



**District of Columbia
Water and Sewer Authority**

Board of Directors

**Water Quality and Water Services
Committee**

Thursday, March 17, 2011

11:30 a.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Dr. Joseph Cotruvo, Vice Chair
Howard Gibbs
Alexis Roberson
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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Dr. Joseph Cotruvo called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

II. WATER QUALITY MONITORING

1. Total Coliform Testing

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

2. Lead and Copper Rule Monitoring (LCR)

Mr. Kiely reported that there have been 35 LCR compliance sample sets taken so far this monitoring period of which none have exceeded the 15 ppb regulatory threshold. He said that the LCR monitoring is continuing a downward trend. When asked about the effect of the September 2009 change that eliminated the previous preflush recommendation at the start of the required minimum 6 hour stagnation period before sampling, he said the overall downward trend was not interrupted by the change in sampling instructions.

Dr. Cotruvo suggested that DC Water consider an initiative to focus on the galvanized pipe problem. Past DC Water sponsored research has implicated household galvanized piping as being an important source of lead release, due to prior capture of lead from an upstream lead service line in the internal rust scale on the galvanized pipe wall. He suggested that WASA draft a fact sheet on the galvanized pipe phenomenon and enlist the support of plumbing contractors to inform customers of the potential and report observations of galvanized pipe in homes that they visit when conducting repairs.

III. SPLASH PROGRAM – GREATER WASHINGTON URBAN LEAGUE

Ms. Audrey Epperson, Director of the Education/Employment and Training Division of the Greater Washington Urban League, gave a presentation on GWUL's administration of the SPLASH program, which is a fund to assist lower income DC Water customers in paying their water bills. She provided some examples of outreach materials mentioning the SPLASH program. Ms. Epperson reported in the last five months (Oct 2010 – Feb 2011), the program had seen 145 clients for assistance requests, of which 108 were assisted with \$34,260 in support. Assistance was not provided to 22 requests in which the water service was "on without authority," 12 requests in which the amount owed was less than \$200, three had been already assisted in the previous 12 months, and one coming from a resident of a multi-unit building. (*Note: Apparent addition error in GWUL handout.*) In the discussion Ms. Epperson reviewed the sources of funding for the SPLASH program, and suggested changes in administration of the program for more effective allocation of assistance. When asked whether the Urban League had been able to stimulate additional donations to the SPLASH fund Ms Epperson responded that there had been some cases of donated funds outside of the DC Water budget. The committee felt that based upon the presentation, the Urban League was performing well in administering the SPLASH program.

IV. FIRE HYDRANT PROGRAM

Mr. David Wall of the Dept of Water Services gave the monthly update on hydrant status, including statistical fact sheet and map of out-of-service (OOS) hydrants. Mr. Wall reported that as of March 1 there were 49 OOS hydrants that were mechanically defective (i.e. not including those designated as OOS because of access issues). This amounts to 0.54% of total hydrants, compared with the target of 1%. He noted that as of March 17 there were only 22 defective OOS hydrants. The committee commended the substantial improvement in the program statistics and the continuing downward trend of out of service hydrants. One member suggested that perhaps a reduction in the program target might be in order in the spirit of continuous improvement..

V. CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Lauren Preston, the Director of Customer Services, gave a briefing on the Customer Assistance Program (CAP). She reported that in the last five months (Oct, 2010 to Feb 2011) there were 5,128 program participants with an assistance amount of \$371,541. The program target for the year is \$1,129,420.

Ms. Preston also reported on the impact of the recently implemented multi-tiered impervious charge on CAP program participants. For 72% of the participants there was no change, but 26% of CAP participants saw a reduction in their charges. A little over 2% of the participants saw an increase. Ms. Preston commented that in some of these cases the customer was "house rich", typically through inheritance, but still of low income.

VI. WATER MAIN BREAK OCCURRENCES

Mr. Kiely gave a presentation on main breaks, including statistics on main break occurrences annually for the last four years. The following comparative statistics were also provided:

National average:	25 repairs per 100 miles of pipe
DC Water:	34 repairs per 100 miles of pipe
Baltimore:	37 repairs per 100 miles of pipe
WSSC:	32 repairs per 100 miles of pipe
Philadelphia	24 repairs per 100 miles of pipe

DCWater, Baltimore, and WSSC are comparable, whereas Philadelphia was about 30% lower than DC Water and essentially the same as the national average. It was suggested that further inquiry with that utility might yield beneficial or at least clarification of its circumstances and experiences.

