



**District of Columbia
Water and Sewer Authority**

**Board of Directors
Ad-hoc Committee on Drinking Water Quality Meeting**

Thursday, March 13, 2008, 10:30 a.m.
Room 407, COF, Blue Plains

SUMMARY MINUTES

Ad-hoc Committee Board Members

Joseph Cotruvo, Chairman
Howard Gibbs
Brenda Richardson

Staff Members

Jerry Johnson, General Manager
Avis Russell, General Counsel
Len Benson, Acting Chief Engineer
Charles Kiely, Assistant General Manager
Linda R. Manley, Board Secretary

Independent Study of Water Quality Discussion

Brendan Shane on behalf of Board member George Hawkins

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Cotruvo called the Ad-hoc Committee Meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Dr. Cotruvo announced that this was the inaugural meeting for the Committee. He also indicated that several Board Members were not able to attend the meeting because of previous commitments. Since all of the members of the *ad hoc* committee are also members of the Environmental Quality and Operations Committee, meetings of the *ad-hoc* Committee and of the Environmental Quality and Operations Committee would be coordinated, when possible, but that other meeting times will be scheduled, whenever appropriate.

II. MISSION STATEMENT AND SCOPE DISCUSSION

1. **Mission Statement and Scope Discussion**

Dr. Cotruvo distributed a draft Committee mission statement and scope for discussion with the other Committee Members. The draft mission statement read as follows:

This *ad hoc* Committee of the BOD will oversee all DCWASA programs related to minimizing lead in drinking water to assure their quality and transparency, and suitable clear and informative public communications on their content and progress, to support public confidence in their outcomes.

Upon discussion, it was agreed that the mission statement should be more broad and encompassing. It was also noted that the mission of the Committee may evolve as circumstances dictate. Thus, the committee agreed to change the name of the Committee to “The DC WASA Board of Directors Ad-hoc Committee on Drinking Water Quality.”

The draft scope of the Committee was lead focused and read as follows:

- Corrosion control performance and lead and Copper Rule (LCR) compliance testing
- Consequences of temporary use of free chlorine as a disinfectant
- The lead service replacement (LSR) program and its reassessment
- Independent Study/Analysis of Water Quality in Washington, D.C. including an audit of lead data
- Public information and communications plans associated with these activities

Ms. Richardson asked if the scope could be made broader. She specifically asked where the recent pharmaceuticals in the water supply issue would be covered in the Committee’s scope of work. Mr. Johnson suggested that it does not fall into the Committee’s scope as an operational issue, since water treatment is the responsibility of the Washington Aqueduct. Dr. Cotruvo replied that since water quality is involved and the public receives drinking water from WASA’s distribution system, then the issue should fall under the oversight of the Committee. The Committee Members felt that adding a specific reference to ‘pharmaceuticals’ in the scope statement would not be appropriate. However, the Committee agreed that a more general, all-encompassing statement on drinking water quality should be added to the scope

Thus, the revised mission statement and scope are as follows:

The DC WASA Board of Directors *ad hoc* Committee on DC Drinking Water Quality

Mission Statement:

This *ad hoc* committee of the BOD will oversee all DC WASA programs related to water quality to assure their quality and transparency, and assure suitable clear and informative public communications on their continent and progress, to support public confidence in their outcomes.

The scope of the committee's coverage will include:

- The composition and quality of drinking water supplied to DC consumers,
- Corrosion control performance and Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) compliance testing,
- Consequences of temporary use of free chlorine as a disinfectant,
- The lead service line replacement (LSR) program and its reassessment,
- Independent Study/Analysis of Water Quality in Washington including an audit of lead data,
- Public information and communications plans associated with these activities.

2. Lead and Copper Rule Compliance Testing: Report and Review Status

Mr. Kiely briefed the Committee on the status of the Lead and Copper Rule compliance activities. He stated that WASA's voluntary testing program remained in effect for 2008 – sampling and analyzing samples on a two-semester basis. Mr. Kiely noted that 47 samples have been collected to date in the first semester; 23 of which have been analyzed to this point; and none of the 23 analyzed were above the action level (15 ppb). The 90th percentile of samples received to date is 8 ppb.

3. LSR Status

Mr. Kiely briefed the Committee on the status of the Lead Service Replacements (LSRs) completed in the first quarter (Q1) of fiscal year (FY) 2008. He stated that 508 premises had their public side lead service lines replaced in Q1, bringing the overall total to 14,620 public side replacements since the inception of the program. Mr. Kiely also mentioned that 223 customers had their private side lead service lines replaced during Q1, bringing the overall total to 2,128 private side replacements since the inception of the program.

