



**Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District
GOVERNING BOARD
Minutes
June 7, 2017**

The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Governing Board met on Wednesday, June 7, 2017 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. Edward Johnson
Hon. Charlotte Nash
Mr. Mark Berry
Ms. Pam Burnett
Mr. Brad Currey
Ms. Kit Dunlap

Mr. Gerald Pouncey
Mr. Tim Thoms
City of Atlanta Designee: Ms. Kishia Powell
Clayton County Designee: Mr. Mike Thomas
Cobb County Designee: Ms. Judy Skeel
DeKalb County Designee: Mr. Ted Rhinehardt
Forsyth County Designee: Mr. Jon Heard
Fulton County Designee: Mr. Nick Ammons
Hall County Designee: Mr. Ken Rearden
Henry County Designee: Mr. Tony Carnell

Members Not Present

Hon. Mathew Santini
Hon. Larry Owens
Hon. Dr. Romona Jackson Jones

Hon. Oz Nesbitt
Mr. Steven Woodruff

Chairman Boyd Austin called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Steve Williams – Mr. Williams provided an overview of water savings potential in the commercial building market and how education efforts could provide greater impact to water savings. Additional conservation efforts are needed within the urban farming community. Mr. Williams suggested improving connections with various partners including Georgia Organics, US Green Building Council, Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge, BOMA, Georgia Urban Ag Council and Southface.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Chairman Austin called for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the March 22, 2017 meeting minutes was made by Ms. Kit Dunlap, seconded by Mr. Brad Currey and passed without opposition.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Lake Level/Drought Conditions

Ms. Katherine Zitsch provided an overview on the current drought and lake level conditions. The Lake Lanier water level had been relatively flat over the winter months holding around 1061 feet and then recently rising about four feet to 1065. The flows into Lake Lanier have been the lowest on record for the year 2016 therefore it will take more rain than normal to help the lake recover. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is expected to maintain Drought Response Level Two through the summer of 2017. Ms. Zitsch presented the latest estimates for drought refill times and provided an overview of education and outreach materials available to local jurisdictions to share with their customers.

The following questions were asked:

Has the Metro Water District considered partnering with the restaurant association? *Great idea.*

Additionally, the District may want to help spread the word that watering is only allowed twice per week in the Drought Response Level Two counties and suggested using the Nextdoor website.

Ms. Zitsch noted that the District has worked with Cobb County to join Nextdoor and Cobb County shared messaging with over 80,000 homes creating lots of dialogue online. The District is setting up region wide training to local jurisdictions.

Is the District reaching out to the landscaping industry?

Ms. Zitsch stated that Mr. Tim Thoms is helping coordinate with the green industry.

Has the Corps' management of Lake Lanier changed the lake level?

Ms. Zitsch responded that the Corps is managing releases from Lake Lanier to maintain target water quality flows in the Chattahoochee River at Peachtree Creek.

Litigation and Congressional Update

Ms. Zitsch noted that there are six lawsuits currently underway regarding water use in the ACF and ACT basins but she will primarily focus her discussion on the Florida v. Georgia ACF Supreme Court litigation.

FL v. GA - ACF Supreme Court Litigation

Florida filed its exceptions to the Special Master's recommendation last week arguing that the Special Master misinterpreted the burden of proof. Georgia's reply brief is due on July 31st. Florida's sur-reply brief is due on August 30th.

The Supreme Court is expected to take up the case in their October session, which runs through summer 2018. The court could accept the Special Master's recommendation, remand the case back to the Special Master, or rule on their own.

Alabama v. USACE and the National Wildlife Federation v. USACE

Ms. Zitsch noted that following the USACE record of decision related to the ACF water control manual, two new lawsuits have been filed. One is Alabama vs the Army Corps of Engineers. The Atlanta Regional Commission, the City of Atlanta, the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, DeKalb County, Forsyth County, Fulton County, the City of Gainesville, Gwinnett County and the State of Georgia have all intervened.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) filed a lawsuit against the USACE regarding releases for environmental flows in the ACF. It is notable that this is the first ever suit by the NWF against the USACE.

Congress

The Georgia congressional delegation did a wonderful job with managing Georgia's interests during negotiations over the recent omnibus bill. Ms. Zitsch urged board members to thank their representatives for their continued support on water issues.

Education and Outreach Update

Chairman Austin introduced Ms. Sarah Skinner as the new lead for Education and Outreach activities. Ms. Skinner announced that the Metro Water District will be participating in several community festivals and events over the summer where staff will be "Chalking About the Drought" as part of its drought awareness outreach. The District is also promoting other District campaigns and messaging for Fats, Oils and Grease (F.O.G.) reduction and stormwater pollution prevention.

The Metro Water District is also creating the Society of Intentionally Dry Lawns (SIDL) to promote drought awareness and specifically to target reducing outdoor watering. SIDL participants will agree to reduce their outdoor water use by not watering their lawns through the summer months and they will receive a free lawn sign to place in their yard to show their pride in being a society member.

Ms. Skinner announced that the Metro Water District will soon be opening the STREAM Awards for Exemplary Level 2 Drought Response and will present the winner at the August Board meeting. We are asking jurisdictions to share innovative ways they addressed four or more drought response strategies and how their actions exemplified the criteria of STREAM: implement SUSTAINABLE practices; THOUGHTFUL and innovative in design; REGIONAL in scale; actively ENGAGE the community; APPLICABLE to other communities; and provide MEASURED success.

