

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

SUMMARY OF July 17, 2015 MEETING

ATTENDANCE:

Members and alternates:

Libby Garvey, Arlington County
Andy Fellows, College Park
Karen Pallansch, Alexandria Renew Enterprises
Craig Rice, Chair, Montgomery County
J. Davis (phone)
J. L. Hearn, WSSC
Cathy Drzyzgula, City of Gaithersburg
Melanie Mason, Alexandria Renew Enterprises
Penelope Gross, Fairfax County
Maureen Holman, DC Water
Lisa Feldt, Montgomery County
Sheila Besse, District of Columbia DOE

COG Staff:

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

Guests:

Tiffany Wright, Bowie (phone)
Glynn Roundtree
Nicole Kaiser, DC Water

1. Introductions

Chair Rice called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

2. Approval of May Meeting Summary

The draft May 2015 meeting summary was approved by the committee with the notation that Maureen Holman be added as an attendant.

3. Water Sector Jobs/Workforce Challenges & Opportunities

Ms. Pallansch provided an overview of the regional need for workforce development, including how to match future job needs with the necessary skill sets and training and accreditation programs. She provided documentation of Alexandria Renew Enterprise's workforce needs and ongoing training programs as an illustrative example. Here's the link to Ms. Pallansch's [presentation](#) and below are a few highlights of her presentation.

- Alexandria Renew Enterprise is a state-of-the-art reuse facility, with a work force of 100 blue and white collar jobs.
- The National Capital Region ranks 4th nationally for the growth of middle sector jobs, which are projected to account for 33% of future job gains in the region.
- In the water field, there is demand for diverse job types, from computer technicians to landscapers who can install green infrastructure for stormwater projects. While there are middle sector and high tech jobs in the water field, employers do not always effectively advertise them.
- Workers in the baby boom generation are retiring from water utilities and there a need for a workforce pipeline to fill job openings.
- Alexandria Renew has an apprentice program for training its future workforce.
 - The agency pays for the training and the apprentices benefit from widely applicable skills in a field that is permanent.
 - Last year, Alexandria Renew trained six operators; the agency has 25 operators that could retire at any time.
 - Alexandria Renew's training is based upon the operator training/credentialing program developed by the Water Environment Federation, but it is local in its execution.
- Ms. Pallansch said that, as pillars of our region, the water utilities need to develop programs for fostering water jobs skill sets, and the region's workforce development "region forward" vision is very applicable.
- As San Francisco's public utilities have noted, the utility of the future needs its workers to be trained in cross-cutting skills, including problem solving skills; the ability to see the business as a whole and to use state of the art technology and data analytics; and skills to make informed decisions.
- Ms. Pallansch also mentioned that California Senator Diane Feinstein's drought bill is aimed at making water projects more efficient and could result in national funding.
- Now is the time to identify the needed skills, training, partners, and recruitment plan and business plan. It will likely take three to five years and a robust communication plan to get the word out to communities.

Member Comments:

- Chair Rice mentioned the relevance of this issue to community colleges and their future jobs programs. He said we need to promote water sector jobs, because people do not know about them. As the Chair of the Montgomery County Education committee, he said he finds this workforce development issue relevant to the region.

Although individual COG members may be taking individual steps, there is still a for a coordinated regional effort to increase jobs.

