

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**DIRECTORS OF UTILITIES COMMITTEE**  
**August 5, 2020**  
**Webex**

Pursuant to the declared state of emergency in the Commonwealth of Virginia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to protect the public health and safety of the committee members, staff, and general public, the meeting was held on August 5, 2020 at 1:30 pm. These electronic meetings are required to complete essential business on behalf of the region. A recording of the meeting is available on the website. The following attended electronically:

**Directors of Utilities Committee:**

J. Chris Dawson, GL	Jason Mitchell, HA
Edward G. Henifin, HRSD	Bob Montague, VB
Frank James, NN	Doug Powell, JCSA
Donald Jennings, IW	
David Jurgens, CH	
Chad Krejcarek, PQ	
Yann A. Le Gouellec, NN	

**Directors of Utilities Copy:**

Alan Benthall, NN	Robert Carteris, NO
Kate Bernatitus, NN	Paul Retel, SU
Bud Curtis, NN	

**HRPDC Staff:**

Katie Cullipher	Whitney Katchmark
Greg Grootendorst	Katie Krueger

**1. Summary of the July 1, 2020 Meeting of the Directors of Utilities Committee**

There were no comments on or revisions to the summary of the July 1, 2020 Committee meeting.

**ACTION:** The summary of the July 1, 2020 meeting of the Directors of Utilities Committee was approved by consensus

**2. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**3. Groundwater Mitigation Program**

Ms. Whitney Katchmark and Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC, presented the summary document and slides that provide a short explanation of the Groundwater Mitigation

Program. These materials are intended to support briefings to elected officials who have questions about renewing the MOA. The committee commented that the slides did a good job of explaining a confusing topic. There were no suggested changes or requests for additional material.

**ACTION:** No Action

#### **4. FY22 Draft Water and Wastewater Budgets**

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, presented the proposed FY22 Water and Wastewater Budgets. Ms. Katchmark proposed flat budgets and using more reserve funds than in FY21 so the localities' contributions would be lower in FY22 .

**ACTION:** HRPDC staff will reach out for votes on the budget via email.

#### **5. Affordability Programs**

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, reviewed an affordability presentation developed by HRPDC staff in 2018. The Committee debated updating the five-year rate projections and how the data would be used. HRPDC staff suggested doing more projections to assess the fiscal impact of utility bills on low income customers.

The Committee discussed different affordability programs across the region. Chesapeake refers customers to the rental assistance program that uses CARES Act money to help citizens pay their bills. Virginia Beach recently (July 1) started a program through their human services group that helps customers pay their bills through a combination of CARES Act funds and general funds. Suffolk also recently started a similar program for customers who have experienced job loss (i.e. 50% reduction in hours, furlough, etc) and have an unpaid balance post March 1. Suffolk is working on developing another affordability program that is not tied to coronavirus. HRSD has recently suspended their assistance program because they had such low numbers of participation. Norfolk has \$57,000 budgeted for an assistance program that is run through their human services department.

Ms. Katchmark reviewed the responses to delinquency trends across the region. Delinquency rates are up from 2019, with over 86,000 accounts becoming delinquent in the past 6 months. The committee concluded that we needed additional data for a trend to be substantiated. HRPDC staff will develop a list of questions about local assistance programs to inform data gathering from now to October. Based on that data, a regional template or lessons learned for assistance programs will be developed.

**ACTION:** HRPDC staff will collect information on locality assistance programs using CARES Act funds. Additionally, HRPDC staff will work to update rate projections.

## 6. Utility Directors and Health Directors Roundtable Discussion

Norfolk asked the Committee whether other localities inspected private grinder pumps. The general response was that localities did not inspect private grinder pumps. James City County did inspect the private grinder pumps at installation and then the offered a grinder pump maintenance agreement. Norfolk also asked the Committee if they were putting up permanent barriers between driver and passenger in their field vehicles. The general response was that they were not.

The Committee discussed new coronavirus cases within utilities. Chesapeake has had 6-7 cases, Poquoson, Suffolk, and Newport News have each had a few employees quarantine due to family member contact, and James City County has had a few employees test for coronavirus but no positive cases yet.

**ACTION:** No Action

## 7. Staff Reports

- **Lead and Copper Rule, Testing subcommittee** – VDH does not have a list of contacts for schools and daycare facilities that must test for lead or plans for an outreach program. Ms. Katchmark will set up a committee subcommittee.
- **Fats, Oils and Grease MOA** – Ms. Katchmark requested that localities send the signed MOA to Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC.
- **HRSD Integrated Plan – First Amendment to 2014 MOA** – The integrated plan is close to being finalized.
- **Update on Source Water Protection Program Risk Assessment Meetings** – Ms. Katchmark reported that HRPDC staff has discussed the inventory updates for the Source Water Protection Program with VDH and they will provide feedback if they have questions about the methodology.
- **Mission H2O** – Ms. Katchmark suggested using reserve funds to renew the regional Mission H2O membership. Votes on whether or not to renew the membership will be collected via email.

## 8. Other Business

No other Business

The next meeting of the Directors of Utilities will be on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 via Webex.