

CHESAPEAKE BAY and WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19TH, 2014 MEETING & BLUE PLAINS TOUR

ATTENDANCE:

Members and alternates:

Alan Hew, City of College Park
 Andrew Fellows, City of College Park
 Craig Rice, Vice Chair, Montgomery County
 Hamid Karimi, Vice Chair, District of Columbia
 Karen Pallansch, Alexandria Renew Enterprises
 Libby Garvey, Arlington County
 Maureen McGowen Holman, DC Water
 Penny Gross, Chair, Fairfax Water
 Pamela Parker, Montgomery County

COG Staff:

Heidi Bonnaffon, DEP
 Tanya Spano, DEP
 Steve Walz, DEP Director

1. Introductions and Announcements

Chair Penelope A. Gross called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Ms. Spano congratulated Chair Gross for her reappointment to the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) for the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council, and for her Public Official Award from the Water Environment Federation. Ms. Gross thanked Ms. Pallansch and others for nominating her. Ms. Spano also recognized Mr. Hawkins' receipt of the prestigious Fuller Award by the American Water Works Association.

2. Approval of CBPC Meeting Summary

The July 18th 2014 draft meeting summary could not be approved because there was not a quorum, so committee approval will be requested at the November meeting. However, the members present did not request any edits.

3. Highlights of *The National Economic and Labor Impacts of the Water Utility Sector Report*

In continuing CBPC's ongoing discussion about water infrastructure investment needs, Ms. Pallansch briefed the committee about the key findings of the *National Economic and Labor Impacts of the Water Utility Sector Report (September 2014)*, produced by the Water Research Foundation in cooperation with the Value of Water Coalition, which illustrates the importance of water infrastructure investments to the economy, economic growth, and jobs. Both Alexandria Renew Enterprises and DC Water were featured in the Report, so Ms. Pallansch and Mr. Hawkins spoke about how their utilities impact their local economies. Ms. Pallansch, on behalf of NACWA, WEF and other Value of Water Coalition Members, made the following points:

- The region needs water for everything, in and out of buildings. It's the basis of the economy.
- The Study included 30 utilities nationally, that in sum serve about 25% of the U.S. population.
- Study found \$1 million invested in the water sector results in 16 jobs.
- The utilities in the study spent \$23 Billion, and provided more direct income in their communities than defense jobs.
- The capital improvement work is short-term noise and disruption but results in long-term economic benefits and as well as other public goods (such as a soccer field and playground resulting from an Alexandria Renew development project).
- These are solidly middle class skilled jobs that stay in the community in which they serve.
- One third of the utilities' employees are due to retire soon.

Mr. Hawkins shared the following perspectives as General Manager of DC Water:

- Blue Plains is the largest construction site in the COG region, with 2,000-3,000 trucks coming and going daily.
- The enhanced nutrient removal project, to remove more nitrogen, is coming online this month at a cost of \$950 Million, and 15,000 assets have been added to the asset inventory.
- He noted that DC Water anticipates shifting more funding over time from capital investment costs to maintenance and operational costs as several major capital projects get built in the coming years.
- Several water lines and mains by the White House are dated from before the Civil War.
- While the Blue Plains upgrades will add cost for rate payers, there are benefits to the region including improved water quality of the Anacostia River, and jobs benefiting the local economy, because DC Water tries to hire locally. In addition, 60% of Blue Plains flow is from outside of the District of Columbia, so the nutrient reductions benefit the region.

CBPC Member Comments:

- In response to Mr. Hawkins' comment about the benefits of wastewater plant investments, Ms. Gross agreed that rate payers are increasingly knowledgeable about the importance of wastewater treatment to water quality, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
- Mr. Rice was interesting in further discussion of a buyer's consortium, which is what they have for Montgomery County schools.
- Ms. Garvey asked whether any of Arlington's wastewater flows to Blue Plains and likewise, whether the Washington Aqueduct supplies Arlington's water.
 - RWQM staff agreed to send the CBPC members maps of the water and wastewater service areas for COG's jurisdictions and agencies once finalized.

Ms. Pallansch ended by requesting CBPC support for the following items:

- Identify job training opportunities in the region;
- Develop regional messaging to aligned with the WEF study's efforts;
- Reflect key findings in COG's Regional Infrastructure Report; and
- Evaluate potential legislative actions related to these issues by the CBPC, CAOs, and/or the COG Board.

Members agreed with these recommended actions.

4. Staff Updates

- Mr. Walz mentioned that the contributions of the water sector and the funding gaps will be an important part of the January report to the COG Board about the region's infrastructure, and he thanked the CBPC members for their input. Ms. Gross commented that the main break outside of the COG building the day of the September 10th Board meeting drove home the point about the need for water infrastructure investment.
- The CBPC members were encouraged to review the General Updates and Upcoming Events document for additional details about other important topics and issues that COG staff are working on.

5. Tour of Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant

Mr. Chris Peot, Director of Resource Recovery, led the committee on a tour of the newest features at Blue Plains. Below are a few of the tour highlights:

- Mr. Peot said that Blue Plains should really be called a resource recovery facility.

- Through the Enhanced Nutrient Removal process the amount of nitrogen being released is being halved from eight million pounds to four million pounds, which is a reduction from a two percent contribution of nitrogen to the Bay to one percent.
- DC Water is also researching the use of innovative technologies for advanced wastewater treatment that are more energy and cost effective (i.e., use of Anammox bacteria), and is also looking into using solar panels to reduce energy consumption.
- DC Water is going to start operating its thermal hydrolysis system and anaerobic digesters in the upcoming months. This treatment process will produce Class A biosolids product for use in agricultural and Silva culture practices.
- It will also reduce the carbon footprint and provide a source of renewable electricity
- Alexandria Renew Enterprises has started a delivery of Class A biosolids to seed the new DC Water's digesters.
- As one means of addressing the potential for increased flooding due to Climate Change, DC Water is building a 500-year flood retaining wall. Ms. McGowan Holman pointed it out on the tour.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:30. The next CBPC will be held November 21st at COG.

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