

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**WATER QUALITY AND WATER SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2015**

**Present Board Members Present D.C. Water Staff**

Rachna Butani, Chair (By Phone) Biju George, Chief Operating Officer

Matthew Brown, Board Chairman Randy Hayman, General Counsel

Robert Mallett, (By Phone) Charles Kiely, Assistant General Manager

Howard Gibbs for Customer Care and Operations

Alan Roth (By Phone) Linda Manley, Secretary to the Board

Kendrick Curry (By Phone)

**I. Call to Order**

Ms. Butani called the meeting to order.

**II. Water Quality Monitoring**

 **A. Total Coliform Rule (TCR) Testing**

Charles Kiely, Assistant General Manager updated the Committee on Total Coliform Rule Testing. There were zero positive tests in September and zero so far in October.

 **B. Lead and Copper Rule Monitoring**

Mr. Kiely stated that they have analyzed 25 samples thus far and are running at 4 parts per billion. That is low but expected during this time of the year. This number will go even lower through the end of the testing period in December.

The flushing program will resume again around March 15 and is concluded around December 1, before the cold weather arrives. In December the flushing crews are reassigned to other activities, usually water main repair work. It is predicated on the weather forecast.

**III. Fire Hydrant Upgrade Program**

David Wall, Manager of Distribution, reported that they are running around 9,450 public hydrants. There has been a decrease in out of service hydrants from 85 down to 59 total, from September to October. Of those, 42 are defective, with 17 related to temporary construction or obstruction.

There also has been a reduction in hydrants out of service for more than 120 days. Mr. Wall stated that they have been focused on addressing those and will continue to for the next month or two.

Mr. Walls reported that there were no new areas of concentrated out of service hydrants on the map.

**IV. Latex Spill Response**

Jessica Edwards-Brandt, Manager of Water Quality, summarized the latex polymer discharge that occurred on the north branch of the Potomac River and the role D.C. Water played in addressing the concerns. D.C. Water’s Emergency Management Director was heavily involved and instrumental in the response to this event. The event occurred on September 23, 2015 when 10,000 gallons of a latex polymer product spilled while being loaded into a chemical storage unit at the paper mill in Luke, Maryland. A valve was left open and polymer ended up in the upper Potomac River wastewater treatment plant where it was treated and discharged into the Potomac. Mr. Gibbs asked if the treatment was effective. Ms. Brandt-Edward replied that it was reported that some of what was discharged at the paper mill was diluted.

The day after the spill occurred the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin notified the normal users through a spill list. They estimated that it would take three weeks for the plume to reach the capital region intake and thirteen days to pass through the intakes.

Ms. Edward-Brandt described the compound and parts of it were determined to be volatile organic chemicals, some of which are regulated. Ms. Butani asked about whether the paper mill was required to disclose everything about the product when there is a spill. Ms. Edward-Brandt replied that they did supply the material data sheets (MDS) which give the safety data portion of the chemical but does not tell you exactly what that chemical is made of. The MDS showed that the latex polymer is a non-toxic chemical that is stable in water and is treatable. Mr. Mallett asked if they had to disclose everything to the EPA. Mr. Kiely stated that in Maryland the Department of the Environment (MDE) is the first report and the lead agency. D.C. Water actually informed EPA. In D.C. such incidents must be reported to EPA.

Ms. Edwards-Brandt indicated that the MDE regulator with MDE toxicologist indicated no issues with the product and that the affected water could be treated conventionally to remove polymer. This was in addition to the dilution expected from rain. The monitoring results indicated that there was no styrene or butadiene in the spilled water. Monitoring will continue.

Ms. Edwards-Brandt said that they are looking at what has to be done to prepare for more serious incidents in the future. D.C. Water is working with the EPA to facilitate an emergency response exercise. Other agencies are looking at the consequences of failure, such as if the intakes must be shut down for a few days, what would that look like and how can the agencies assist each other. All of the regional utilities have to do a Source Water Assessment and this is being done now. A data tool component has been added so that they can look at what industries are in the Potomac River Basin, what chemicals they have on site, and get real time data of what that looks like.

Mr. Gibbs asked about what happened to the plume. Mr. Kiely stated that because of rain, that helped dissipater the plume. The Washington Aqueduct took samples up river and analyzed them to discover what the affects might be later down river. It became a non-event for D.C. Water and others.

