



**District of Columbia
Water and Sewer Authority**

Board of Directors

**Water Quality and Water Services
Committee**

Thursday, April 21, 2011

11:30 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Dr. Joseph Cotruvo, Vice Chair
Howard Gibbs
Howard Croft
Brenda Richardson
Alan Roth (by phone)

DC WATER Staff Participating

George Hawkins, General Manager
Charles Kiely, Asst. General Manager
Randy Hayman, General Counsel
Linda Manley, Board Secretary

Board Member Present

David J. Bardin

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Dr. Joseph Cotruvo called the meeting to order at 11:38 a.m.

II. WATER QUALITY MONITORING

1. Total Coliform Testing

Charles Kiely reported that there were no positive total coliform samples in the month of April.

2. Lead and Copper Rule Monitoring

Mr. Kiely reported that in the current semester there have been no first-draw LCR samples above the 15 ppb Action Level criterion for lead. One second-draw sample was above the 15 ppb level, but from an address that is known to have galvanized pipe in the interior plumbing. (The second-draw sampling is not required under the federal LCR; however, DC Water has always taken this sample in its protocol, and continues to do so for consistency of the data record.)

3. “Spring Cleaning”

Mr. Kiely reported that the Washington Aqueduct will resume chloramination as the secondary residual disinfection process on May 2. This year’s “Spring Cleaning” resulted in only 8 taste-and-odor complaints compared to the nearly 100 complaints the previous year. The dosing was modified so it will be interesting to see if the expected benefits were

achieved.

III. FIRE HYDRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Wall of the Department of Water Services gave the monthly update on hydrant status, including a statistical fact sheet and map of out-of-service (OOS) hydrants. He reported that as of April 1 there were 21 Out of Service hydrants that were mechanically defective (i.e. not including those designated as OOS because of access issues). This amounts to only 0.23% of total hydrants, compared with the target of 1%. Kudos!!!

The committee discussed the issue of the appropriate level of hydrant inspection by the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS) going forward, in light of the significantly improved system and current continuing low OOS numbers. Mr. Hawkins reported that FEMS is planning to change the hydrant inspection operation by assigning this responsibility to individual fire stations to be done as part of their non-fire-fighting duties, rather than as a centralized operation. Mr. Hawkins noted that DC Water staff will coordinate with FEMS on this new arrangement to make sure that there is consistency in procedures and reporting by the various crews.

IV CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE

Ms. Lauren Preston reported that there has been an 8% reduction in accounts receivables. Contributing to this was the collection in the previous three weeks of \$400,000 in account arrears. She noted that this positive development was directly attributable to initiatives taken by some specific members of her staff, which Board members commended.

Ms. Richardson raised a question concerning water cut-offs and how that is mitigated for indigent families. Ms. Preston responded that the DC Water policy is not to cut-off water during the winter. She also noted that families that would qualify for the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program would also qualify for a CAP discount to be applied to their water bills. Mr. Bardin requested that a future presentation be made on the water cut-offs, and that it cover general statistics, post-cutoff customer behavior, and coordination with the Customer Assistance Program and the SPLASH program.

V. WATER QUALITY COMPLAINTS

Mr. Giani gave a briefing on the process that DC Water uses for investigation of water quality complaints received from customers, including a flow chart of the process. The process includes on-site investigation, different levels of flushing operations, and referral to the engineering department for problems that are particularly recalcitrant and for which it appears that the main probably needs to be replaced. He noted that at any given time there may be about 45 locations that are in some stage of investigation or remediation, and that typically about ten problem sites annually are referred for engineering for capital project development—i.e. pipe replacement. It was noted that a capital project fix will likely take two years, and the affected customers are provided with guidance on how to mitigate the issue in the intervening period. Mr. Hawkins noted that there is some consideration being given to discounting charges to customers for whom routine household flushing is

recommended for to improve their water quality.

