



Consortium Technical Committee Meeting Summary

APRIL 7, 2021 CALLED TO ORDER: 1:32 PM ADJOURNED: 3:03 PM

QUORUM PRESENT - YES - 14 MEMBERS

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE

Approval of March 3, 2021 Meeting Summary

Kari Duncan made a motion to approve the March 3, 2021 Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) meeting summary. Todd Heidgerken seconded the motion. The CTC unanimously approved the March 3, 2021 Consortium Technical Committee meeting summary as presented. (14:0:0)

Workforce Development and Planning Discussion

Rebecca reminded CTC members that workforce development and planning was identified as a strategic plan initiative for the Consortium to discuss and consider. Rebecca advised that Consortium staff is interested in learning more from members about how to address this task; what sort of advocacy role makes sense for the Consortium to take on; and what the Consortium's role might be in this arena. Since this is such a big topic, the April meeting is devoted to discussing workforce development and learning what programs and initiatives are in place or being developed.

Jim Nurmi from Clackamas Community College (CCC) was invited to give an overview of the Drinking Water Regional Internship Program (DRIP). Jim advised that CCC was approached a few months ago by water providers interested in working together to apply for an EPA grant aimed to increase the workforce in the water/wastewater industry. A committee was formed consisting of representatives from CCC, City of Hillsboro, Portland Water Bureau, City of Forest Grove, Joint Water Commission, EWEB, and Carollo Engineering.

Jim noted that the committee's primary focus for the program is to provide a hands-on, regionally diverse, equitable internship program that lays out a guided pathway for individuals to successfully join the water industry workforce, and in addition provide a blueprint for hosts that want to have an intern at their workplace. Jim outlined the reasons for such a program including the limited number of water and environmental technology programs; the limited number of certified operators; a dwindling

workforce pipeline due to retirements; the lack of awareness of water utility career opportunities; and the increase in water utility workforce needs.

Jim advised that the objectives of the DRIP program are to create an internship program that includes fourteen paid internships per year; increase outreach and awareness of water-related career opportunities; evaluate and refine the program through intern and utility surveys and DRIP committee recommendations; and distribute and present outcomes of the program through presentations, video, publications, etc. The grant submission requests \$365,000 to fund the program for the first two years. Jim shared the two-year action plan and expected outcomes for the program.

CTC asked questions and thanked Jim for his presentation.

John Collins provided an overview of an apprenticeship program developed by South Fork Water Board (SFWB) and the North Clackamas County Water Commission (NCCWC). SFWB and NCCWC applied for and were granted an apprenticeship program through the Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI). The apprenticeship program is a two-year program for two full-time apprentices that will be cross trained and work at both the SFWB and NCCWC treatment plants. John noted that the purpose of the apprentice program is to build long-term relationships with potential employees and to set a new standard of excellence for on-the-ground training and developing state-licensed treatment operators. The program is self-funded and costs about \$90,000. John advised that they are currently working on putting together criteria for hiring standards.

CTC members discussed what role the Consortium can play in supporting workforce development and planning regionally. Discussions focused on building on the Consortium's current outreach and education programs by including messaging promoting these new internship and apprenticeship opportunities; conducting outreach to students at the high school level and also to those adults looking to make a career change; creating messaging in multiple languages; outreach to other public works managers/supervisors and other departments within cities to promote educational program, e.g., CCC's WET program, and having a Consortium-sponsored internship fund that could be contributed to these programs.

It was noted that the DRIP committee meetings are open to anyone. The next DRIP meeting is Friday, April 30, 2021. John Collins commented that he has a recruiter colleague that he can reach out to for advice on how to and to whom this type of outreach program could be targeted.

Rebecca will share the presentation slides with meeting attendees. It was recommended that workforce development and planning would be an excellent topic for discussion at a future Consortium Board meeting.

Program Updates

Program Updates – Bonny thanked CTC members and staff for their participation and completion of the recent surveys that were sent out – the Water by the Numbers and Infrastructure Resiliency surveys. 21 of the 24 Consortium members responded. The information gathered from both surveys will be shared on the Consortium website, in social media, and other external communications and outreach efforts. Bonny reported that Consortium staff is working to develop infographics and an interactive map that will utilize the information garnered from these surveys that will be displayed on the Consortium website.

Bonny mentioned that Consortium staff is also working to update the *Our Regions Water* portion of the Consortium website regionalh2o.org. The new section will be released in May, in concert with Drinking Water Week. Bonny reported that there will be three on air interviews with KATU during the same week. One interview will feature a story on the Washington County supply line and another from a reservoir in Clackamas.

June Consortium Board Draft Agenda

Rebecca reviewed the June Consortium Board meeting draft agenda. Agenda items included approval of minutes, board elections, director’s report, program updates, a legislative update, and a placeholder presentation. Potential topics for the presentation included impacts from the February storm; workforce development and planning; a more detailed legislative update, and water loss prevention. It was the consensus of the CTC that it may be a bit too soon for a workforce development and planning discussion. It was thought that a panel discussion on the February storm and the benefits of regional coordination would be timely and interesting to the Board. CTC members approved the agenda and directed Consortium staff to present it to the Executive Committee at their meeting next week. Rebecca asked CTC members to remind their Board members about the Chair and Vice-Chair elections and to let her know if they have an elected official that might be interested in filling one of those seats.

Legislative Update

Rebecca highlighted a couple of water related bills that are making their way through the legislature.

HB 2310 – “Plastic Pipe Bill” that would have pre-empted local governments from restricting evaluation or comparison of pipes used for water projects if pipes meet certain standards has died.

HB 2616 – allows one owner of a reservoir located on specified property within Big Butte Creek

drainage area to register their reservoir with Water Resources Department (basically bypassing or recognizing water right process). While the reservoir in question is outside our region, it has policy and precedent implications regarding water rights law and prior appropriations. You can see testimony on OLIS. OWUC has come out strong against this bill and they are encouraging folks to talk to their house members about it. It is also on the radar of environmental organizations.

Niki Iverson noted that City of Hillsboro/JWC has been working with Brad Taylor on opposing the bill and encouraged others who this might affect to do so as well.

John Goodrich mentioned that this will be his last CTC meeting as he is retiring. John's last day at the City of Tigard is Thursday, June 3. John advised that he will attend the June board meeting. CTC members and Consortium staff thanked John for his support and work with the Consortium and in the water industry.

Meeting Attendees:

David Winship – City of Beaverton

Todd Heidgerken – Clackamas River Water

Niki Iverson, Sophia Hobert, Chris Wilson, Rania Ayoub, and Todd Evers – City of Hillsboro/JWC

Sarah Jo Chaplen – Oak Lodge Water Services

Edward Campbell and Kim Gupta – City of Portland

Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD

Rich Sattler – City of Sherwood

John Collins, Wyatt Parno, and Mayor Jules Walters – South Fork Water Board

Tim Janssen and Wade Hathhorn – Sunrise Water Authority

John Goodrich – City of Tigard

Jeff Fuchs – City of Tualatin

Carrie Pak – Tualatin Valley Water District

Mike Grimm – West Slope Water District

Ian Eglitis – City of Wilsonville

Jim Nurmi – Clackamas Community College

Rebecca Geisen, Bonny Cushman, Riley Berger, and Patty Burk – RWPC Staff

Next CTC Meeting: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 via *Zoom/videoconference*.