The annual Calendar Photo Contest opened at the beginning of May and will be open until the Friday after Labor day to capture all of the summer holidays. For this year's grand prize the Metro Water District partnered with GA River Network to be able to offer a Hidden Gem paddling trip for two in 2018 along with a \$500 cash prize. The photos have been an incredible resource for the District and for the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Ms. Skinner announced the first place video contest winners are from West Forsyth High School. This year's topic was "It's Not a Sewer" which focused on where storm drains flow and how our actions can impact water quality. The Metro Water District received over 40 entries this year. The school and students split a grand prize winnings of \$1,000.

The Metro Water District will be opening the essay contest this fall. The topic of this year's essay is "Why are water quality and quantity equally important."

Ms. Skinner provided an update on the children's puppet show contract being created in partnership with the Center for Puppetry Arts. The show takes the audience on a fun and creative journey through the water cycle. Utility members will be able to check out the puppet show for school programs and local events.

2016 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Audit (CAFR)

Chairman Austin announced that a copy of the 2016 CAFR is available for members to review.

Schedule 2017

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

- August 23, 2017
- December 6, 2017

Reflections on the District's Accomplishments

Chairman Austin provided his parting comments as his second and final term as Chairman expires. He noted that serving as Chairman for the Metro Water District has been a very rewarding experience and noted that the District has incredible staff. It has been refreshing to have been part of something so productive and work with such passionate people. Water has been one of the fundamental building blocks for the region. Chairman Austin noted that we must continue to support and work with our downstream partners and that they are welcome to use the District's resources. It has been an honor to serve.

Chairman Austin continued with a slide presentation noting many of the regional accomplishments made during the life of the Metro Water District.

Ms. Dunlap thanked Chairman Austin for his service noting the Chairman has served as a board member since 2004 and at that time, she knew they had the right person on the board. Chairman Austin is dedicated to the mission, the board and District staff. He has been one of the District's biggest advocates by writing op-eds and speaking at public engagements. He understands the importance of working with our upstream and downstream neighbors. He has traveled to Washington D.C. on many occasions, has worked to foster strong partnerships among the agriculture and business communities and we are thankful for his hard work, integrity, and guidance.

Chairman Austin noted that he will continue to do good work for the Metro Water District and stated that the elected officials have a duty to be at these meetings as often as they can because they will have to enforce the Plan. Chairman Austin closed with noting he looks forward to the next five-year update.

Adoption of the 2017 Water Resource Management Plan

Mr. Danny Johnson presented an overview of the Plan Update process with the most recent certification of the 2017 Water Resource Management Plan by the Director of EPD on May 23, 2017. Mr. Johnson noted that one change has been made to modify Table 3-1 to correct a column title and total figures presented at the bottom of the table. A copy of the modification was provided to board members.

The Chairman read the resolution adopting the updated Water Resource Management Plan and called for a motion to adopt the Plan. A motion to approve the updated Water Resource Management Plan was made by Mr. Brad Currey, seconded by Ms. Katie Kirkpatrick and passed without opposition.

Hon. Buzz Ahrens presented a motion to include evaluation of cost/benefit and range of costs in the scope of work provided to third party consultants for future plan updates going forward. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thoms and passed without opposition.

Next Steps in Plan Implementation

Mr. Johnson presented a list of next steps to be taken to help facilitate the implementation of the adopted plan noting that the District's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) will play a role in guiding communities in areas where assistance is needed.

Ms. Kirkpatrick noted that as the District looks forward to the 2022 plan update, we will need turn our attention to research, data collection and related analyses to understand even better the challenges and opportunities we have as a region. From there we've committed to look more closely at establishing more robust numeric goals and analyzing potential action items based on their cost effectiveness in meeting these goals. Together with the diverse perspectives of our stakeholders and other qualitative and quantitative factors, we can continue to build on today's progress as we go forward.

Executive Committee Report

2017 Budget Revision and 2018 Budget and Work Program (Action Item)

Secretary/Treasurer Birdel Jackson provided an overview of the 2017 budget revision and 2018 budget and work program. For the 2018 Budget, the Finance Committee proposes maintaining the per capita dues at 20 cents to continue to fund current contracts and to cover the projected increase in fringe and overhead.

Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve the 2017 budget revision and 2018 budget and work program. Chairman Austin explained that a recommendation of the Finance Committee does not require a second. The 2017 budget revision and 2018 budget and work program passed without opposition.

BAC Membership Drive

Chairman Austin noted that this morning, the Executive Committee approved 139 individuals for membership on the Basin Advisory Council. Twenty-five are new to the process.

The next BAC meeting will be on July 27th, at the new Peachtree Center office location from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. It's the annual, conference-style Joint BAC meeting. Board members and designees are invited to attend. The meeting will include presentations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, an overview of agriculture water use with Mark Masters, and Georgia Power will provide an update on ongoing work at the Water Research Center.

Emerging Topics – Cooling Towers

At the request of a board member, Mr. Johnson provided an overview of a recent Wall Street Journal article on potential health concerns related to cooling towers. The article discussed a

recent study by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) who tracked Legionnaires DNA in cooling towers. The study found remnants of the DNA were found in 84% of the cooling towers studied. The next step for the CDC is to study the potential health risks associated with the presence of the DNA. Mr. Johnson noted that as the Metro Water District looks toward any future actions related to cooling towers and their water efficiency, potential health implications should be considered prior to any action.

Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Gerald Pouncey provided a report from the Nominating Committee. The committee met on May 17, 2017 to recommend nominations for the offices of Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer due to the expiration of the current three year terms. The committee nominated Hon. Charlotte Nash as Chairman, Ms. Katie Kirkpatrick as Vice Chairman, and Birdel Jackson as Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Pouncey called for a vote. All nominees were elected without opposition.

Hon. Nash noted that she served as a designee for Gwinnett County on the original Metro Water District board and that she has big shoes to fill. Hon. Nash stated that she looks forward to working with the board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.