

## **Environmental Advisory Committee**

MEETING DATE – JULY 14, 2020

LIAISON REPORT – ROGER GERMANN

### **1. Cooperative Funding Initiative Updates**

- Scott Letasi, Project Management office chief, provided the schedule of fiscal year (FY) 2022 Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) funding cycle as well as CFI applications changes, third party reviews, cost increase guidelines and use of contingency funds. Mr. Letasi is requesting feedback on the five percent contingency threshold for construction projects 2022 CFI projects and beyond.
- Members were uncertain about the five percent contingency on project cost increase and asked how the District decided this. Mr. Letasi explained that some of the Governing Board members feel five percent is an appropriate limit that emphasizes the importance of a well vetted design prior to construction. Feedback will be shared at July Governing Board meeting as part of the CFI Update presentation.
- Ms. Ayech expressed her concern with some projects allowing up to 10 percent and requested the District reconsider the five percent.
- Mr. Dan Savercool commented on the five percent contingency, stating the “amount of the contingency depends on the type of construction, level of uncertainty, and the completeness of the design. The lowest contingency is typically five percent when the design is very complete, site conditions are very well understood, and the construction risk is low (no risk of unknown conditions, escalating disposal volumes, etc.). On the other hand, for higher risk projects 25 percent or even higher is possible if there many unknowns, significant construction risks, limited design, etc.”
- Mr. Mark Alderson identified concerns with the CFI process, which include returning to the Governing Board for scope changes, use of federal funds, and restrictions of using cash only. Mr. Letasi confirmed the mentioned requirements in the CFI process and suggested to speak with him more elaboratively regarding cash only.

### **2. Regional Water Supply Plan**

- Mr. Joseph Quinn, Water Supply project manager, provided an update to the Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP). Mr. Quinn explained the RWSP serves as a long-range (20-year) planning guide on water supply and water resource management decisions. Current five-year evaluation suggests water supply and demands can be met through 2040.
- Mr. Sid Flannery asked if there are any specific surface water sources, particularly creeks or rivers that are anticipated for use within the planning period. Mr. Quinn explained staff are primarily looking at existing sources. Mr. Flannery asked whether existing users increasing their storage capacity are evaluated to make sure they are staying within the minimum flows level (MFL). Mr. Quinn replied in the affirmative.
- Ms. Ayech asked whether the Myakka River is considered a surface water source. Mr. Quinn explained that the Myakka is very limited and no projects are proposed at this point. Ms. Ayech agreed the Myakka River should not be considered as a source.
- Ms. Ayech asked whether the District is actually reserving water quantity. Mr. Quinn replied in

the affirmative and identified the Upper Peace River/Lake Hancock reservation. Ms. Ayech congratulated the RWSP team for their efforts and would like to see more reservation projects.

- Ms. Ayech referred to brackish water desal and asked how reject water would be disposed of. Mr. Quinn explained deep well injections are one of a few options, but they are addressed on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Ayech also asked whether it could be injected deep enough that it would not affect groundwater sources yet add to the recharge in order to reverse the pressure of saltwater intrusion. Mr. Quinn suggested the team has considered highly treated reclaimed water (not brine water) injections for such recharge capability.
- Ms. Ayech suggested staff reevaluate the estimated decline in Agricultural water demands of nine million gallons per day due to land use changes as she feels this number should be greater.
- Ms. Ayech expressed her concern with nitrogen levels related to the use of reclaimed water for agriculture and asked whether there are efforts to treat more to remove nitrogen and phosphorous loadings. Mr. Quinn clarified that reclaim water uses have primarily been for citrus, but the expansion of such use is limited. She suggested it is not helpful to have fertilizer bans if reclaimed water is putting more nutrients into the system. Members agreed with Ms. Ayech's concern and added that a key component of restricting nutrient input is restricting where it is applied as well.
- Ms. Ayech also suggested bringing water conservation commercials back.

### **3. ePermitting Replacement Project**

- Eryn Worthington, Regulatory Support project manager, and Wendy Tipton, Regulatory Support business analyst, provided an update on the ePermitting Replacement Project. Regulation, in partnership with ITB and Appian consultants, have begun the 3-5-year ePermitting Replacement Project by focusing on the redesign of ERP and eCompliance submittal to be followed by Compliance, Water Use and Well Construction Permits.
- Ms. Ayech complimented the team and asked if this would eliminate or reduce incomplete data input. Ms. Worthington responded in the affirmative and explained there would still be some requests for additional information as needed but reduced greatly.

### **4. Draft 2020 MFL Priority List and Schedule**

- Chris Zajac, Environmental Flows and Assessments manager, discussed the proposed 2020 priority list and schedule as well as legal requirements and proposed changes.
- Mr. Mark Anderson suggested the Lower Braden River should not be moved back too far because it is an important fishery.
- Mr. Flannery asked whether the Lower Peace River (LPR) report includes the MFL for Shell Creek and will the proposed MFL for Lower Shell Creek be changed. Mr. Zajac said the LPR report does include Lower Shell Creek and staff do not anticipate MFLs changing for Lower Shell Creek at this time. Lower Shell Creek is being moved to 2021 to allow staff additional time to develop the recovery strategy.
- Ms. Ayech referred to the Southern Water Use Caution Area and asked what intention is behind the MFL set for the aquifer. Ms. Tamera McBride, Resource Evaluation manager, explained the

SWUCA MFL is set to halt the rate. Mr. JP Marchand, Water Resource bureau chief, explained when the current SWIMAL was adopted the intent was to slow the rate with the ultimate goal to halt the rate. He said reevaluation will be looking to see if additional data changes that rate. Ms. Ayech asked whether halting saltwater intrusion is an option, and Mr. Marchand suggested staff cannot predict future objectives. Current objectives are to slow the rate and the next steps will be to stop it.

#### **5. Advisory Committee Engagement Results**

- Mr. Michael Molligan, Employee and External Relations Division director, provided results from the advisory committee outreach survey staff conducted in December and January.
- Committee members asked whether a report is given to the Governing Board following each meeting and Mr. Molligan replied in the affirmative. Members appreciate when Governing Board members are in attendance and suggested the liaison report be orally presented at Governing Board meetings.
- ***Ms. Ayech made a motion for the liaison to provide an oral report at the Governing Board meeting once the committee has met. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***
- Ms. Ayech requested more actionable items to come before the committee. Ms. Hecker suggested staff to flag items that will be going before the Governing Board for action so the Environmental Advisory Committee has an opportunity to comment.

#### **6. Hydrologic Conditions Update**

- Mr. Molligan provided an update on hydrological conditions as of June 23, 2020.
- Members appreciate the updates and would like to continue receiving them.