



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes
December 6, 2017**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. in the Harry West Board Room at the Atlanta Regional Commission office in Atlanta, Georgia.

Members Present

Ms. Katie Kirkpatrick, Vice Chair
Mr. Birdel Jackson, Treasurer
Hon. Buzz Ahrens
Hon. June Wood
Hon. Oz Nesbitt
Mr. Mark Berry
Ms. Pam Burnett
Mr. Brad Currey
Mr. Tim Lee

Mr. Glenn Page
Mr. Tim Thoms
Clayton County Designee: Mr. Mike Thomas
Cobb County Designee: Ms. Judy Skeel
DeKalb County Designee: Mr. Ted Rhinehardt
Douglas County Designee: Gil Shearouse
Fulton County Designee: Mr. Nick Ammons
Gwinnett County Designee: Kevin Farrell

Members Not Present

Hon. Kasim Reed
Hon. Edward Johnson
Hon. Mathew Santini
Hon. Larry Owens
Hon. Ford Gravitt

Hon. Richard Higgins
Hon. Boyd Austin
Ms. Kit Dunlap
Mr. Gerald Pouncey

Vice Chair Katie Kirkpatrick called the meeting to order.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Kirkpatrick called for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the August 23, 2017 meeting minutes was made by Mr. Brad Currey, seconded by Hon. June Wood and passed without opposition.

VICE CHAIR'S REPORT

Litigation/Drought Conditions Update

Katherine Zitsch announced a court decision has been reached in the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority(CCMWA)/Atlanta Regional Commission/State of Georgia v. US Army Corps

of Engineers (USACE) case ruling that the USACE must consider the water supply requests for additional water from Allatoona Lake. Details on schedule are being worked out.

Ms. Zitsch noted that the Supreme Court has scheduled oral arguments in the Florida v. Georgia case on January 8, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. Another interstate water case, Texas v. New Mexico will be heard just prior to the Georgia case. Ms. Zitsch added that it was expected the Supreme Court would hear oral argument in this case because it involves an interstate dispute. The court is expected to rule before the session ends in June 2018.

Ms. Zitsch gave a brief overview of drought conditions across the metro region. The elevation of Lake Lanier is approximately 1065.5, or 4.5 feet below the full winter pool elevation of 1070. With the current levels, there is better than a 50 percent chance that the lake will refill by spring 2018.

BAC Chair Election Results

Vice Chair Kirkpatrick noted the results of the Basin Advisory Council Chair elections for 2018-2019. The following were elected as Chair of their respective councils:

Warren Howe - Chattahoochee BAC
Bruce Coyle - Coosa/Etowah BAC
Stephanie Grande - Flint BAC
Tom Vivello - Lake Lanier BAC
Steve Williams- Ocmulgee BAC Chair
Jill Stachura - Oconee BAC

Education and Outreach Update

Ms. Sarah Skinner provided an update on upcoming Education and Outreach activities and events. The 2018 Calendar Contest had over 40 participants submitting around 120 entries. Ms. Skinner announced the winning cover photo by Harry Hyaduck of Jonesboro. The 16th Annual Essay Contest had over 1,200 essays submitted by middle schoolers around the region. The topic required the students to explain why water quality and water quantity are equally important. The recognition event will take place at the Georgia State Capitol on December 13, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

Ms. Skinner recapped the 2nd Annual Storm the Watershed 5K/15K Trail Run held at the Henry County Cubihatcha Outdoor Education Center. Over 150 attended the race including partners from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals, Henry County, Fulton County, Gwinnett County, Cobb County, and the City of Griffin.

Schedule for 2018

Vice Chair Kirkpatrick announced the Governing Board meetings dates for 2018 as follows:

February 28, 2018
May 23, 2018
August 22, 2018
December 5, 2018

Executive Committee Report

2017 Year End Budget Revision

Mr. Birdel Jackson presented the Finance and Executive Committee's recommendations on the 2017 year end budget revision. A motion to approve the 2017 year end budget revision was made by Hon. Wood, seconded by Mr. Currey and passed without opposition.

Plan Amendment for Public Review

Paulding County

Vice Chair Kirkpatrick announced that the Executive Committee voted to approve the Paulding County amendment request as a major amendment, requiring a 30-day public comment period. The Governing Board will be voting on the amendment request at the February meeting.

Intergovernmental Coordination Meetings

Mr. Danny Johnson provided an overview of the six intergovernmental coordination meetings held across the District from September to November. District staff invited elected officials and managers of planning and zoning, code enforcement, building permit offices, and site plan review departments to attend. The meetings provided a means to communicate the requirements of the Water Resource Management Plan to the non-water related local government departments. Over 240 members from 84 participating local governments attended the meetings.

