



*District of Columbia
Water and Sewer Authority*

**Board of Directors
Environmental Quality and Operations
Committee Meeting**

Thursday, April 17, 2008, 9:30 a.m.
Room 407, COF, Blue Plains

SUMMARY MINUTES

Board Members

David W. Lake, Chairman
David J. Bardin
Joseph Cotruvo
Howard Gibbs
Jimmie Jenkins
Paivi Spoon
Beverly Warfield

Staff Members

Jerry Johnson, General Manager
Avis Russell, General Counsel
Leonard Benson, Acting Chief Engineer
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary
Walter Bailey, Director, DWT
David McLaughlin, Acting Dir., DETS
Chris Peot, Biosolids Manager

I. CALL TO ORDER

David Lake called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. He explained that the agenda has been revised several times, with the intention of finishing by 11:00 a.m. after which the Ad-hoc Committee on D.C Drinking Water Quality would convene.

II. AWTP STATUS UPDATES

1. BPAWTP Performance

Mr. Bailey, Director of Wastewater Treatment, reported that March performance was excellent; in 100% compliance with all permit limits. Flow for the month averaged 291 MGD, with a 12-month rolling average also of 291 MGD. This is a 10-year low for annual average. Rainfall for the month was very low at 0.28 inches; 12-month rainfall is still below average. Biosolids production was 1210 wet tons per day. Effluent total nitrogen for the month was 8.8 mg/l with a 12-month rolling average of 6.1 mg/l, below the annual goal of 7.5 mg/l.

2. Status AWTP NPDES Permit Appeal

Mr. Bailey advised the Committee that there has been no change in status of the permit appeal from last month.

3. Status of EPA Approval of TN/WW Plan

Mr. Bailey advised the Committee that a meeting with EPA took place in Philadelphia on April 9th. EPA did not initially seem to understand WASA's points, however by the end of the meeting they appeared to understand WASA's concerns, a primary one being that EPA is attempting to implement a "bubble" permit, which would include Outfalls 001 (wet weather flow) and 002 (complete treatment flow) under the total nitrogen discharge limit.

Additional discussion ensued related to the low 12-month flow that has been experienced, and how that compares to the last “drought” period of 2002. A request was made by the Committee to compare the 12 month data of each period, and a further request was made to staff to quantify the flows that have been prevented by tide gate repairs. Mr. Lake pointed out that the only way to sort out Blue Plains flows is to analyze long term and that comparison with the USGS Fairland well may show some interesting correlations.

The Committee also raised the issue of Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) written testimony to Congress which complained about WASA asserting its right to protest the permit. Mr. Johnson has invited the CBF to meet with WASA regarding WASA’s position.

The Committee raised questions about the basis for the proposed nitrogen reductions and associated \$1B cost required of WASA, and requested that EPA be invited to explain to this Committee the water quality improvements expected from such an investment. Mr. Lake offered that new members are entitled to hear the stories that some of the staff and Committee have heard on this topic for many years, and that it would be more likely that a knowledgeable MWCOG staff member would accept such an invitation and could present the background on the nitrogen allocations to the Committee. Mr. Bardin stated that it was very important that EPA Region 3 or Headquarters be invited to explain their rationale for the proposed nitrogen reductions at Blue Plains.

III. INDEPENDENT BUDGET REVIEW: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Johnson updated the Committee on WASA’s responses to the Independent Budget Review by URS with an itemized list of status and management recommendations for 18 of the recommendations. He would like feedback from the Board members. WASA was aware of most of the issues raised by the report; and was in the process of acting on them, or they were in the long term work plan.

In addressing a question on the water audit raised in the report, Mr. Johnson advised that a new model to account for water use is being implemented. Mr. Kiely, Assistant General Manager for Customer Services confirmed that a presentation will be made to this Committee in June.

IV. POTOMAC INTERCEPTOR ODOR CONTROL PROJECT - UPDATE

Mr. McLaughlin, Acting Director of Engineering Services, gave a presentation on the status of the odor control abatement projects planned for the Potomac Interceptor, reviewing the status of the six proposed sites (3/Maryland; 2/Virginia; 1/DC). Mr. Johnson updated the Committee on a recent meeting held between WASA staff and the Palisades Citizen Association, at which they expressed appreciation for WASA’s efforts, and have offered to take a lead role in pulling together stakeholders.

Mr. Lake expressed concern that there is an 18 month delay now projected over what was reported last fall. He requested that an update on this topic be included on the agenda each month, to better track progress toward implementing the proposed odor control project. Mr. Lake noted that the web link for this project on the WASA website needs updating. Mr. Jenkins offered that he and his office will help WASA maneuver through the Fairfax County permitting process, and Mr. Lake offered the same for Montgomery County.

