

**MEETING SUMMARY
DIRECTORS OF UTILITIES COMMITTEE
November 4, 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 November 4, 2020 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 electronically:

Directors of Utilities Committee:

Bo Clayton, NN	Yann A. Le Gouellec, NN
Wayne Griffin, SM	Bob Montague, VB
Edward G. Henifin, HRSD	Doug Powell, JCSA
Frank James, NN	Paul Retel, SU
Donald Jennings, IW	Erin Trimyer, PO
David Jurgens, CH	
Chad Krejcarek, PQ	

Directors of Utilities Copy:

Kate Bernatitus, NN	Robert Carteris, NO
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HRPDC Staff:

Katie Cullipher	Rebekah Eastep
Whitney Katchmark	Katie Krueger

1. Summary of the October 7, 2020 Meeting of the Directors of Utilities Committee

There were no comments on or revisions to the summary of the October 7, 2020 Committee meeting.

ACTION: The summary of the October 7, 2020 meeting of the Directors of Utilities Committee was approved by consensus

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Regional Source Water Protection Plan

The Directors of Utilities Committee serves as the Local Advisory Committee for the [Hampton Roads Regional Source Water Protection Plan](#) (January 2017). Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC, reviewed the history of the plan and the ongoing efforts, including: one-page emergency contact lists, updating the HRPDC's source water protection web page with educational materials and an interactive map, and incorporating the potential

source of contamination inventory into another HRPDC project that looks at flooding impacts on hazardous sites (“What’s in Your Floodplain”). Committee members requested that they receive copies of the emergency contact lists in addition to a list of people the contact lists were sent to.

ACTION: No Action

4. Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee Review

Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC, gave an overview of the first meeting (held October 22) of the Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee (EVGWMAC). The EVGWMAC was reconvened as part of SB679 to assist DEQ and the State Water Commission in developing, revising, and implementing a management strategy for groundwater within the Eastern Virginia groundwater Management Area. Ms. Krueger reviewed the preliminary results of the 2020 groundwater model for the Potomac Aquifer, which shows recharge occurring in the aquifer for both reported use and total permitted inputs. Ms. Krueger shared that HRPDC now has the locations of critical cells that have been historically present for all aquifers. Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, also reviewed some future goals for groundwater modelling within the HRPDC including: permit changes, SWIFT injections, comparing model results to observed groundwater levels (model has not been calibrated for approximately 10 years), and looking into the research behind private, unpermitted groundwater withdrawals (which have not been updated since 2008). Mr. Ted Henifin, HRSD, and Mr. David Jurgens, CH, discussed the status of the unpermitted groundwater withdrawal paper records. Currently, the historical private, unpermitted groundwater wells are kept via paper records and are considered incomplete records.

ACTION: No Action

5. Regional Constructions Standard

Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC, reviewed the status of Regional Construction Standards (RCS) online training. The RCS now has two options for training: an in person 3 hour training or 3 part module online. The online modules are all available and offer 1 CEU per module. Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, shared that VDOT is reviewing the RCS to potentially endorse the standards. Ms. Katchmark also shared the Bob Sciacchitano, who has worked on the RCS for over 22 years, is retiring this spring.

ACTION: No Action

6. Utility Directors Roundtable Discussion

Mr. Ted Henifin, HRSD, reviewed the status of the consent decree, including that signatures have been received by the state and it has been passed on to the Department of Justice. HRSD expects it to be signed soon where it will go to court and for a 30-day

public notice period. HRSD is believes it is on track for release as public notice for early 2021.

Mr. Henifin then gave an update on waste load allocations in relation to the final phase 3 watershed implementation plan (WIP). As part of the Phase 3 WIP, HRSD has been given a floating allocation (instead of their design loads). HRSD is working to negotiate their allocations so that HRPDC ratepayers are not paying for more than the region's share.

The Committee discussed the special session from the General Assembly that address the budget repayment plan for utilities. Municipal utilities can not require late fees, they must give people 60-day notice prior to disconnect, they must offer repayment plans for up to 24 months, and submit reports to the Commission of local government (first report is due 12/31/20). The Committee discussed the challenges of generating the delinquency report within two weeks (must be inclusive of 12/15/20).

Additional CARES Act funding could potentially be distributed to municipal utilities however, this money must be used for customer accounts by 12/31. This money will likely not be available until the end of November and is dependent on the budget that is to be signed by governor on Thursday (11/5). Likely will only have 2 weeks to distribute (due to reports that need to be generated) the money based on a qualification that has not been developed. Mr. Jurgens, CH, shared that their delinquent accounts have tripled since April (currently 5,000 delinquent accounts vs 1,700 accounts in April)

Ms. Katchmark reviewed a new GIS tool developed by HRSD that showed spatial and temporal distributions of delinquent accounts covered by HRSD billing. The Committee was interested in expanding this tool to show all the locality delinquent accounts as well. HRPDC staff will plan to share the data with CAOs and confirm which utilities have reached the threshold of arrearages equal to 1% of annual operating revenues which allows them to lift the moratorium of disconnects.

Mr. Robert Carteris, NO, shared that Norfolk has allocated \$1.5 million of CARES Act funding for the utility to spend quickly. Norfolk sent out postcards to 5,400 customers that are >60 days delinquent on bills to encourage them to apply to use the funds for their bills. Mr. Jurgens, CH, is also doing something similar, with postcards going out to everyone who is delinquent later this week. Ms. Erin Trimyer, PO, has not seen a surge in people applying for the funding and only a portion of the funds have been used. Mr. Bob Montague, VB, is seeing a similar trend. The Committee discussed that they did not expect to see too many interested people without disconnecting them.

Ms. Katie Cullipher, HRPDC, asked the Committee if they would like to coordinate on regional messaging to encourage people to apply for CARES Act funding and creating a regional database of how to get assistance on bills. Mr. Jurgens, CH, voiced his support of the idea of a regional message. Mr. Henifin, HRSD, disagreed stating that he thought that the messaging would not be helpful as the messaging would come too late for the money to be used. Mr. Yann LeGouellec, NN, stated his support for the regional messaging saying that it would be helpful to have some sort of educational message (i.e. encouraging people

with delinquent accounts to apply for assistance as soon as possible). Mr. Henifin suggested doing this regional messaging once they get more information on State's required repayment plans. Additionally, the Committee discussed temporarily increasing the cap on the Help2Others bill assistance program.

The Committee also discussed the need for increased customer service and meter reading staff in preparation of when cutoffs resume. Finally, the Committee discussed cybersecurity threats with most of the Committee members stating that they send cybersecurity issues to their IT division.

ACTION: The Committee asked to have a call next week (11/10) depending on the outcome of the budget language (to be signed 11/5).

7. **Staff Reports**

- **HRSD Integrated Plan - First Amendment to 2014 MOA** - Ms. Katchmark requested that localities send the signed MOA to Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC.
- **FOG MOA** - Ms. Katchmark requested that localities send the signed MOA to Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC. Ms. Krueger will individually remind the localities that she has not received the signed MOA.
- **Groundwater MOA** - Ms. Katchmark requested that localities send the signed MOA to Ms. Katie Krueger, HRPDC. Ms. Krueger will individually remind the localities that she has not received the signed MOA.
- **Water and Wastewater Rate Data Call** - HRPDC staff will postpone the data call until after the first of the year.

8. **Other Business**

No other Business

The next joint meeting of the Directors of Utilities and Health Directors will be on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 via Webex.