Agricultural Water Use in Georgia and the Metro Region

Mr. Mark Masters from the Georgia Water Policy Center (GWPC) in Albany, GA provided an overview of agricultural water use in Georgia and the Metro Water District. The GWPC provides technical support for Georgia EPD and the State Water Planning Councils by collecting and summarizing water use data in the agriculture sector. Mr. Masters discussed irrigation technology, presented data on water use within the Metro Water District as well as the Lower Flint region and discussed the importance of irrigation to successful crop production especially during periods of droughts. Mr. Masters noted that Georgia has had a moratorium on new well permits from the Floridan Aquifer effectively since 1999, whereas Alabama is offering incentives to farmers to install irrigation systems just over the state line.

The following questions were asked:

Question: Would you tell us more about the latest technology with moisture sensors and the work at the Stripling Irrigation Research Park is progressing?

Answer: The Stripling Irrigation Center is a state of the art research and education center operated by the University of Georgia. They receive funding from federal and university research grants to evaluate new technology like using smart irrigation controllers using real time moisture sensors. For next steps in guidance we could better demonstrate the amount of improvements being made to irrigation efficiency through these technologies.

Question: Will Alabama be metering their withdrawals with grant funded meters too?

Answer: No, they only have a registration system.

US Army Corps of Engineers Update

Ms. Kris Mullins, with the USACE, presented an overview of the recent update to the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Water Control Manual and Environmental Impact Statement. The Record of Decision was signed and approved on March 30, 2017. Ms. Mullins noted that the water supply storage contracts for Lake Lanier are currently under development. There are two legal challenges pending in response to the update; one from the State of Alabama and the other by the National Wildlife Federation. Ms. Mullins discussed comments provided from interested stakeholders and how those comments influenced the final document.

Mr. James Hathorn, with the USACE, provided an overview of reservoir operations and how decisions are made to release flow from USACE projects and invited anyone interested in learning more to come to the Mobile, AL office to become a “water manager for a day.” Mr. Hathorn discussed the tools used in the rainfall forecasting process and noted that the USACE manages the system based on what Mother Nature provides.

Multi-Family Toilet Rebates

Mr. Andrew Morris presented an overview of the new Multi-Family Toilet Rebate program offered by the District. The program is available as an option for utilities to meet the 2017 Water Resource Management Plan requirement for having a multi-family toilet rebate program. Mr. Morris noted that the District has finalized the program structure, and has started sending out program materials to water utilities across the District. Based on conversations with interested utilities to date, the District expects to have at least a few utilities signed up in early 2018.

Mr. Morris offered a few highlights of the program structure. 2018 fees for utilities will be \$400 per application up to 90 toilets and \$675 per application above 91 toilets to cover the District’s costs of providing this service; rebates associated with the District program will be \$50 for HETs and \$75 for UHETs; the program will be limited to buildings constructed prior to 1994; a post-installation verification will be performed by District staff virtually using tools such as Skype or other video conferencing tools – utilities may perform additional on-site inspection as desired; the District will work with utilities and customers to include additional educational components through the website and other materials on FOG, water efficiency and other topics; and utilities may decide whether they want to require toilet recycling.

Commercial Water Use Assessments

Mr. Morris provided an update on the progress District staff and a group of utility stakeholders made since the August board meeting. The District is developing a commercial water use assessment program focusing on indoor water use for small and medium commercial customers because this group shows promise for water savings and because they are not the target market for private resource efficiency companies.

The District is working to create partnerships with power companies to provide a combined water and energy assessment to our mutual customers. By combining these assessments into one, customers will save time and receive a more complete picture of expected return on investment and natural resource savings. Mr. Morris noted that based on the District’s research, at least one power company in each utility service area is already offering commercial energy use assessments.

Mr. Morris added that he has had preliminary conversations with a variety of stakeholders and received positive feedback. For calendar year 2018, utilities will be able to opt-in by agreeing to provide certain billing and usage information and agreeing to help build and execute partnerships. Initially, there is no cost for utilities to participate, but as the program grows and needs arise, it is possible that the District may ask participating utilities to pay a fee to remain in the District's program. The District will be sending out letters to every utility outlining the commitment in the next few weeks, and utilities can opt in by sending a letter back to the District committing to the program for 2018. Based on what the District learns and what is working well, the District expects to modify the program for calendar year 2019.

Mr. Morris noted that District staff is also working on options to address cooling towers and commercial irrigation, and will provide an update in the first half of next year. These components may end up being addressed outside of the partnerships with power companies.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.