



Consortium Board Meeting Summary

OCTOBER 6, 2021 CALLED TO ORDER: 6:31 PM ADJOURNED: 8:30 PM

QUORUM PRESENT - YES - 13 MEMBERS (MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE)

Approval of June 2, 2021 Meeting Summary

Director Mark Knudson made a motion to approve the June 2, 2021 Board meeting summary. Commissioner Mingus Mapps seconded the motion. The Consortium Board unanimously approved the June 2, 2021 Consortium Board meeting summary. (13:0:0)

Public Comment

None

City of Scappoose Non-Regional Membership Request

Rebecca Geisen, Regional Water Providers Consortium Managing Director pointed out that included in the meeting materials packet was a letter from the City of Scappoose requesting to join the Consortium as a non-regional member. Non-regional members do not have a position on the Consortium Board and are non-voting members. Annual dues are \$1 per retail account. Non-regional members can participate in most programs of the Consortium but are limited by proximity to other water providers and scope of some programs.

Consortium Board members were supportive of the City of Scappoose becoming a non-regional member.

Commissioner Carol Wild made a motion to approve the City of Scappoose as a Regional Water Providers Consortium non-regional member. Mayor Peter Truax seconded the motion. The Regional Water Providers Consortium Board unanimously approved the City of Scappoose as a Regional Water Providers Consortium non-regional member. (13:0:0)

Director Report

Ms. Geisen pointed out that a detailed tri-annual activity report was included in the meeting materials packet and encouraged Board members to look over the report for information on activities conducted since the last Board meeting in June.

Provision of Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan: Ms. Geisen reminded Consortium Board members that in partnership with the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO), the Consortium is working on a Provision of Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan. UASI grant funds were awarded for the development of the Plan that will explore how the region can provide drinking water in the event of an emergency. The Plan will also provide policy recommendations and tools for individual water providers planning for resiliency and emergency water supplies.

Ms. Geisen reported that the project is moving along well. Two workshops have been held. The first in June, focused on agency roles and responsibilities during an emergency. Participants discussed respective roles for medium and large-scale events, communication and coordination opportunities and needs, and roles in emergency water distribution. The second workshop was held October 4 and focused on emergency water resources. Over the summer, a comprehensive survey was done of water providers on their resiliency efforts both infrastructure and planning. The results of the survey were shared at the October workshop.

Next steps include developing regional policies and recommendations. A regional tabletop exercise is scheduled for February 2022 (now March 31) to vet the regional policies before the final framework plan is developed.

Ms. Geisen noted that once the project is completed, a more detailed presentation will be brought to the Consortium Board.

Program Report

Bonny Cushman, Consortium Program Coordinator reminded Board members that the Consortium runs a water conservation focused outreach campaign from May – August that then shifts focus in September to emergency preparedness. Ads both in English and Spanish were run on television, radio and on-line digital platforms. Messaging was also done via on-air interviews, the Consortium website, social media – Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, newsletters, and promotions. Ms. Cushman advised that new this year QR codes were included in the ads which enabled people to hold their smart devices up to the television screen and then be directed to the Consortium website.

Toolkits and promotions were also used to reach community members. The toolkits provided Consortium members with written content for social media, newsletters and websites along with images that could be used for their own entity's outreach. This helped to build a cohesiveness to the Consortium's regional messaging efforts.

Ms. Cushman noted that the Consortium continued to partner with KUNP to do newsletters in Spanish. These newsletters continue to be a great way to reach Hispanic/Latinex community members. The first newsletter was done in September and focused on emergency preparedness. The next newsletter is scheduled to go out in November and will focus on critical infrastructure and regional water supplies. The final newsletter is planned for March 2022 and will focus on Fix a Leak Week and leak detection. Each issue goes out to approximately 25,000 subscribers.

Ms. Cushman commented that having Consortium members staff act as spokespeople and subject matter experts is crucial to the success of the media interviews and outreach as well as helping to find locations for filming.

