

**Note:** Minutes are not official until approved by the Committee.

## **METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

390 Robert Street North, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

### Meeting of the **METROPOLITAN AREA WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

August 23, 2007

Committee Members Present:	Peter Bell, Chair	Metropolitan Council
	Dennis Berg	Anoka County, Commissioner
	Tom Furlong	City of Chanhassen, Mayor
	Chuck Haas	City of Hugo, Council Member
	Joe Harris	Dakota County, Commissioner
	James Japs	DNR, Assistant Director, Waters – Alternate
	Peggy Leppik	Metropolitan Council Member
	Linda Loomis	City of Golden Valley, Mayor
	Gaylen Reetz	MN Pollution Control Agency – Alternate
	Steve Schneider	St. Paul Regional Water Services, General Manager
	Barry Stock	City of Savage, Administrator
Committee Members Excused:/Absent:	John Stine	Department of Health
	Gene Hugoson	Department of Agriculture

#### **Call to Order**

Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

#### **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Leppik, seconded by Loomis to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2007 and the agenda for the August 23, 2007 Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee meetings. **Motion carried.**

#### **Water Conservation Toolbox**

Sara Bertelsen, Metropolitan Council Planner, explained that the objective of the tool box is to provide a centralized clearinghouse of conservation information to help water suppliers select programs appropriate for their communities. The Committee reviewed the web pages, which will be updated at least on a seasonal basis, as relevant information is available. Stakeholders have reviewed the site, and their comments/edits have been incorporated. Numerous positive comments were received. The web site will be published September 4<sup>th</sup>, and the site will be publicized so that consumers are aware of its existence. Committee Member Stock suggested sending communities a news release for their newsletters or other publications, as well as a link to the website. Staff agreed and will also look at other agencies to partner with and share the link. Committee members asked if there are national best practices for water conservation that will be included in the website. Conservation practices are generally the same throughout the country, the aggressiveness in which they are implemented differs. In response to a question about whether water conservation activities of various

municipalities are being cataloged, staff said the water conservation activities of the regional municipalities are included in their water supply plans. Municipalities are required to have an education program and the Council asks them to list any other programs that they have. The Council maintains a database of those conservation programs. It will be included in the master supply plan, and it can be incorporated into the conservation toolbox. Committee member Schneider suggested that staff bear in mind that municipalities have different reasons for their rate structures. It is not 'apples to apples'.

Committee member Haas asked if exploring reuse of stormwater was a subject for this Committee to consider. Staff responded that it is not currently included, but discussions have been on the topic and it will be considered as an option. Infrastructure cost is concern.

Committee member Schneider expressed concern with reuse of water – contaminants are picked up, and it would have to be closely scrutinized, even for irrigation use.

Committee member Stock suggested a simplified approach. The City of Savage is including new park development where storm ponds are being designed so that water can be directly pumped from the ponds for irrigation use.

Committee member Leppik suggested adding point-of-service water heaters to the Toolbox tips for reducing residential water use.

### **State Drought Response Plan Update**

Judy Boudreau, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, provided an update on current drought conditions. The central and northern portions of the state are experiencing abnormally dry or extreme drought conditions. Mississippi River headwaters are not bringing much water either, leading to concerns as to what our availability will be. There are a number of different resources used with regard to the Mississippi River information. DNR is working with hydropower producers along the river. They all signed onto a low flow management plan now required by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Hydropower plants tend to hold back water as much as possible then react to waters as they come into the reservoirs. Hydropower producers have agreed, especially during low flows, to minimize their fluctuations as they see changes coming in to their reservoirs. The DNR web site allows hydropower producers to check flows and to communicate through a log. Another resource is the weather service website ([www.crh.noaa.gov/ncrfc](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ncrfc)) low flow forecast for the Mississippi River which is updated daily.

