

, FINAL Meeting Notes for the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup

July 21, 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 Rugar, Denise Savageau, Gail Lucchina, Lori Mathieu, Mike Dietz, Janice Ehlemeyer

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

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

Meeting Starts 11:32am

Topics of Discussion

Changes to Agenda

- No changes

Approval/Modification of Notes from June 16, 2020 meeting

- Dave Murphey was corrected to Dave Murphy; notes approved

Alliance for Water Efficiency (A4WE) – Update (Mary Ann):

- Planning for the Rates Workshop
 - Tentative date of March 18, 2021, at the MDC Training Center
 - Regional Water Authority (RWA) has agreed to be a case study for the rates model
 - Working on recruiting local officials for the panel
- Legislative issue areas – matrix scoring
 - Agencies, groups, and other stakeholders were asked to fill out a matrix scoring each of the nine legislative issue areas, identified by A4WE; the higher the score, the more desirable or favorable it is to pursue that option
 - Out of the nine issue areas identified, three (3) have scored the highest so far:
 - 1) Fixture & appliance standards – strong consensus
 - 2) Water loss auditing and leakage reduction requirements
 - 3) Drought planning
 - Scores favored those options with the best water savings potential
 - Scores were generally low across the board in terms of implementation feasibility and staffing requirements, with the exception of fixture and appliance standards
 - Next steps: continue to receive responses, close comment on September 1st
 - Will start to address the first two issues mentioned, then tackle drought

Role of WPCAG reviewing our reports – Proposal / Discussion (Virginia):

- The WPCAG is reviewing the white paper written by the Domestic Wells topical sub-work group; their role is "to do a reality check and provide stakeholder feedback"

- Need to discuss how we will handle things if the WPCAG makes recommendations that we disagree with
- Virginia presented the following proposal: “I am proposing we handle this in a way similar to peer review of science papers. If we disagree with a WPCAG recommendation, we will write a response explaining why we disagree. The recommendation and our response would be forwarded to the WPC.”
 - Members are in agreement that this is a good approach; none opposed

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

- Recently increased meeting frequency – about every three (3) weeks
- Met on June 12th and June 26th; also meeting this Friday, July 24th
- Two new members announced: Iris Kaminski and Peter Galant
- At the June 26th meeting, the group continued to work through the 2016-2017 drought; got through the January 27, 2017 meeting minutes
- The topical sub-workgroup generally agrees with decisions made by the Inter-agency drought workgroup but notes they did not meet frequently enough
- Good discussion on winter drought indicators and whether they are appropriate
- Next meeting: start work on report writing
 - Each member was asked to compile their ‘top 10 things of note’ from dissecting the 2016-2017 meeting minutes and be prepared to discuss
- Goal to get draft report to the IWG by November
- Noted that the current Interagency Drought Group has met twice as of June 26th

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

- At the WPC meeting a few weeks ago, there was a consensus on moving forward with the proposal to start a topical sub-workgroup on private groundwater-well testing
- Mike Dietz has agreed to chair
- Mike listed out potential members (stakeholder groups and individuals), which are contained in the draft proposal:
 - Real estate professional
 - Home builders
 - Health districts
 - USGS
 - Water testing labs
 - Volunteers: Gary Robbins (UConn), Meredith Metcalf (ECSU), Tiziana Shea (DPH), Ryan Tetreault (DPH), Tom Stansfield (Local health), Veronica Tanguay (DEEP), John Mullaney (USGS)
- Discussion related to testing of private wells and handling of information (further discussion on these issues would be in the topical sub-workgroup)
 - In terms of the real estate side, problems with water quality identified through testing could affect property values
 - Worried about homeowners trying to sell their homes and not being required to disclose information if their well has known contaminants
 - Private well information is not public, which poses challenges

- Look into our state laws, determine what information is shareable and what's protected. We could also look at other states as examples.
- It's important to include stakeholders such as the Home Builders Association of CT, real estate professionals, and other related groups
- We could strengthen water quality testing requirements for private wells, but we will definitely get pushback
- We also can't neglect the cost impacts of treatment if contaminants are found in homeowners' wells
- Suggested that we consider expanding the scope of the workgroup to include water quantity. Is there a minimum standard yield people should be testing for? There is a possible DPH initiative to help homeowners who have insufficient water
- Most new wells must meet minimum standards, but older wells could have been grandfathered in
- Spoke about the issues with Uranium in Glastonbury private wells. There are two polarized sides... some people want to be connected to public water as soon as possible, while others don't care / don't see a problem / don't want to pay for it
- Encouraged finding ways to increase affordability in testing/treatment for low income or disadvantaged homeowners

Marketing & Outreach topical sub-work group:

- The WPC passed the proposal 3-1; councilors were not unanimous in this topic being a priority
- The group's mission is to continue the outreach and education of the State Water Plan. Increasing educational awareness and spurring more involvement is essential to implementation
- Suggested that the work group be renamed to 'Communication & Outreach' instead of marketing – maybe 'marketing' is getting the wrong point across
- Lou Burch agreed to assist with organizing the sub-work group
- Start soliciting official members
 - Ali Hibbard was volunteered on DEEP's behalf
 - Dan Aubin was volunteered on DPH's behalf
 - Include local health districts
 - Include councils of governments and elected officials
 - Reach out to small, local groups, e.g., watershed groups
 - Reach out to under-served communities

Regionalization & Interconnections topical sub-work group:

- The WPC had a motion to accept at the last meeting. Lori proposed an amendment to include wastewater. The amended proposal passed, 3-1.
- WUCC groups and Implementation Workgroup to work on many specific, non-overlapping topics
- Discussed appropriateness of including wastewater:
 - Argument for including wastewater: we need to consider the whole picture; water, wastewater, maybe even storm water
 - Counterargument: we weren't intending to look at this topic from a large regional planning perspective, but rather more focused and narrow. Concern that this could become too big of a topic.
 - Counterargument: Wastewater Interconnections were not a major topic in the State Water Plan

- This topic could be divided into workable chunks like with the private wells work group
- DaveR. to revise the proposal to include potential two-way communication from WUCC to this new topical sub-work group

Other Business – Plan of Organization:

- General consensus that topical sub-work groups could be chaired by IWG alternates, rather than limit chair role to sitting members
- Alternates' roles to be clarified
- Alternates would be "deputized" to act in place of the member and be expected to make it to all IWG meetings in order to fully brief the IWG on activities of the sub-work group

Public Comment:

- Lou spoke about Renew CT top policy priorities/ a new green new deal

Meeting Adjourned 1:04pm

Next Meeting: August 18, 2020 at 11:30am via Zoom.