- Ms. Spano noted there are common factors between the waste water, drinking water and stormwater sectors.
- Mr. Walz noted that COG has been selected to participate in an Aspen Institute workforce training initiative. COG is focusing on stormwater for the six-part training program; the core team will include staff from Prince George's County, the Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership, COG and the Washington Board of Trade. As part of the initiative, COG staff plans to work with Alexandria Renew Enterprises, Montgomery County, DC Water, and other partners to develop job training credentials that can apply regionally. Chair Rice expressed concern over people taking jobs for which they are over-qualified. There should be avenues for jobs for all members of our communities. Montgomery County has implemented a county savings plan to limit its budget, but it still is investing \$300,000 in scholarships for workforce training. We need to get people retooled, to be able to go into another career. Stormwater management isn't going away; it is important to set future goals for 10-20 years out. As water sector employers it is a great opportunity to shape what skills are needed by perspective future employees. He stated he is very encouraged by work of Alexandria Renew, and the Aspen Institute opportunity.
- Ms. Drzyzgula said she hopes that COG can develop a program niche to help those who already have degrees learn new skills during recessions.
- Ms. Gross noted that she chairs the Northern Virginia Regional Commission's workforce workgroup, on which Ms. Garvey also serves. She raised the issue of socio-economic discrimination. While there is a need for four-year colleges, there is a gap between how colleges prepare the workforce and the skills the business community needs. Community colleges are trying to fill this gap, but until there is a major change in how society views the education system, there is a stigma associated with community college degrees.. Ms. Gross suggested that COG's workforce development process take advantage of other training programs, so that job training is not done piecemeal on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis.
- Ms. Garvey stated that Ms. Pallansch's presentation was one of the best that the CBPC has heard, because it is something the committee can do something about. For example, the Arlington County career center has "outcome based learning." It includes a computer program for checking off skill sets for various certifications- HVAC, mechanics, and certified network engineer. It is a five-year program, and upon completion, the course taker gets a high school degree, plus a 2-year Associates degree.
- Ms. Feldt agrees with working within already established programs. Montgomery County has a green business certification program, so there could be a tie.
- Mr. Fellows mentioned some programs are likely better done regionally, but some, such as Environmental Site Design (ESD) training, might work better locally. It neatly fits into the infrastructure discussion: transportation, green infrastructure, agriculture, and Mr. Fellows said that COG has a role.
- Ms. Pallansch mentioned the need to pool demand before approaching community colleges. She noted that by itself Alexandria Renew Enterprise did not have enough

influence with the local community college. She suggested that it will be important to figure out which programs are good at what things, how they are implemented and what will be individualized.

- Ms. Garvey inquired whether community colleges talk with each other.
- Ms. Gross said the COG Board already studied educational institution collaboration a number of years ago, so COG staff should revisit the outcomes of that study.
- Ms. Feldt suggested bring future employers into the conversation, for example, Corvias Solutions and CH2M Hill. Mr. Walz agreed that this is a good idea.

4. ANACOSTIA WATERSHED RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS

Ms. Besse, Associate Director, Watershed Protection Division for the District Department of the Environment, and Current Chair of the Anacostia Watershed Partnership Management Committee, provided a brief summary of the Anacostia watershed and its challenges, an overview of the Watershed Restoration Partnership history and goals, and a synopsis of ongoing projects in the Anacostia watershed. Here's the link to Ms. Besse's [presentation](#).

- The Anacostia River was once the "forgotten river," pre-1980's, but that has changed over time.
- The Citizen Advisory Committee was created in 2006, with the realization that the Anacostia clean up would take a lot of public will and a lot of money. It includes the governor of Maryland, mayor of the District of Columbia, county executives, and the EPA Region III administrator. It includes a leadership council and steering committee as well as citizen advisors.
- Ms. Besse highlighted fish passages projects and stormwater challenges, including stream restoration permitting challenges and trash traps.
- Ms. Besse cited the progress in the Anacostia watershed, including strong stormwater permits in Maryland; the bans on Styrofoam and coal tar sealants in Prince George's county; the COG region's Green Streets regional policy, and homeowner stormwater incentive program, which is in itself a form of education for citizenry. Ms. Besse also noted once DC Water's Clean Water Project's tunnel goes online we will see tremendous progress in the District of Columbia, and \$45 million is now dedicated to analyzing the source of toxics to the river and how to remediate it.
- Ms. Besse stated lengthy permitting processes pose another challenge to stormwater programs. Permit streamlining and regional procurement may be two avenues of improvement.