The first drought plan in 1993 was a result of the drought in 1988. Many agencies coordinated efforts to produce the plan. Plan was updated in 2006 and is currently being updated. The DNR and Metropolitan Council, with input from metro surface water suppliers and the US Army Corps of Engineers, have made

some proposed changes to the Drought Coordination Matrix. This will be reviewed by a larger group of stakeholders. When the matrix is finalized and agreed to by local communities, it will be implemented through their water supply plans. The Committee reviewed the revised matrix, discussed the criteria that generates the restrictive phase, and the actions to be taken. Mr. Elvrum discussed the plan to integrate the matrix with the Water Supply Plans.

Next steps: Forward draft to municipalities & surface / groundwater suppliers for comments, make final revisions to matrix, revise drought plan, then publish.

### **Northwest Metro Water Supply**

- Overview of Water Supply in the northwest metropolitan area – Christopher Elvrum, MCES. Regional planning effort can address the metropolitan water supply. Provided overview of the situation, radium, and discussed stakeholder meeting held the week of August 13<sup>th</sup>. Reviewed projected population increase in the NW area through 2020. (125,000). There is limited availability in existing aquifers in the area. As a result some communities have been considering surface water option. Radium is concern. Elvrum explained that radium is a naturally occurring radioactive contaminant found throughout Minnesota. It accumulates in treatment plants and distribution systems. There are operator safety issues, as well as waste disposal regulations to consider. Cost of radium removal treatment plant ranges from \$1,150,000 to \$2,010,000 per well. Reactions to the issue at the public meeting last week included no concern, uncertainty, and funding questions.

The NW Water Supply Work Group will continue to meet.

- Groundwater Availability – Laurel Reeves, MN DNR. Reviewed water supply availability issues in the NW metro from groundwater, primarily those influenced by aquifers that are available, water use, water quality, ground and surface water interconnection. Mt. Simon-Hinckley Aquifer water levels pre-development were 100 feet higher than now. Restrictions have been placed on the use of the Mt. Simon aquifer - new permits for the Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Counties may not be issued except for potable water use where there are no feasible or practical alternatives. Ms. Reeves discussed the importance of well placement and the affect of groundwater withdrawal on surface water. Water quality concerns affect water availability. Areas that don't have bedrock have to use sand & gravel aquifers and those are very prone to infiltration of water on the surface which might carry contaminants with it. Contaminants naturally go down into the aquifer but it can also be drawn in through induced pumping from the aquifers. One of the concerns about water supplies in these areas that have sand and gravel aquifers is the water quality issues of drawing water from the surface into it. Water use will draw down levels in affected wetlands, which affect surface water features. The City of Moorhead has addressed its water supply

issues through a conjunctive use of surface and ground water. Since using this approach, groundwater levels have been recovering.

- City of Ramsey Water Supply – Brian Olson, City of Ramsey, presented the water supply challenges the city is facing, the advantages and disadvantages of surface and ground water.

Mr. Olson emphasized that of the city's water conservation efforts to minimize peak day demand, public education and enforcement are key to a successful program.

Mr. Olson noted that one of the disadvantages of surface water is the issue of varying water quality. There is a benefit to interconnection, but a loss of control if buying from neighbor.

The city needs to determine the reasonableness of surface water source; identify a funding source; select a site, and justify the capital expenditure.

Mr. Olson discussed requesting state funding for implementing required surface water treatment facility. This committee's report to the legislature included the recommendation that funding be considered for improvements that involve regional or state benefit.

Committee member Stock shared the experience of the City of Savage when it partnered with another community and went through the process of obtaining a Drinking Water Revolving Loan to construct a treatment plant

The committee agreed that it would be beneficial to have the Council facilitate meetings with communities to discuss coordination of their efforts, funding options, and help with education resources and the perception of water supply. Staff could also develop voluntary incentives to encourage municipalities to conjunctively use water.

### **Planning Schedule Update**

The next MAWSAC meeting will be November 15, 2007.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.