Consortium's partnerships with the television stations are particularly unique. Because of these longstanding partnerships, the Consortium is able to utilize station spokespeople to add credibility to the messaging, great connection to the news department, and the ability to gain exposure through snipe/news ticklers. The Consortium has also cultivated a great relationship with its radio partners who help ensure the ads run in the correct time slots and help to secure on-air interviews on various radio programs. All of the Consortium's ads and interviews can be found on the newsroom page on regionalh2o.org.

Ms. Cushman concluded that not long ago the Consortium only messaged in English and almost exclusively about water conservation. Now, the Consortium also messages in Spanish and has added a variety of online platforms so that they can message to people where they are at about a greater number of water-focused topics. The Consortium has been able to diversify its messaging via social media and on the regionalh2o.org website and to some extent on television and radio. Ms. Cushman commented that a lot of work has gone into embedding equity in Consortium outreach by diversifying messaging topics and strategies; using best practices on the Consortium website and in social media; increasing content in Spanish; working with partners to develop messaging strategies; doing a lot more language and accessibility work; and using the State's Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) website to find contractors.

Strategic Plan – Check In

Ms. Geisen explained that there are provisions in the Consortium 5-Year Strategic Plan to review it to make sure it is still current, relevant, and moving in the right direction. She noted that given the past 18 months of challenges, change and uncertainty, now seemed the opportune time to do a check-in as the Strategic Plan provides the framework for work plan and budget development. In addition, one of the Strategic Plan’s “General Implementation Strategies” is to conduct strategic initiative milestone review and assess progress on each of the three focus areas and annually review Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to determine if new strategies are needed.

Ms. Geisen advised that the Board will be asked to engage in small group breakout sessions to review and discuss the initiatives in the Consortium Five-Year Strategic Plan. Ms. Geisen introduced Chris Wallace Caldwell from Catalysis LLC who was the consultant that worked with the Consortium to develop the Strategic Plan in 2018 and will be facilitating the discussion.

Ms. Caldwell gave an overview of how the breakout sessions will be conducted. Board members will be asked to think about and discuss what are some of the areas that the Consortium might be at risk at not being successful; obstacles that can be removed and shifts that can be made to achieve success. Board members were assigned to one of three breakout rooms. Each breakout room focused on one of the three key strategic initiatives – Meeting Water Needs, Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency, and Strengthening Regional Partnerships.

Ms. Geisen gave a brief overview of the Strategic Plan including the mission and values; purpose; major focus areas; strategic initiatives; and how water provider work has been impacted by the events of the past 18 months.

Board members participated in small breakout sessions. They were asked to discuss the focus area and strategic initiatives of their assigned group and consider where they might be able to provide support or guidance, and what role the Board can plan in ensuring success.

Board members were asked to answer the following questions: what the Consortium is at risk of not doing well; what obstacles can be removed, or changes made for the strategy to be successful; and whose voices or inputs might be missing in the focus area. Following the breakout session each group provided a brief report out of their session discussion. Breakout notes are attached to this meeting summary.

FY 2022-23 Budget and Work Plan Concepts Discussion

Ms. Geisen reported that it is the start of the budget planning season and time to begin the conversation about next year's work plan and budget. Ms. Geisen reported that Consortium Staff discussed budget and workplan concepts with the Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) and Executive Committee (EC) at their meetings in September and have made recommendations for Board consideration and approval at their meeting in February 2022.

Ms. Geisen gave a brief summary of the carryover from FY 2020-21. The Consortium expended approximately 87% of the FY 2020-21 budget (\$997,612) leaving \$134,000 to be carried over to the FY 2022-23 budget and work plan. Ms. Geisen advised that the large carryover was mostly pandemic related and resulted from under expended personnel – mandatory furloughs, reduced hours due to Covid and overhead costs not applied; unspent contingency; no large emergency preparedness exercise; no school assembly programs; reduced printing and device purchases; and no travel and training.

