

MEETING SUMMARY

Public Supply Advisory Committee Southwest Florida Water Management District February 6, 2018

The Public Supply (PSAC) Advisory Committee of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 1:00 p.m., February 6, 2018, at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 US Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida.

PSAC Committee Members Present

Chair Debra Burden, Citrus County (Water Resources)
Jennifer Desrosiers, City of North Port Utilities
David Buyens, City of Plant City Utilities
Warren Hogg, Tampa Bay Water
Alys Brockway, Hernando County Utilities
Christopher Cole, Sarasota County Utilities
Norm Davis, Hillsborough County Utilities
Ruffin Gray, City of Lakeland Water Utilities
Phoenix McKinney, City of Tampa Water Department
Olga Wolanin, Manatee County Utilities
Jim Kramer, City of St. Petersburg
Steve Adams, City of Punta Gorda Utilities

Staff Members Present

Cara Martin, Facilitator
Jennette Seachrist
Jason LaRoche
JP Marchand
Michelle Eddy
Lois Sorenson

Recording Secretary

Kelly Schwegel

Others Present

Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website WaterMatters.org.

The numbers preceding the items below correspond to the order of presentations.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Debra Burden called the meeting to order. Members introduced themselves.

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

Ms. Cara Martin, Board and Executive Services manager, stated there were no changes to the agenda.

3. Approval of the November 7, 2017 Committee Meeting Minutes

Following consideration, the committee approved the November 7, 2017 meeting minutes.

4. Public Comments

No public comment was given.

5. SWUCA Recovery Strategy Five-Year Assessment

Mr. JP Marchand, Water Resource bureau chief, introduced the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) Recovery Strategy (2007-2025) and the five-year assessment (2012-2016).

The four goals of this strategy include: (1) restore minimum levels to priority lakes in Ridge lakes area, (2) restore minimum flows in the Upper Peace River, (3) reduce the rate of saltwater intrusion along the coast, and (4) ensure sufficient water supplies for existing and projected beneficial uses. The purpose of the assessments is to ensure the four goals stay on track in achieving recovery.

An update on the status of each goal:

1. Mr. Marchand explained that despite low rainfall, the District has been able to achieve reductions in groundwater withdrawals and groundwater use, as well as some increases in water levels. As of 2016, 12 of the 28 lakes adopted within the Ridge area (six have been reevaluated within the

last five years) have met minimum lake levels. Overall, each lake is getting (roughly 7/10 of a foot, on average) closer to minimum lake levels.

2. The use of the Lake Hancock project, specifically the gages, has allowed low levels to stay above minimum levels as needed. Overall, the minimum levels flow has not yet been met, because this is a complex process that requires flow levels to stay above minimum levels for several years. However, the District is optimistic to restore the minimum flows in the Upper Peace River.
3. In the most impacted area, the aquifer is currently within six inches of the Saltwater Intrusion Minimum Aquifer Level (SWIMAL), as compared to .7 feet in 2015. Contributions to the increase in aquifer water levels include: reduction in groundwater withdrawals and ongoing projects to recharge the SWIMAL.
4. The District's efforts to ensure adequate water supply include assisting with the creation of the Polk Regional Water Cooperative, exploration of the Lower Floridan Aquifer, leader in the Central Florida Water Initiative, as well as cooperatively funding alternative water supply projects, regional projects, and Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) conservation projects. Overall, the District has been able to meet reasonable and beneficial uses. Predictions suggest an additional 75 million gallons per day of demand that will need to be satisfied, and the District has identified alternative water supply that will meet this demand.

Members asked if there was a correlation with issues that Mosaic has been experiencing with minimum flows in the Upper Peace River, and Mr. Marchand responded that issues had not been mentioned. He suggested the general reduction in groundwater tables and general groundwater pumping has impacted the flow in the river, and by augmenting this with the Lake Hancock project, the District has been able to meet minimum levels.

6. Third-Party Review

Mr. JP Marchand, Water Resource bureau chief, presented the District's third-party review process. Governing Board Policy 103-4 requires the District's high-cost projects (i.e.: construction projects with a \$5 million or more estimated cost, or complex projects costing \$1 million to \$5 million) to be evaluated by a third-party before the Governing Board can approve project funds.

The Governing Board can agree to fund a project up to the 30 percent design stage, however, it will need to be reviewed by a third-party and then brought back the Board for additional funding. Mr. Marchand explained the third-party review is performed by an independent consultant, and they are tasked with evaluating the cost-effectiveness metrics, resource benefit, and cooperator performance of each project.

Currently, there are six unchanged completed third-party review projects, costing \$50 million, as well as four completed third-party reviews with changes, costing \$95 million (\$93 conceptually), and 13 projects still pending, costing roughly \$650 million in conceptual project cost. The idea is to manage the projects and the money to make sure they do not cost significantly more than the original request.

Members asked if in the event that a third-party review says a project should be higher, whether this is a guarantee of increased funding. Mr. Marchand responded in the negative. He explained all projects go back to the Board, regardless if there are changes in the project, and nothing is guaranteed by the Board until this happens.

7. Septic/Package Plant Conversion Project Controls

Ms. Jennette Seachrist, Resource Management director, explained the Governing Board will be setting controls on septic/package plant conversion projects in order to protect the District's

investment on cooperatively funded projects. These controls are still in the draft phase and will be approved at a future Governing Board meeting. Draft controls include: projects located in a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) designated Priority Focus Area (PFA), funding must be available from DEP, and local ordinances must be restricting new conventional septic systems.