Discussion followed regarding what technologies have been looked at, with Mr. McLaughlin advising the Committee that WASA is open to new technologies, but have done a thorough review to arrive at WASA's proposed (activated carbon) long term solution. As a temporary measure, Thioguard was successfully used this past summer as a pilot project, and another proprietary chemical, Vulchur, is to be tested this summer. There was a brief discussion on the relative importance and priority of the sites, with the opinion that it would cause problems to emphasize one jurisdiction over another. Mr. Johnson also pointed out that all sites will have to work for project success.

V. DISCUSSION OF JOINT-USE FACILITIES – DEFINITION.

Mr. Lake opened with the question “What are joint-use items?” There needs to be a definition of joint-use facilities, and while there is an existing itemized list, there needs to be a mechanism to add and subtract facilities from the list periodically. Mr. Johnson has engaged the General Counsel to consider the idea of having this Committee define what is and isn't joint-use. Changes to legislation may be required. Mr. Lake wants a clearer definition of the role of the suburbs, as there are overarching issues. There is a need to take a look at how the legislation was crafted, and to make sure that it conveys what are joint interest, joint use, and joint responsibility. There are questions regarding what is a decision, and when does it occur? This Committee makes recommendations not decisions. The Committee requested that the minutes reflect a positive reaction from the Committee, and also requested that the full Board be given the exact language from the present law/legislation that defined joint-use facilities, and the statutory context in which it appears.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

The following contract items were submitted for Committee action, after a brief discussion whether the non-joint-use item (procurement action for the Fire Hydrant Contract should be considered here or in the ad-hoc committee). The General Counsel believes that there are governance issues to be worked through before the ad-hoc committee can recommend approval of contracts to the Board:

Contracts Considered and Recommended to Full Board				
No.	Type	Prime Contractor	Scope	Amount
Joint Use				
DCFA #401-WSA	Engineering Services	Metcalf & Eddy Management P.C.	Supplemental Agreement	\$2,900,000.00
WAS-04-018-AA-MB	Goods and Services	C&E Services of Washington	Option Year 4	\$1,034,700.00
P051271C5074-063008-O	Goods and Services	Criswell Chevrolet	Vehicle Purchase	\$622,000.00
Non-Joint Use				
060020	Construction	Fort Myer Construction Corp	Change Order	\$1,060,000.00

The action items were discussed (joint-use contracts by all members; non-joint use contract by District members only), with no reservations expressed by Committee members. A clarification was requested on the engineering services item, to indicate that services being funded now were anticipated at the time of original contract award. Mr. Johnson clarified that no alternative fuel or hybrid vehicles are being purchased under the vehicle purchase action item, although WASA is keeping such vehicles in mind when they can suit WASA's requirements. Mr. Kiely clarified that the construction action item is for 160 fire hydrants, which includes some that are known out of service, and an allowance for those that are reported by the Fire Department's ongoing inspections. All items were recommended for forwarding to the full Board for approval.

VII. EMERGING ISSUES

A May 29th date has been established for a capital projects workshop, with the focus being NPDES permit related projects. Biosolids projects will not be emphasized. The Committee requested that the workshop include a general overview of the total program and lifetime budgets, as an introduction. The Committee also requested there be some discussion of the digester (or biosolids management plan) projects in the introduction. Mr. Lake invited the Committee to forward any specific questions or comments on the workshop to him.

Recent Associated Press news articles on biosolids were distributed to the Committee. Mr. Chris Peot, Biosolids Manager, discussed these articles. WASA has been working with the Associated Press for a year, educating them on biosolids, in the hope that balanced and more positive articles would result. It appears that some of these articles represent old and discredited stories, and another distorts a positive effort to control lead in the soil of a Baltimore neighborhood, through the application of Class A biosolids, into a scare story by insinuating that the biosolids are a toxic mixture of unknown composition. The articles have already resulted in statements of concern from various parties, including politicians. WASA is working actively with industry organizations to correct any misinformation that has resulted from these articles.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

A tour of Blue Plains capital projects was discussed. It appears that there is Committee interest, and other Board members will be invited. Mr. Lake and Mr. Johnson will discuss with Mr. Bailey what such a tour would involve. Mr. Johnson suggested that other facilities, such as the Main Sewage Pumping Station be included; however it was decided to focus this tour on the Blue Plains capital improvements. The Committee requested that, when establishing the tour date, it be after a scheduled Committee meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lake adjourned the meeting at 11:15 p.m.