Ms. Geisen explained that the workplan concepts reflect a focus on equity and preparedness and the potential work tasks/concepts have been organized by Strategic Plan initiatives. Ms. Geisen shared the new work tasks/priorities identified by Consortium staff and supported by the CTC and EC. They include:

Meeting Water Needs:

- \$10,000 – Additional funds for digital campaign
- \$2,000 - Additional funds for translation services

Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency

- Staff time – scope out interconnections and regional transmission and storage strategy update
- \$2,000 – Russian Radio Campaign

Regional Partnerships

- TBD – Workforce Development – outreach focused
- \$15,000 – Drinking Water Advisory Tool – Accessibility review and increased language access

Ms. Geisen noted that at this time it is unknown how much staffing costs may increase. Staffing cost are typically available from the City of Portland in mid-December. Ms. Geisen noted that Consortium Staff is looking for feedback on the proposed new work tasks, any potential work tasks or initiatives that might have come out of the Strategic Plan sessions from tonight's meeting Board members would like to also have considered, work task priorities, and fiscal parameters to be cognizant of, i.e., dues percentage increase.

Board members discussed the FY 2022-23 budget and workplan concepts and supported the direction and initiatives proposed by staff, CTC and EC. Ms. Geisen advised that for planning purposes, 7% was applied to increased staffing costs. Utilizing those staffing numbers and the cost of the proposed new program initiatives, it would result in an approximate 6% dues increase over last year. There was general consensus from the Board to aim for a 5% overall dues increase for the FY 2022-23 budget and workplan. Ms. Geisen advised that Consortium staff would work with the CTC and EC over the next few months to continue to develop the FY 2022-23 Consortium budget and work plan to bring to the Board in February for their consideration.

Meeting Attendees:

<i>23 Total Members</i>		
<i>Quorum = 12</i>		
David Winship – City of Beaverton	Commissioner Naomi Angier and Todd Heidgerken– Clackamas River Water	Mayor Peter Truax and Greg Robertson – City of Forest Grove
Councilor Mario Palmero and Councilor Dina DiNucci – City of Gresham	Commissioner Debbie Raber and Niki Iverson – City of Hillsboro	Councilor Lisa Batey – City of Milwaukie
Director Mark Knudson and Sarah Jo Chaplen – Oak Lodge Water Services	Commissioner Mingus Mapps, Michelle Rodriguez, Gabriel Solmer and Edward Campbell – City of Portland	Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD
Councilor Sean Garland and Craig Sheldon – City of Sherwood	Mayor Jules Walters – South Fork Water Board	Commissioner Kevin Bailey – Sunrise Water Authority
Councilor Bridget Brooks, Nic Westendorf and Heidi Springer – City of Tualatin	Commissioner Jim Duggan and Carrie Pak – Tualatin Valley Water District	Commissioner Carol Wild and Mike Grimm – West Slope Water District
Martin Montalvo – City of Wilsonville	Darryl Sykes – City of Scappoose	Chris Wallace Caldwell – Catalysis LLC
Rebecca Geisen, Bonny Cushman, Riley Berger, and Patty Burk – Consortium Staff		

Consortium members agencies not represented by elected officials at this meeting included the City of Beaverton, City of Cornelius, City of Gladstone, City of Lake Oswego, Raleigh Water District, Rockwood Water PUD, City of Sandy, City of Tigard, City of Troutdale, and the City of Wilsonville.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 2, 2022 via Zoom/videoconference



**MEETING WATER NEEDS
BREAKOUT SESSION
OCTOBER 2021 CONSORTIUM BOARD MEETING**

Main Themes:

- Need to provide more public education on the RWPC and our good work done through RWPC, emergency preparedness, regional partnerships, who is their water provider, and how we support each other.
- Need to gain a better understanding of climate change and its impacts. Seeing unanticipated impacts to supply, sources, and demand. Need to communicate it the public and relate to some of our changing water industry needs including increasing drought, water quality, and similar impacts.
- Staff fatigue is a serious issue. Need to find more creative ways to host networking events, and how to support staff that have experienced multiple emergencies.
- Discussed issues associated with cost increases, inflation, and supply chain impacts. May need to communicate these issues to the public and understand related impacts. It makes rate increases more difficult to get approved during a pandemic as well. What public messaging could we do to help the public understand the value of water.
- Need to consider different stakeholder and how to meet their needs, including DEI efforts and those with health considerations and challenges.

