

## askHRgreen.org | Water Awareness Committee Meeting Summary Thursday, June 24, 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 Zoom. A recording of the meeting is available upon request.

### Attendees:

Cyndi Masterstaff, NN  
Tamara Clore, SU  
Jerry Hoddinott, CH

Katie Cullipher, HRPDC  
Rebekah Eastep, HRPDC

### 1. Meeting Summary

The May meeting summary was accepted without changes.

**Action:** Summary approved.

### 2. askHRgreen.org Event Schedule

The current listing of outreach events is as follows:

7/16	TGIF event	Suffolk
7/21	YNot WINDsday	Virginia Beach
8/20	TGIF event	Suffolk
9/16 - 9/19	Isle of Wight County Fair	Windsor
10/6-10/11	Suffolk Peanut Festival	Suffolk
10/9	LRNow Fall Festival	Virginia Beach

**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:

- Imagine a Day Without Water paid media campaign (October) – existing + new creative - COMPLETED
- Fixing Leaks paid media campaign (March) – existing creative - COMPLETED
- Value of Water paid media campaign (May 3-9) - COMPLETED
  - HRPDC staff provided the campaign summary report for review
- Virginia Drinking Water & Wastewater Professionals Day (June 30) – Op-ed submitted to local papers and will hopefully run next week in the editorial section. Virginian-Pilot asked for the article to be expanded and HRPDC staff added information about customer assistance programs. Op-ed will also be posted as a blog post on the website and shared on social media.
- Work for Water campaign – The Committee selected a strategy during the May meeting to produce one shorter video. RCS recommended three shorter videos, each focusing on a particular job type with the same theming across the three videos. Videos will include in-person interviews and be about 45 seconds each.
  - The Committee approved the proposed direction for the campaign.
  - Newport News Waterworks and Virginia Beach Public Utilities will host interviews with staff. Interview locations should be picked in a way that helps capture b-roll efficiently.

- askHRgreen social media branding campaign – ongoing

**Action:** The Committee approved the strategy for the Work for Water campaign.

#### 4. Printing & Promotional Items

The Committee approved via email the purchase of 5,000 bamboo toothbrushes and stainless steel straws. The order is on hold for now due to the closing of the fiscal year and as the askHRgreen.org Recycling & Beautification Committee considers joining the order.

Supplies are available for pickup, upon request.

**Action:** HRPDC staff will order bamboo kids toothbrushes and stainless steel straws after the new fiscal year.

#### 5. Roundtable

- Outreach for the end of the cutoff moratorium
  - Governor may lift moratorium for cutoffs of delinquent water bills.
  - Newport News is developing a letter to send out to customers in small batches as to not overwhelm customer service staff. Efforts will likely begin with commercial customers.
  - HRSD has already resumed cutoffs for nonpayment.
  - Chesapeake is undecided at this time as to when cutoffs will resume, however, the Board has approved doing so.
  - Suffolk does not have a date yet for resuming cutoffs for delinquent accounts, may begin by tagging doors to warn customers about overdue balances
  - HRPDC staff can discuss with the Directors of Utilities if regional outreach plan is needed. At a minimum, the Committee could craft language regionally to be used locally.
- Newport News – meter mapping continues for meter replacement, working on new customer portal launch, plans for implementing lead/cooper rule
- Chesapeake – City will use HUD money to help residents pay connection fees, currently Utility Review Board can waive requirements for 2 years but now those residents will have access to HUD funds to cover connection fee. Customer would still pay for adding lines from the home to the street but connection fees would be covered (about \$3,500 for each waste/wastewater)
- HRPDC Board will likely resume meeting in person starting in August. Virtual meetings were only allowed due to the Governor’s emergency order.

**Action:** HRPDC staff will discuss resuming delinquent account cutoffs with the Directors of Utilities.

#### 6. Staff Reports

*FY21 Budget* - The FY21 budget was provided for review. Final rollover amount to FY22 has not been finalized. Committee media planning for FY22 will happen in July.

*May Digital Marketing Report* - HRPDC staff reviewed the May Digital Marketing report. Month-to-month website traffic was down due to the high levels of traffic

generated by Earth Day/month in April. Traffic was up when compared with May 2020. May/June newsletter had a 25 percent open rate with a 12 percent click through rate to the website – these are great statistics based on industry standards.

*All Hands Meeting* - HRPDC staff are hoping to plan an in-person All Hands Meeting this fall as hybrid or in-person meetings resume.

*10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of askHRgreen.org* - HRPDC staff presented the idea of a campaign to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of askHRgreen.org. The proposal includes a \$10,000 budget split evenly between the four environmental education committees (\$2,500 each). The campaign would include:

- One-minute video highlighting facts/figures of the impact of askHRgreen.
- Sponsorship with Coastal Virginia magazine to include large presence (full page sponsorship, overprints, newsletter, etc.) in September/October issue and smaller presence (1/6-page ad, newsletter banner ads) in 4 additional issues covering FY22 calendar.
- The Committee discussed options for funding the special promotion from the FY22 budget and decided to approve the campaign with funds to be used from the promotional item budget.

**Action:** None.

**The next committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 22, 2021.**