The committee commented that water quality complaints are a high priority matter warranting an aggressive remediation program. For starters, it would be valuable to provide a more detailed assessment of the distribution of complaints to determine whether they can help pinpoint areas of the city that may be having endemic water quality problems due to pipe condition or age of water. A brief routine report to the committee on current WQ complaint statistics was suggested, with use of a map similar to that which has been used in the hydrant program. Dr. Cotruvo related some recent comments that he had received from some staffers on Capital Hill on their perceptions about water quality in their buildings, and he suggested that the water issues and perceptions among the Hill staffers might need special attention, to diagnose and mitigate. The perceptions issue warrants some type of education activity among legislators and staff.

VI. VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

Mr. Caldwell, the Director of Facilities and Security, gave a briefing on a project being started to update the agency's Vulnerability Assessment. He indicated that a consultant had been selected, and that the contract is currently being negotiated. It is anticipated that there will be a 4 to 6 month schedule for the project. The issue of cyber security will be addressed in a separate contract. In the shorter term, the committee is interested in learning of the results of the Post 9/11 Vulnerability Assessment, which could be done in Executive session, if appropriate. It would be instructive to know how the proposed new contract scope will differ from the post 9/11 vulnerability assessment.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

The committee recommended for Board approval two contracts, consisting of:

- WAS-10-038-AA-CE – Wachs Valve and Hydrant Services for valve operations in support of the capital improvement program. (This contractor had performed well in the base period and was recommended for an option year extension, but ultimately this is an activity that DC Water intends to undertake with internal staff resources.)
- DCFA #442 EA Engineering and Technology for construction management services for Division C and E under the agency's Clean Rivers Program for combined sewer overflow abatement. (This contract was also reviewed and recommended by the Environmental Quality and Sewerage Services Committee, but was also brought to the WQWS committee because it is categorized as non-joint-use.)

VIII. EMERGING ISSUES

Mr. Giani reported on an activity being undertaken by the EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) involving lead. The SAB has been requested by the EPA Water Division to address certain technical questions related to the issue of partial lead service line replacements in support of the EPA's ongoing activities to issue revisions of the Lead and Copper Rule. He and other parties representing DC Water had recently attended a two-day open meeting of the SAB panel, and a memo summarizing the meeting's discussions

will be provided to the Board members. He indicated that the SAB is intending to complete its report on findings to the Office of Water this summer, and the Office of Water intends to issue a proposal of a revised LCR within a year. The entire process of proposal, review and comment, and promulgation, and implementation requires several years in most cases.

IX. MAIN BREAKS FREQUENCY: “PHILADELPHIA STORY”

In a previous presentation on main break frequency, it was noted that Philadelphia had an unusually low main break reported frequency, well below the reported national average. Mr. Kiely reported that he learned from his recent communications with the Philadelphia utility that about 20 years ago Philadelphia had increased the water infrastructure replacement rate, and that it is apparently now reaping the benefits of that decision. Philadelphia’s replacement rate was set at 0.8%, almost three times DC Water’s 0.3% rate. The committee suggested that it would be valuable to produce a “cost avoided” assessment to attempt to quantify the net cost of preemptive main replacement and repair versus the cost of responding to emergency incidents after breaks.

X. AGENDA FOR NEXT MONTH’S MEETING

The following topics were suggested for appropriate agenda items:

1. Standard Agenda Items
2. Customer water quality complaints statistical summary and map
3. Briefing on collections activities, water cut-offs, and coordination with customer assistance programs.
4. Post 9/11 vulnerability assessment results and corrections status. Scope of proposed new assessment.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:11 pm.

Follow Up Items

Customer water quality complaints statistical summary and program description (requested at April 21, 2011 meeting.)

Briefing on collections activities, water cut-offs, and coordination with customer assistance programs (requested at April 21, 2011 meeting.)

Developing better estimates of water usage by segments using AMR data and other readily available resources (initiated in Retail Rates committee).

Scope and cost of new Vulnerability Assessment.