



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Customer and Community Service  
Committee Meeting  
Monday, March 22, 2004  
10:00 a.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Board Members in Attendance**

**Alexander McPhail, Chairman  
Michael Dutton  
Stephanie Nash  
David Bardin**

**WASA Staff in Attendance**

**Jerry N. Johnson, General Manager  
Paul Bender, Chief Financial Officer  
Charles Kiely, Customer Service Dir.  
Johnnie Hemphill, Assistant to the GM,  
Government Relations  
Pat Wheeler, Interim Public Affairs  
Director  
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary**

Mr. Alexander McPhail, Committee Chairman called the meeting to order at approximately 10:15 am.

**Customer Service**

Mr. Bender informed the Committee that there was nothing new to report relative to the IG report on customer service. Mr. McPhail asked if we needed to make the Council aware of any issues in the report. Mr. Bender stated that the Authority has communicated with Council member Schwartz about the report. The IG report on meter accuracy has been completed, and we are awaiting the customer service responsiveness report.

**Government Relations Plan Update**

Johnnie Hemphill provided an update on the development of the Government Relations Plan. The plan will address the local, regional and federal resource requirements and priority action areas. The Public Affairs and the governmental relation's functions overlap. Therefore, the communications and the governmental relations plans will be integrated and activities coordinated as appropriate. The Committee delayed the planned submission of the proposed plan until the end of July, given the demands associated with the Lead Services Replacement Program.

**Lead Service Line Update**

Mr. Johnson reported that the lead service lines issue continues to be an evolving one and that there have been significant coordinative activities out of the Task Force. Filter distribution sites have been set up around the city and filters have been distributed at different neighborhood meetings however, because only 3,000 filters have been distributed over the last 3 weeks, WASA will begin a more aggressive approach of mailing filters to all customers with known lead service lines. By using United Parcel Service (UPS) to deliver the filters, WASA can supply between 2-4 thousand filters to our

customers a day. UPS will make three delivery attempts. This will allow customers who are not at home at the time of the initial delivery, the option of having the filter left at their door, having it delivered to another address, or picking the filter up at the UPS site. UPS requires a signature for deliveries, which allows the Authority to track which customer actually received the filters. By the end of the week, the Authority will have enough replacement cartridges to last customers for 6 months and will begin mailing those as well.

WASA is populating the lead service database with the information gathered in this process. This will allow the Authority to update current records. The Authority has centralized all information into the CIS and now customers can access their account via the Internet and determine if they have a lead service line.

The Committee discussed different approaches to garner customer contact information, including a possible response survey to customers requesting specific information. The Committee agreed that every customer contact should be used as an opportunity to update the database and to gather other needed information. Brita has donated 10,600 filters and PUR has donated 12,000. In addition, the Authority is currently negotiating with another manufacturer to donate additional filters. When negotiations are completed, a determination can be made on the number of additional filters needed. The purchase of the additional filters will be split between Brita and PUR. Both manufacturers have given the Authority a fifty percent discount on replacement cartridges. All filters are scheduled to be delivered by April 10, 2004.

The Committee discussed EPA's ten-point letter to the Authority that laid out a number of requirements. The Authority responded with a plan (a 30 page document) that went out last week. In an effort to make the home lead test sampling procedure instruction language easier to understand, the contractor had recently adjusted the language because some of our customers have found the initial instructions confusing. We have identified 2,200 addresses that received the initial set of instructions and are in the process of notifying these customers to instruct them to disregard the results of the first kit which had been sent with the initial instruction language. To rectify this problem, the Authority will provide the affected customers with a second kit with the improved/revised instructions so that the sample can be properly collected. However, in the meantime, we have suspended mailing test kits until EPA has signed off on the protocol and the revised text for the instructions.

The Authority is working with EPA to reach a consensus on the issue of cutting lead pipes. Cutting lead pipes leaves residue in the pipes, which is then forced through the line into the residence. The Department of Health has recommended that we stop cutting at the property line and go to the first threaded joint – which may be on either side of the property line (meters are not necessarily set on the property line). The staff of the Authority agrees with the Department of Health that going to the first threaded joint is the most effective process. EPA initially agreed we would go to the first threaded joint but has since rescinded their position. We are currently in discussion with EPA on this matter.

Mr. Johnson informed the Committee that tests carried out so far by the DC Department of Health show that there is no direct correlation between lead in drinking water and high lead levels in blood. He also noted that there have been no pregnant women or nursing mothers who have been tested that show elevated lead levels.

### **Proposed Resolution - Policy on the Replacement of Lead Service Lines**

Mr. McPhail outlined a Proposed Resolution to adopt a policy on the replacement of lead service lines. A copy of the proposed Resolution circulated at the meeting is attached. Mr. Johnson stated that while this would take care of WASA's legal obligation in accordance with EPA policy, the replacement of the portion of the service line that is in public space, it would not have done our customers any great benefit. He questioned whether the elimination of the lead service lines is really a solution to the problem, or if the Authority would have just come into compliance with a rule that is really not working. He also questioned whether the resolution is the solution to a problem we still don't have a clear definition on at this point. An approach of this type should include in understanding of the legal parameters, the health affects at various levels and whether replacement of the lines is the ultimate solution.

Mr. McPhail asked what the difficulty was with having lead service lines removed from public space by 2010. Mr. Johnson responded that the Authority has looked at several scenarios for accomplishing this task and found that five years was extremely aggressive because of the number of permits and the coordinative efforts involved and disruption within the city. The Engineering staff believes that seven years is more realistic based on all these requirements and other ongoing projects. He stated that the Authority is looking at a number of options to possibly finance the private portion of the line.

Mr. Bardin stated that he supported the resolution and that it is critical that this Board develop a policy. This is a good starting point and it can be amended at a later date.

Ms. Nash stated that the policy was excellent, but that she had a concern with the 2010 date. She didn't want us to miss the date. Mr. McPhail indicated that the date could always be changed later if needed.

Mr. Dutton asked if we could increase (double or triple) the number of lead service lines we plan to replace in a year. Mr. Johnson stated that there is no overall plan to change out lead service lines. There is no Board adopted policy and we have not built anything into our long-term capitol plan except for regulatory compliance, which is the seven percent a year.

Mr. Bardin stated that the staff should work with the Department of Transportation (DDOT) to coordinate our efforts. Mr. Johnson stated that the Authority is working with DDOT to obtain a blanket permit to dig up lead lines. The committee agreed to forward the resolution to the full board for review.

### **Command Center Update**

Mr. McPhail commented that his recent interaction with the command center was positive. Charles Kiely provided the committee with an update on the command center. He reported that we have processed over 40,000 transactions and have sent out 14,000 test kits. We have picked up approximately 10,000 kits and overall the command center was running well. The call volume for weekdays 9:00am-5:00pm is most extensive, dropping off significantly after 5:00pm. Call volume for weekends have declined as well. We plan to continue the same hours for about the next 3 months, but will adjust if needed.

## **SPLASH Update**

Mr. Kiely reported that we are targeting July for promotion/kick-off.

Mr. McPhail suggested that we use upcoming events i.e.: Christmas in April, Joint Utility Discount Day to better publicize our efforts. Mr. Bardin suggested we author a story informing customers of our milestones.

Mr. McPhail adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:27pm.