Member comments:

- Ms. Spano identified common themes between the Anacostia and the WRTC/CBPC. There are future opportunities to leverage and coordinate on permitting, procurement, and “to get us out of our silos.”
- Chair Rice said the committee members have homework: Determine what collaborative efforts can be done as a region. Ms. Besse is open to piloting work force training in the Anacostia, due to the number of underserved.
- Mr. Walz noted that nutrient trading and the District’s Stormwater Retention Credit (SRC) program may be able to be traded across the jurisdictional boundary.
- Mr. Fellows sees Anacostia as a model of a national urban watershed and suggested that COG should be able to leverage the model for additional funding.
- Ms. Feldt mentioned that coordination is already ongoing between the District, Prince George’s County, and Montgomery County, including a meeting with Secretary Grumbles about trans-state interest in permit streamlining.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN (CEC) UPDATES ON WATER QUALITY OUTREACH

Ms. Kaiser, Water Communications Coordinator, DC Water and CEC Chair, presented campaign elements of the Community Engagement Campaign (CEC) water outreach program including TapIt, “flushable” wipes, and a regional Drug Take Back as elements of the FY16 campaign. Ms. Kaiser also explained how the CEC coordinates on water supply issues: It was how the CEC was borne, to oversee and coordinate on water quantity and drought issues, as well as water security and emergency response. Here’s the link to Ms. Kaiser’s [presentation](#).

The TapIt program represents a common goal for the utilities, and regional umbrella since the public lives in one area, and works in another. The public enjoys seeing the regional campaign at events such as Smithsonian Garden Fest. This year an emphasis will be on TapIt partners in Maryland and Virginia, and also work more closely with regional biking and running communities and business improvement districts, as well as reaching a full spectrum of demographics via social media.

The Protect Your Pipes campaign focuses on items that should not go down drains and toilets. The non-flushable wipes and other items result in millions of dollars to address problems, including new equipment installation, such as the \$1.5 M grinder that WSSC has installed to shred the wipes and other non-flushable items that do not belong in the sewer system.

The CEC is a way for utilities to join forces on these issues. A comprehensive assessment of other national campaigns about the issues in common with Protect Your Pipes found a common short coming was a lack of branding and unifying themes to their campaigns. The Protect Your Pipes website development is underway and the CEC will be seeking national funding for campaigns since the issues of non-flushable items, fats, oils, grease, and medications are issues affecting all wastewater utilities nationally.

The CEC is also partnering with COG's Police Chiefs' and Health Officers' committee to coordinate a regional campaign in sync with the national DEA Drug Take Back Day on September 26. Medications, in trace amounts, are a drinking water source protection issue.

COG produces monthly drought reports and the regions' utilities have been getting questions about whether the drought happening in California could happen here. Water quality conversations, such as these, help the public connect all of the dots about their local watersheds, the Chesapeake Bay and why water resources matter.

Wise Water Use messaging is timely as some regional utilities are raising their rates. It gives the public tips on how to conserve water use and save money on their water bills.

The CEC would like to expand membership this year, by adding more COG jurisdictions and utilities, and the CEC would appreciate CBPC members sharing the word about CEC program's ability to leverage resources.

Member comments:

- Mr. Fellows said he hopes the TapIt program can reach out to public schools to encourage water fountain access and usage, particularly underserved communities.
- Chair Rice said he would like to encourage MML and MACo leadership to join the CEC, so that the CEC can reach beyond the urban cores. He will follow up with them.
- Ms. Gross mentioned TapIt should do ads to remind people to bring their reusable water bottles to airports (and to work with the Washington Airport Authority).

6. RWQM FY 2016 Work Program & Budget

Ms. Spano provided highlights of the draft Water Resources Work Program and Budget noting:

- Today's CBPC meeting highlighted a number of the robust programs that are integral parts of the Work Program and Budget.
- Stormwater is getting an increase share of the RWQM program funding, since it is an important sector. Ms. Feldt mentioned there is ongoing regional coordination via MACo and Secretary Grumbles.
- Ballot approval will be via email, and it will be emailed by the end of the July.

7. STAFF UPDATES

None were provided.

8. MEMBER UPDATES

Chair Rice mentioned Prince George's County's coal tar sealant ban as an example of the small pieces that we can move ahead. He stated we need to educate people about importance of water, the careers in the water sector, and continue to market our accomplishments.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Rice adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m. The next CBPC meeting will be held **September 18, 2015**, at Alexandria Renew. Wear long pants and closed toed shoes. Please RSVP.

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