



**District of Columbia  
Water and Sewer Authority**

**Board of Directors**

**Water Quality and Water Services  
Committee**

*Thursday, May 20, 2010*

*11:00 a.m.*

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present**

Neil Albert, Chair  
Howard Gibbs  
Howard Croft  
Alexis Roberson  
Brenda Richardson

**WASA Staff Participating**

Avis Russell, General Counsel  
Leonard Benson, Chief Engineer/  
Deputy General Manager  
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Neil Albert at 11:10 am. He first expressed appreciation for the service that had been provided by Dr. Cotruvo in chairing the previous meeting in his absence.

It was noted that the General Manager, George Hawkins, could not be present for the meeting as he was attending to an urgent press meeting occasioned by breaking news stories on past water quality issues related to lead concentrations.

**II. WATER QUALITY MONITORING**

**1. Coliform testing:**

Mr. Rich Giani, Water Quality Manager, reported that there had been no positive coliform results in any of the compliance samples taken since December, 2009

**2. Lead and Copper Rule compliance testing:**

Mr. Giani reported there have been only two samples above the 15 ppb regulatory action level in the 69 samples analyzed so far this semester. The calculated 90<sup>th</sup> percentile concentration for the samples so far is 8 ppb. In follow-up investigations for these two samples, high iron concentrations suggest that the elevated lead concentration is due to release from internal rust scale present in interval household galvanized pipe.

In response to questions from a Committee member, Mr. Giani described the extensive communication and follow up, including additional sampling that is performed with customer consent at locations that exceeded the action level.

**3. Nitrification issue status:**

Mr. Giani reported on the change in secondary disinfectant to free chlorine for an extended period from February 1, 2010 through May 18, 2010. He indicated that from initial results it appears that the change has been successful, with reduced nitrification, fewer discolored water complaints and iron release. He noted that Water Quality staff would continue to monitor the situation into the more critical summer months.

**III. FIRE HYDRANT PROGRAM**

**1. Service status:**

Mr. David Wall, Manager of the Fire Hydrant Program, reported that there are currently 109 defective hydrants, approximately 1.2% of the total publicly owned hydrant inventory: This is slightly above the goal of 1%. A map showing locations of the out-of-service hydrants was also distributed to the committee. Mr. Wall noted that the increase in the number of out of service fire hydrants this month was a result of the a temporary “back-log” due to the recent initiation of the Fire Department fire hydrant inspection program this Spring we noted that he expected the number to be back below the target of 1% in the near future.

**2. Disinfection protocols used for leak detection equipment**

In response to a request from a previous meeting, Mr. Giani reported on protocols that DC WASA uses to maintain disinfectant integrity of water mains during leak investigations. He said that if the water main is taken out of service for manned internal inspection, then it is disinfected prior to being returned to service using AWWA standard procedures for this purpose. If leak detection equipment is introduced into a live water main, then it is thoroughly disinfected prior to its insertion in the line.

**3. Water main break history**

In response to a request from a previous meeting, Mr. Wall reported on water main break statistics, distributing two graphics: one showing annual break numbers from FY’00 to FY’10 (partial), and the other depicting monthly break totals since October 2007. He noted that so far in 2010 there have been 269 breaks, with a projected total by the end of the fiscal year of about 400, which would be slightly less than average. He also distributed a spreadsheet which indicated that the repair costs to DC WASA for some of the larger break incidents have been substantial, ranging from \$8,000 to \$324,000, and totaling about \$1,682,000 for calendar year 2009.

#### IV. CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE

In response to a request from a previous meeting, Ms. Lauren Preston, Director of Customer Services, reported on procedures that DC WASA uses to handle condominiums that are in arrears on water bill payments. She outlined a procedure that progressed from “special notices” to “payment plans” to “property liens” to “DCRA plumbing inspections for plumbing violations, including chronic leaks” and finally to “service shutoffs” if the problem cannot be resolved. She noted that Customer Service staff make every effort to avoid “service shutoffs,” particularly out of concern for adverse impacts on customers that are cooperative within the condominium. Instead, cooperative payment plans are the preferred approach. She reported that there were 43 condominiums currently in arrears over 90 days, with two being responsible for 63% of the outstanding balance of approximately \$180,000.

Ms. Preston also reported on the recently inaugurated “Top 75 Review” program, in which the accounts with highest revenue arrears were targeted for special review and action. This program yielded \$150,000 in collections in its first month.

Committee Member Brenda Richardson inquired concerning the status of the SPLASH fund for payment assistance for financially distressed customers. She had heard that the fund was depleted. Ms. Preston responded that she believed that there is a positive balance in the fund and it is operational. She indicated that she would confirm this and report back.

#### V. PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Public Affairs Director, Alan Heymann, was not present at the meeting due to his having to assist with an urgent public affairs matter with the General Manager. Ms. Russell indicated that his report on this matter would be submitted to the committee in writing.

#### VI. ACTION ITEMS – NON-JOINT USE

##### 1. Contract No. DCFA# 430-WSA, Hatch Mott MacDonald

The Committee agreed to recommend approval of this contract for program management services for the water distribution system capital program. The proposed contract is for \$19 million over a 5 year period. Mr. Leonard Benson, the Acting Chief Engineer/Deputy General Manager, responded to Committee member questions on the scope and staffing level of this particular contract, on the numbers of DC WASA staff dedicated to managing this contract (over 3 full time equivalents), evaluation criteria used in engineering consultant selections, and an emerging concern over the workload capacity of minority and women subcontractors that are often used in many DC WASA engineering contracts.

##### 2. Contract No. DCFA# 432-WSA, Whitman Requardt & Associates

This item was deleted from the agenda prior to the start of the meeting, and referred to the Environmental Quality and Sewerage Services Committee for necessary action.

## **VII. EMERGING ISSUES / OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Mr. Benson reported that pursuant to the request from last month's committee meeting, Mr. Kiely, the Assistant General Manager for Consumer Services, would make a presentation at the next meeting on the recommended detailed scope for this committee, including regulatory, consumer groundwater and stormwater issues.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.

### **Follow Up Items**

1. Provide a briefing on protocols in place between DC WASA and the Washington Aqueduct on decision making, and on timely notification of emerging issues that would affect DC WASA or its customers (requested at a prior meeting).
2. Schedule a briefing on the scope of DC WASA responsibilities for separate stormwater systems and for groundwater facilities, and what oversight responsibilities would be appropriate for this committee (requested at a prior meeting).
3. Provide a status report on the current funding levels in the SPLASH program.
4. Submit the Public Affairs status update to the Committee in writing.