With regard to the recent DC Council Hearings which focused on the LSR issues, Dr. Cotruvo praised Mr. Johnson for his presentation and efforts during these hearings, as well as the perspectives provided by Dr. Guidotti. He mentioned that the public information materials that WASA provides to D.C. residents through the LSR Program were highly praised by Councilman Graham. However, one speaker at the hearing stated that the materials did not specifically indicate the health consequences of elevated lead in drinking water. The point was that perhaps some carefully written and accurate information of that sort might encourage more people to choose private side line replacement.. Dr. Cotruvo asked whether or not WASA would re-visit the materials to determine whether additional language should be included in them. Perhaps only a brief addendum would be sufficient. Mr. Johnson noted that experts in risk communication participated in the development of these informational materials and their conclusion was that the text was appropriate for such a broad audience. This topic will be re-visited at the next meeting, and Mr. Johnson agreed to initiate a further review of the materials.

Dr. Cotruvo then mentioned a rumor that 'profiteering' might be occurring within the LSR Program in some cases. He mentioned an undocumented claim that in an

example two thousand dollars was charged for a private side replacement that consisted of the installation of perhaps 10 feet of pipe that supposedly only took 20 minutes to complete, and on the other hand in another case the homeowners had negotiated a much lower price directly with the installer. Mr. Johnson reminded the Committee that the private side replacement rates were set by the Board and constituted a fully loaded cost that includes contractor management, oversight, etc. Mr. Johnson stated that WASA will look into whether or not the fees currently being charged are appropriate. Ms. Richardson asked whether the customer pays WASA or the contractor. Mr. Johnson replied that the customer pays WASA directly for the private side replacement.

4. Temporary Use of Free Chlorine as a Disinfectant – Coordinated Public Communications Plan

The Committee agreed to discuss the coordinated public communications plan for the free chlorine modification at the next meeting.

5. Independent Study of Water Quality

Mr. Hawkins was unavailable, so Mr. Brendan Shane from the DC Department of the Environment (DDOE) spoke on his behalf. Mr. Shane stated that DDOE would co-lead the study with WASA, and would work in a transparent fashion to address any public concern that the 'true' facts are being hidden or distorted. Mr. Shane identified the steps involved in the study:

- Identify who would be designing the study
 - Who will participate
 - Which party makes the decision(s) on the design
- Determine the scope of the study
 - Contemplating actually going into the homes to improve the quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) of the sampling efforts (and therefore the results of the study)
- Determine the schedule
- Determine the source of funding
- Develop and implement an outreach and education plan
 - Outreach to be performed by both DDOE and WASA
 - DDOE and WASA would co-lead advisory group

Dr. Cotruvo raised a concern that care must be taken in order to ensure that the study is both actually and perceived as independent and that it is not in any way being influenced by WASA (i.e., WASA cannot go beyond the role of an advisory group). Mr. Shane responded that is their intent; and that the work is to be performed by an outside, 3rd part entity (contractor).

Also, a question was raised as to how long the study will take. Mr. Shane advised that the study could take over a year to complete. Finally, it was determined that, if possible, the study should be peer reviewed to ensure it would hold-up to scrutiny.

III. EMERGING ISSUES

Ms. Richardson noted that a story on this morning's news mentioned DC and pharmaceuticals in drinking water. Mr. Gibbs noted that the Mayor of the District of Columbia said WASA is meeting all federal standards and the water is "safe" to drink. Mr. Johnson briefly described how pharmaceuticals can enter the water supply. Mr. Johnson also noted that chlorine will break down some of the pharmaceuticals and that some others will be filtered out. However, water treatment processes will not remove all of these compounds.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that the technology available to measure these compounds is advancing at a faster pace than the technology to remove them. He then mentioned a "real-world" example of parts per trillion (ppt.) being equivalent to one drop of water in 16 full-sized, Olympic swimming pools full of water. Dr. Cotruvo mentioned that the ppt concentrations commonly detected in drinking water would usually be in the thousandths to millionths of the therapeutic doses of the pharmaceuticals. Mr. Johnson mentioned that there are two approaches to the issue: 1) source control by pharmaceutical companies themselves, and 2) alternative treatment methodologies by public water systems. Mr. Johnson mentioned that WEF and AWWA's Research Foundation is studying, alternative treatment methods. Mr. Johnson noted that he has provided information from AWWA to Board members. Dr. Cotruvo asked why the BOD had not been informed earlier of the existence of the data which was being collected in 2007. Mr. Johnson said that the Washington Aqueduct had been participating in the analytical study, but they had not notified WASA of the results. This raises questions about the working relationship with the Aqueduct. Mr. Johnson agreed to look more closely into this to determine why there was no previous notification.

Dr. Cotruvo suggested that the water supply industry may also want to consider establishing benchmarks for these contaminants, since these types of chemicals will continue be found in the future and regulatory action is likely to be years away, if it is determined to be necessary.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Gibbs noted that at a fire in the District early this morning, the Mayor praised WASA's personnel for support in containing the incident.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that there may be an article in the Washington Post in the near future concerning the method used to connect lead pipes to copper pipes.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.