

MEETING SUMMARY
DIRECTORS OF UTILITIES COMMITTEE
June 2, 2021
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 May 5, 2021 at 1:30 pm via WebEx. 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 virtually:

Directors of Utilities Committee:

David Jurgens, CH	Robert Carteris, NO
Jason Mitchell, HA	Richard Underhill, PO
Mike Martin, HRSD	Chad Krejcarek, PQ
Donald Jennings, IW	Jack Reed, SM
Doug Powell, JCSA	Paul Retel, SU
Yann A. Le Gouellec, NN	Bob Montague, VB

Directors of Utilities Copy:

Erin Trimyer, CH	Kate Bernatitus, NN
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HRPDC Staff:

Katie Cullipher	Whitney Katchmark
	Jill Sunderland

1. Summary of the May 5, 2021 Meeting of the Directors of Utilities Committee

There were no comments on the summary of the May 5, 2021 meeting.

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. FOG Memorandum of Agreement

Eight localities have signed the Fats, Oils and Grease MOA but at least one locality has indicated that there is no support to sign it. The MOA is written to require all localities to sign it in order to finalize the MOA. The Directors discussed potential next steps.

There is some question as to whether the MOA is still valid if all of the localities and HRSD are listed, but some of the localities do not sign it. Another option would be to have each locality that is interested sign an individual MOA with HRSD instead of the regional one. However, those who had already signed did not want to take a new MOA to their respective councils for approval.

Mr. Jurgens volunteered to have Chesapeake's City Attorney review the language to evaluate the options. Several Directors were interested in reviewing the FOG MOA from 2008 and comparing the language to the newly updated version.

ACTION: HRPDC staff will distribute the 2008 MOA and follow up with Chesapeake's Attorney. HRPDC staff will also poll the localities to confirm that some of them do not intend to sign the MOA.

4. Federal Infrastructure Funds

The federal government is making significant investments in infrastructure and the Congressional delegation has requested input on regional priority projects across many sectors. Ms. Katchmark suggested developing a short list of projects so that the region would have a response ready. Only a few localities responded to the email inquiry. Since there are several federal funding initiatives underway, some question whether it is advisable to submit the same projects to multiple inquiry requests. Another concern is when the funding would be available and whether projects should be shovel ready or longer term.

ACTION: HRPDC staff will share more information about the structure of the funding programs as it becomes available.

5. Input for HRPDC Workplan / Staff Skills

HRPDC sent the committee a short survey asking for input on valuable staff skills and priority program issues. This input will inform the recruitment of Katie Krueger's replacement. Ms. Katchmark reviewed the results of the survey. The highest rated program topics included: 1) aging infrastructure – rate increases, 2) drinking water supply planning and projections, 3) public health – trust in water systems, 4) affordability and assistance programs, 5) regional coordination tied to enforcement, and 6) source water protection. The ideal candidate would be experienced in research and have technical credentials that align with the regional priorities.

ACTION: Ms. Katchmark intends to advertise the position soon.

6. Utility Directors Roundtable Discussion

- **Lifting the moratorium on utility shutoffs:** Rather than take individual action, some localities prefer to wait until the Governor's state-of-emergency expires, which automatically lifts the moratorium after 60 days. Those localities who took formal action to initiate the moratorium will still have to take formal action to lift it. They also noted that resuming shutoffs will be an incentive to use their remaining CARES Act funding.

- **Reopening municipal buildings and offices:** The Cities of Chesapeake, Newport News, Portsmouth, and Norfolk indicated that they were all mostly open. Virginia Beach is looking to open towards the end of June. Several localities are also developing teleworking policies.

ACTION: None.

7. Staff Updates

- **Changing structure of the Committee:** Several Directors noted their preference for some virtual and/or hybrid meetings moving forward, as it avoids commuting across the water. The HRPDC is reducing the number of meetings that will be designated as public meetings moving forward, which could give more flexibility for holding hybrid meetings. Changing the meeting designation would mean that the Directors would no longer vote as an advisory committee to the Commission or be required to record virtual meetings.
- **SSORS expansion to Eastern Shore:** Because HRSD is expanding to the Eastern Shore, the DEQ Tidewater Regional Office would like to expand access to SSORS as well. The Directors support the expansion.
- **Groundwater updates: DEQ model updates, PAROC subcommittee:** The SWIFT Oversight Committee has a Groundwater Subcommittee. During their recent meeting, DEQ discussed doing additional due diligence on the potential for injections to cause a seismic impact. DEQ also mentioned developing a new groundwater model in 2.5 years to improve modeling the regional head changes from SWIFT injections.
- **Regional Construction Standards:** Because Mr. Danny Poe retired, the TRC named a new chair – Mr. Arnie Cuevas, Chesapeake.
- **Notice of Intended Regulatory Action for Regional Water Supply Planning:** Ms. Katchmark will apply to be part of the regulatory advisory panel, which will discuss how best to designate water supply planning areas across the state.
- **Mission H2O:** The Directors support using \$8,000 of their reserve funds to pay for regional membership to Mission H2O.

The next meeting of the Directors of Utilities will be held on July 7, 2021.