers of water.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.