Ms. Seachrist explained the 2016 Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act requires FDEP to adopt Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP) for all Impaired Outstanding Springs (OFS) by July 2018. FDEP has drafted correlating rules, which suggest there would be no new conventional septic tanks installed and outdated systems will be phased out over next 20 years. In order to meet this requirement, homeowners will need to hook up to an existing sewer line, if one exists, or install an enhanced septic system.

The District will be cooperatively funding projects assist in the elimination of outdated septic systems and package plants in these designated areas. To comply with the state rule, there are currently 13 springs projects submitted in request for FDEP funding within the District. Ms. Seachrist clarified that FDEP will most likely not be able to fund all projects, so they will likely be phased and prioritized over the next several years.

Members asked what an enhanced septic system will look like, and Ms. Seachrist responded that these systems vary greatly in technology and in cost, but will each have some type of system to reduce nitrogen. Currently, the Department of Health is evaluating enhanced systems to determine which will be acceptable.

Members asked if FDEP runs out of funds, yet there is another project the Governing Board wants to move forward, whether the District will fund a project without FDEP funding. Ms. Seachrist responded that at this moment, the District will not fund a project that FDEP has not agreed to fund.

Members asked how many municipalities in the spring sheds have started considering the local ordinance changes for abandonment of traditional septic systems, connection to sewer, or prioritization of the enhanced septic systems, and whether the District will assist in these costs. Ms. Seachrist explained there is a state statute that requires connection within 365 days if there is sewer available. Local governments have not yet set ordinances for enhanced systems, and the costs associated with this will likely fall on the homeowner. In the future, utilities may have programs for homeowners to upgrade their septic, and these programs could have potential to be cooperatively funded by the District, but it is too early to determine.

Members asked if FDEP will provide standard language for local ordinances that will be acceptable to the District and Ms. Seachrist agreed to ask FDEP for this request.

8. District's Regional Observation and Monitor-Well Program (ROMP), How and Why

Mr. Jason LaRoche, senior professional geologist, explained ROMP was established in 1974 and is the basis of making well-informed decisions about groundwater resources. ROMP is a critical source of providing geohydrological data for projects, which include aquifer exploration and testing, constructing regional water level and water quality networks, water use permitting, water use caution area studies, minimum flow levels, etc.

Mr. LaRoche explained the three phases of ROMP:

1. Projects begin with the exploratory, coring, and testing phase. This phase uses an exploratory coring rig to perform testing (i.e. water quality, water levels, permeability, flow rates, geophysical logging). The data collected will identify aquifer boundaries and the defining units between them, as well as delineate different variations going on within the aquifers.

2. The second phase involves the use of a private contractor to construct the well.
3. The final phase involves ROMP conducting aquifer pump tests (also called stress test) to assess the properties of each aquifer. In addition, ROMP monitors the impacts of nearby wells, to determine how they affect one another. This data is also used to populate the layers in the regional groundwater models.

Mr. LaRoche informed the committee that collected data is compiled into wellsite reports, which are available online.

Mr. LaRoche concluded that the wells are the windows to understanding groundwater and surface water processes. ROMP is the basis for the District's monitoring, investigations, planning, modeling, as well as permitting. Members added that ROMP's work is the foundation of all of their (utilities) work.

9. WUP Online Permit Info Center

Ms. Michelle Eddy, WUP compliance technician lead, introduced the District's new online permit information center (ePIC) that is expected to be more user-friendly and will provide more accurate data to registered users. The system was released on January 25th for public use, but it still being developed, and suggestions are welcome to continue improvement.

Ms. Eddy showed the committee some of the new features that will give the user an easier experience: A pop-up feature communicates permitting or system alerts to users; The search feature opens a new window to search for permits without leaving the current screen; An ePIC Help link opens information page to help users navigate the new website; Ability to enter and save all data points at once as opposed to entering data individually. Currently, annual reports must still be mailed to the compliance technicians, however, there is discussion about how to provide a process for submitting electronically. Multiple delegates and report entry is still in development as well.

Ms. Eddy explained that Workshops were held in October, however, one-on-one demonstrations are available to assist users in navigating the new website.

Members asked if the Public Supply Annual Report has been released. Ms. Cara Martin noted there are a list of dates for the workshops available and Ms. Eddy suggested the report should be going out in the next couple days.

10. Hydrologic Conditions

Ms. Lois Sorensen, demand management program manager, provided members with an update of the current hydrologic conditions within the District. Currently the District has seen some decline in groundwater but is still within normal range. There were 13 dry well complaints in the Doer/Plant City Water Use Caution Area during the two evenings the region experienced freezing temperatures.

The region is expected to have a warmer and dryer than normal Spring, and the District will watch for signs of drought. Conditions continue to decline, but they are declining seasonally. Overall, public supply appears to be in a healthy position.

11. Development of agenda topics for the next Industrial Advisory Committee meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15, 2018 in the District's Tampa Office.

Members requested to have a Legislative Update. Members also asked to consider adding an open discussion on the agenda to discuss issues and share agenda topics. Members agree to request Public Supply Annual Report presentation at the next meeting.

12. Announcements and Other Business

Ms. Cara Martin shared the dates for the Cooperative Funding Initiative Workshops:

Northern Region – Brooksville Office – February 7, 2018

Heartland Region – Bartow City Hall – February 8, 2018

Southern Region – Sarasota Office – February 14, 2018

Tampa Bay Region – Tampa Office – February 15, 2018

Ms. Martin also asked everyone to take a handout the provided handout on the 2017 PSAR Report and Water Audit Workshops.

13. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.