**IV. Blue Horizon 2020 Progress**

Sarah Neiderer, Strategic Plan Chief, updated the Committee on Goal 6 and 7 over which it has oversight. This is being done in an effort to keep the committees more engaged in their individual goals. She also stated that this is to prep the committees for the November Board Retreat where they will focus on strategy and how they implement, track, and improve it. Ms. Neiderer provided an overview of the plan for those who were unfamiliar with it. The overview and Ms. Neiderer’s presentation can be found on the D.C. Water website.

The Committee has responsibility for Goal 6: Securing Safety and Security and Goal 7: Considering D.C. Water’s Role in Drinking Water Treatment. Ms. Neiderer went through the initiatives for each goal and indicated those that were complete and those that would always be ongoing. Under those which would never be complete, she pointed out those tasks in the initial adoption of the plan and stated that some would be revised.

Mr. Mallett stated that one of the challenges of the Strategic Plan is trying to put numerical metrics around what are ongoing kinds of issues. He thought it might be better to use a dashboard way of presenting it the way the financials are presented. With the colors utilized on the dashboard, you could better talk about the tasks--going well, some cautions, not going so well. That may make it easier to talk about these problems.

Mr. Mallett also stated that if D.C. Water is doing as well as indicated in some of these areas, are the right things being focused on. Something catastrophic can always happen in an organization. As those risks are looked at, how are they managing around those risks? Are they being discussed and is attention being given to them? Mr. Mallett wanted to know if Mr. Kiely and Len Benson, Chief Engineer, think the organizational focus is around the right things. Mr. Kiely stated that they created the goals on a high level. They have accomplished some of the major points and are now focused on the obvious things related to safety. They now have a certification program for all front-line supervisors. Mr. Kiely indicated that at the Board Retreat, they will discuss with the Board what the focus is now, how to revise it and how it will be monitored and tracked. From an operational perspective they are looking at lost time accidents, vehicle accidents, and other safety issues. Until they hit zero with the major metrics, it can never be at 100 percent completed. Safety is something that is constantly revised, ever changing.

Ms. Neiderer responded to Mr. Mallett’s suggestion and stated that they have acquired a dashboard type of business intelligence tool that should allow them to present the information in a dashboard style. Another issue is how often the Plan should be revised, annually, every two, or three years. Based on the industry, how often should they be looking at the policies, processes, procedures, and measures?

Goal 7 is focused for the most part on the Washington Aqueduct Study which was completed in 2014 and then there are a few components that were related to taste and odor quality in drinking water. She informed the Committee that that has been completed. Ms. Neiderer stated that they went through a revision process and determined that there are more areas for them to focus on.

Ms. Neiderer explained how they are proposing that Goal 6 and 7 be revised. There were no changes to Goal 6 at the goal and objective level. There were changes at the initiatives and tasks levels. They are now moving into Phase 2, the implementation phase and how they will identify the right metrics and report on those. The changes are outlined in the materials and are found on the website under the agenda for the Committee meeting. Prior to the Board Retreat she will provide additional information to the Committee on revisions.

Ms. Butani raised a question about the wording of the initiative to “Optimize D.C. Water’s Role in Drinking Water Treatment.” Her understanding was that D.C. Water would determine if it wanted to take over water treatment and she does not understand the wording for Goal 7. Biju George, Chief Operating Officer, stated that the intent in drinking water treatment is that D.C. Water be responsible for water from the source to the tap. D.C. Water must be judicial in owning the responsibility. He stated that whether the Washington Aqueduct will be a necessary piece or not, that could come as a later discussion but the focus must be on how well D.C. Water needs to be integrated in day-to-day operations. Ms. Butani wanted to know how everything ties together, Goal 2 and 7; specifically, “compliance with sewer and water systems, permits and regulations. Mr. Kiely explained that they are tied together. The Washington Aqueduct as part of the treatment process, the NPDES Permit and the MS4 Permit all fall under D.C. Water’s jurisdiction. If there is a major spill or problem related to the water side, it falls under there. D.C. Water has to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act relative to this process and Mr. Kiely said they wanted to acknowledge it in the Strategic Plan. Mr. Kiely said that they were going to send out the revisions. The Retreat will give the Board an opportunity to look at all of the revisions, have some more in-depth discussions and propose revisions.

Mr. Roth stated that he believes these are code words for what he feels are the General Manager’s ultimate objective that D.C. Water take over the Aqueduct. They may not want to state that explicitly here and that is why code words are being used intentionally. He thinks at the Retreat the Board, in consultation with the General Manager and staff, should decide how explicit or not they want to be about that goal. He said they should recognize this, acknowledge it, and see it for what it is and decide whether D.C. Water wants to go down that road.

There being no other comments or questions, Ms. Butani adjourned the meeting.