Mr. Kiely also discussed the costs of water main break repairs, indicating that the typical repair done by internal DC Water labor costs about \$8,200, including restoration of paving. The typical cost for a repair done by DC Water's support contractor is \$10,600. Mr. Kiely noted the contract cost structure includes factors that reflect the contract response time requirement of two hours. Examples were also given of specific incidents in which unusually extensive damage was caused by the water main break, and the necessary repair cost \$212,546 (5/6/09 repair on Florida Ave, NW), \$762,490 (10/15/10 repair on Constitution Ave, NW) and over \$329,000 (12/31/10 repair on Spring PI, NW.)

There was some discussion of the net cost of a water main replacement program which should reduce the incidence of breaks vs the cost of emergency repairs. It was noted that the current 1% annual replacement plan would ultimately produce an average system age of about 50 years, vs the current average of about 75 years. The committee would be interested in hearing the replacement strategy and the criteria for selecting replacement priorities outside of those driven by DDOT's major street renovation schedules. The latter also drives involuntary lead service line replacements.

VII. ACTION ITEMS – NON-JOINT USE CONTRACT

The committee recommended for Board approval a new contract to CCP Construction Co. for the "Rehabilitation and Upgrade of the Fort Reno Pumping Station" for \$4.1 million.

VIII. STATUS OF LEAD OUTREACH MATERIALS

Mr. Alan Heymann, Director, Office of Public Affairs, provided an update on the outreach materials that are to be used in connection with water main replacement projects to educate the customers on the lead-in-water issue and to encourage them to participate in replacement of lead service lines if their service line is lead. He indicated that the materials are currently in pre-production at the printer. Dr. Cotruvo indicated that he would solicit review comments from Committee members and forward them to staff.

Mr. Heymann also discussed a letter that had been sent out to pediatricians and other health professionals discussing the 2010 CDC report on lead service lines. The letter briefly summarizes DC Water's recommendations to customers for mitigation of lead-in-

water impacts, including actions recommended for full or partial replacements of lead service lines. This letter was sent out under the signatures of the directors of the Dept of the Environment, the Dept of Health, the Dept of Health Care Finance, and the DC Water General Manager.

Dr. Cotruvo noted that the 2010 CDC study should not be considered the “final word” on the lead issue, and encouraged staff to take opportunities to disseminate research findings that the Authority had developed, including the forthcoming article on the role of household galvanized pipe as a significant source of lead, even after lead service lines had been replaced.

IX. “SPRING CLEANING”

Mr. Kiely repeated information that had been earlier conveyed to the committee that the Washington Aqueduct would be replacing chloramines with free chlorine as a water quality maintenance practice for the period of March 21 through May 2. A press release had been issued on this and this information is posted on the DC Water website.

X. EMERGING ISSUES / OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Roth noted a recent community newsletter item on a report by a resident of discolored water, with a picture of the water in the bathtub. There are numerous possible causes, some systemic and some due to home plumbing. Mr. Hawkins indicated that the incident will be investigated and a determination made as to the cause, and he would report this information to the committee. A determination will be made as to whether the ‘red water’ incident is considered “systemic” and of significance, and would warrant inclusion on a future meeting agenda.

XI. AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

A draft agenda for the next WQWS Committee was agreed to in concert with the new public notice requirements. Dr. Cotruvo requested that a briefing be provided to a joint meeting of the WQ&WS committee and the EQ&SS committee on vulnerability assessments that have been made in the past, by the Authority and how they have been addressed in emergency response planning and operations. A drinking water system vulnerability assessment was mandated by the US government post 9-11. Water and sewage system vulnerabilities and their consequences are quite different, but there might be educational value in a joint presentation. If necessary for security reasons, the briefings might be held in closed session.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Follow Up Items

Provide the presentation made to the HR and Labor Relations Committee about the

operations vulnerability and safety at DC Water facilities – suggested as appropriate for a presentation to a joint meeting with the Environmental Quality and Sewerage Services Committee (Requested at November 18, 2010 meeting.)

Briefing on water main replacement strategy and priorities.