

askHRgreen.org | Water Awareness Committee Meeting Summary Thursday, February 25, 2021

To protect the public health and safety of the Committee members and staff, the askHRgreen.org Water Awareness Committee meeting was held electronically via WebEx. A recording of the meeting is available upon request.

Attendees:

Jerry Hoddinott, CH
Laura Tworek, VB
Lacie Wever, HRSD
Cyndi Masterstaff, NN

Rachael Gaul, NO
Tamara Clore, SU
Katie Cullipher, HRPDC
Rebekah Eastep, HRPDC

1. Meeting Summary

The January meeting summary was accepted without changes.

Action: Summary approved.

2. askHRgreen.org Event Schedule

The current listing of outreach events is as follows:

3/26 - 3/27	Great American Cleanup	Hampton Roads
3/27 - 3/28	2021 Daffodil Festival	Gloucester
4/10	Go Green Fest	York
6/12	HRSD Woodstock Park Project	Virginia Beach
6/19	ERP RiverFest	TBD - Chesapeake

The Daffodil Festival has been scaled back this year so the askHRgreen trailer will not be included in this year's event line up.

HRSD Woodstock Park Project to install a wet weather tank under the park with a renovation of the park itself.

Action: Committee members should reserve the trailer for any upcoming events.

3. Media Campaigns & Promotions

The following media and promotional campaigns are planned for this fiscal year:

- Fixing Leaks paid media campaign (March) – existing creative
 - Committee members have requested dye tabs and rack cards to assist with the campaign.
- Value of Water paid media campaign (May 3-9) – existing creative
- Annual Drinking Water & Wastewater Professionals Day (June 30)
 - Can promote the “thank a water worker” assets
 - First female crew member in Norfolk will be celebrated in March for National Women’s Month.
- askHRgreen social media branding campaign – ongoing

HRPDC staff asked the Committee to think about new campaigns, resources, or assets the Committee could produce regionally to address local utility issues. The Committee discussed recruitment (call center, CDLs, etc.), operations security, and

lead service lines (not current issue, but coming soon).

HRPDC staff can repurpose local news releases and newsletter content for blog posts and social media promotions for askHRgreen.

Action: Committee members should collect information locally about future lead service line replacement outreach and challenges with recruitment for water utility employment and prepare to discuss next steps at the March meeting.

4. **Printing & Promotional Items**

The following items are available for pickup: water bottle stickers, seed bookmarks, and skoy cloths. There is funding available to support a special promotion in FY21 since promotional item needs have not been needed in support of outreach events.

Green Learning Guide was sent via email for review. Edits are due by Friday, February 26.

Action: None.

5. **Roundtable**

- Newport News shared new smart meter website (story map) they are using for public education about water meter replacement plans. Next mapping application will focus on planned outages.

Action: None.

6. **Staff Reports**

Budget - The FY21 budget was provided for review.

Digital Marketing Report - HRPDC staff reviewed the January Digital Marketing report. The e-newsletter has a high open rate but HRPDC staff is working with RCS to improve the click through rate by updating newsletter format. Currently all content is served in the newsletter with no need to click through to the website for more information.

Help to Others - HRPDC staff will be discussing changes to program eligibility at the April Directors of Utilities meeting.

- Issues to discuss include the \$250 cap on pledges, requirement to copay difference above \$250, the limitations on using the program only once per calendar year, and growth in H2O funds availability.
- Due to lack of cutoffs from local water utilities, fewer customers are applying for H2O assistance despite rising balances on their utility bill.
- Salvation Army is gathering data on real life need from those who apply to their programs. HRPDC staff is collecting data on average bill amounts and delinquency.
- HRSD and other localities are discussing resuming service disconnection for non-payment. CARES Act funds may still be available to assist customers when cutoffs resume, however, the H2O program should also be an asset in

helping these customers.

Action: HRPDC staff will discuss potential changes to the Help to Others program.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2021.

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