

Draft Meeting Notes for the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup

June 16, 2020; 11:30 – 1:15

Zoom Meeting

***Please note, due to the nature of this meeting, all attendees may not be accounted for. If someone is missing from this list, please suggest a modification.**

Members: Virginia de Lima, David Radka, Corinne Fitting, Bruce Wittchen, Tom Tyler, Lou Burch, Steve Ruper, Denise Savageau, Gail Lucchina

Note Taker(s): Dan Aubin, Abigail Davis, Kevin Veilleux

Public*: Mary Ann Dickinson (AWE); Bill Christensen (AWE); Lacey Smith (AWE); WPCAG member Alicea Charamut; WPC Chair Jack Betkoski; DEEP Water Quantity Unit Ali Hibbard; Janet Elmire; David Murphy; Ingrid Jacobs; Judy Allen; Iris Kaminski; Janice Ehlemeyer; Mary Hogue; Peter Galant;

Meeting Starts 11:30am

Topics of Discussion

Changes to Agenda

- No changes

Approval/Modification of Notes from May 19, 2020 meeting

- No changes; notes approved

Alliance for Water Efficiency – Update (Mary Ann):

- Mary Ann w/ Bill Christensen and Lacey Smith
- Progress on putting together rates workshop in March – working w/ Dave, Virginia, Alicea, Steve
 - Rates workshop will be in-person (decided at last WPC meeting), hopefully next March 18th 9-3.
 - Jan Beecher will be in CT at that time, will be one of the speakers focusing on revenue stability for municipal systems
 - Seeking municipal and/or regional utility to be an example for the rate model – utility could remain anonymous
 - Bill will be putting together that rate model structure / analysis
 - Need candidate(s) so Bill can create model this fall
 - Also looking for local officials to participate in a panel discussion on rates structure, challenges, and “getting to yes” on rates
 - Handbook will be given to participants
- Mary Ann, Bill Christensen, and Lacey Smith gave a presentation on State policy options related to water conservation that CT might consider implementing – looking for feedback based on following presentation of options:
 - 1) Plumbing fixture standards; min flow rates, policy addresses both point of sale and installation.
 - 2) State building and plumbing codes; CT has no requirement for plumbing/fixture updates, possible specialized “green code”.

- 3) Water loss and control of leakage; repairing leaks before breaks, replacing meters that are under registering water consumption, move away from term “unaccounted for water,” require reporting.
 - 4) Water right permitting; require water suppliers to include stakeholders, require conservation plans be incorporated into permits, time permit approval.
 - 5) Drought preparedness; require standalone drought plans to be reported to the state, increase frequency of plans being updated.
 - 6) Water conservation plan requirements; statutory updates to increase frequency of updates and implementation accountability of Water Supply Plans/Water Conservation Plans.
 - 7) Funding and technical assistance; for conservation groups.
 - 8) Metering/billing/conservation rates structures; requiring volumetric billing, rate structures to address efficient water use.
 - 9) Climate change/resiliency; impact on water utilities, conducting vulnerability assessments, requiring water providers to conduct those assessments.
- Mary Ann said she will send a feedback survey to the group as well as a summary report. Those surveys will be used to compile a report with recommendations for CT going forward.
 - David R: Need to address revenue impacts before pushing for regulatory change and public support.
 - Alicea C: Supported including stakeholders in the options presented, especially Water Supply/Water Conservation/Drought Plans.
 - Steve R: counterpoint of view, too much water conservation could adversely affect water quality where infrastructure and plumbing are built for high demands.
 - Mary Ann: AWE is very interested in this issue right now, actually seems to be happening whether conservation occurs or not due to, for example, lower populations in areas served.

Domestic Wells WQ topical sub-work group (Mike Dietz):

- Submitted the white paper to the DCP and gotten comments
 - Mike Dietz is to share the White Paper with the Advisory Group and send comments to Virginia and David.
- Corinne has convened a small group to work with Jake Cohen at DCP to figure out how their database will be set up.
- Water Quality testing questions – sent out invite to sub-work group members to see who would be interested in addressing these questions, got a handful of volunteers
 - Virginia: fill out form to we can continue soliciting interest, will treat WQ as a new group
- Corinne, Mike, Dave: Discussed the item in the Agenda that asks the question “Should this include septic systems?” Decided it should be separate and not included in the Domestic Wells sub-work group.

Drought Plan topical sub-work group – Update & Plans (Steve Rugar):

- Ramped up frequency of meetings, met May 21st and June 12th.
- Went through August and October 2016 Agency drought meeting minutes

- Good discussion about role of Governor's office
- Group is beginning to think about Statutory/regulatory changes to increase effectiveness of interagency drought workgroup
- New members added: Iris Kaminiski, and Peter Galant.
- Next meeting presumably June 26th.

Slate – Elect Officers:

- Virginia: Vacancy for out of stream category hoping to fill it. Possibly be filled by Janice Ehlemeyer?
- Need to elect officers. IWG needs to think about how we will propose handing chairs for this committee going forward.
- David – waiting on WPC affirmation on the members.

Marketing topical sub-work group – Review proposal (Dan Aubin)

- Meeting brief discussion –Alicea, Gail, Ali, Denise.
- Identified that marketing and outreach is a separate focus than implementation and tracking, need to identify where the IWG's track is going.
- Agreed that marketing and effective outreach is to educate those unaware of the SWP, and help those who are trying to implement but don't have the resources/knowledge of how to do it.
- Get more people involved/participating.
- Discussion on if there could be more than one person from a state agency be allowed to participate in the group.
 - Denise: for example, DEEP has a whole marketing and outreach group, but would also want people involved in water
 - Gail: agrees, PURA also has staff familiar with marketing, legislative/press
 - No one opposed
- Dan Aubin discussed:
 - Short term: getting people involved
 - Long-term: building a branding and marketing goal, and gaining funding
- Lou Burch: Interested in participating.
- Vote to move forward with the sub-work group, approved unanimously.
- No volunteers for chair, Virginia will solicit the IWG via email after the meeting
 - Finalize discussion at next meeting

Regionalization topical sub-work group – Review proposal (David R.)

- David, Alicea, Gail, Peter Galant.
- Propose looking at regionalization/interconnections and the pros and cons interconnected water systems afford, including policy/regulatory incentives/impediments
- Look at consistency with state/local plans.
- Not looking to identify priorities but will look at examples.
- Give people a week or two to comment and approve the proposal (BOTH GROUPS).
- Good to have response back from IWG before next WPC (?) meeting in July.

Public Comment:

- Judy Allen: concerns about not having rates workshop until 2021, also seems to be a lot of work on drought and worried about overlap.

Meeting Adjourned 1:20pm

Next Meeting: July 21, 2020 at 11:30am Via Zoom.