Raber – one of the things realized that RWPC is that not many of the public are aware of the Consortium. Water providers such as JWC are a tight knit group, but not much of the media presentations on who Consortium is. Get the word out that the organization exists.

Garland – they don't have the bus routes, so don't see as many of the advertisements there. Many of the public don't know who their water provider is. The public doesn't also know how fragile that source of drinking water is, and more work is done than shows up on their water bill. Build in messages of water conservation for other things other than lawns. Need to continue to focus on emergency preparedness and those partnerships.

Duggan – Best use for the water supply plan, water conservation programs, public education, anticipating responding to changes to public demands. More education on who RWPC is and the work that we do together. More education on our great regional water sources. More education on who your water provider is and our great work supporting each other. Need to tell our stories to the public more. Need to anticipate the public needs for messages on the background foundation level of who we are. Education on emergency contaminants of concern.

Knudson – The uncertainty that results from climate change. We have some good ideas, but seeing unanticipated effects on supply and demand, water quality and quantity, and need to figure out what that means. Could be substantial challenges and need to communicate to the public why this is important and tie to regional interconnections, emergency preparedness, and mutual support. Also, costs and inflationary pressures (i.e., supply chain issues), opportunity to reinforce regional support and partnership. There is a great deal of staff fatigue, they have done a lot to support the drinking water supply and operations for our communities. Need for more networking with staff.

Brooks – Concerns related to climate change and the need to be deeply proactive. Thinking about different stakeholders and their needs and how to meet them. Think about DEI and those with

vulnerable health challenges as well. Discussing of Colorado River drought and differences between responses in Arizona and Nevada on how they prepared for that event. Scientists are calling it the aridification of the West and need to prepare people for it. Staff fatigue, and the exhaustion from the multiple emergencies that have occurred over the last couple of years. Need for discussion with public on these issues and impacts to water quality



**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCY
BREAKOUT SESSION
OCTOBER 2021 CONSORTIUM BOARD MEETING**

- We were focused on earthquakes – instead we got a host of other emergencies – beyond preparing for the big one.
- There are a lot of events that can impact your water supply and folks don't think about it
- Messaging to diverse audience (non-English speaking, low-income) so important and bringing more people to be part of the solution
- Chlorine shortage was so unexpected – have to be prepared for the unexpected
- How do you message preparedness to most vulnerable?
- As a Board member, not sure knows enough to know how to remove obstacles
- How do we integrate CERTs/NETs into our work
- Prior to emergency – ID your go-to person or community member/organization
- How do you overcome the distrust of government? Need partnerships and organic grassroots outreach by members of community
- Working with CELs
- What about messaging for houseless?
- Emergency guide in multiple languages
- Emergency texts were effective during the heat wave
- Elected officials can help ensure that their staff and entities know about and maintain interconnections.
- Helping advocate for water at state level
- County health officers – need more regional coordination especially in regard to messaging and emergency management
- Help promote shared worker agreement



**STRENGTHENING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP
BREAKOUT SESSION
OCTOBER 2021 CONSORTIUM BOARD MEETING**

Risks of not doing well:

- Risk of not reaching diverse communities
- Board perspective – staff living out of district, what does Board member say to community members about the what happens now. What could we be doing to disseminate information from those folks like Board members that live in the district.
- Risk of not being able to communicate effectively; need to build plan of how information gets out to customers.
- Communication across disciplines is important.

Initiative # 5 – Facilitate a Network of Peers that members rely on for information, expertise, resources and sub-regional partnerships.

Obstacles

- Ownership.
- Break down mind set of proprietary information

Exploring Possible Approaches:

- Get information out to partners, i.e., legislators, state agencies, etc. on what the Consortium is doing
- Meet more often with these partners, importance of sharing
- Board members sharing information about the Consortium widely, state-wide
- Awareness building with our networks, awareness of what the Consortium is doing, and awareness of what partner agencies are doing.
- Advertise public comments section of the Board meetings. Encourage public, partners, others to attend Board meetings.
- Inviting more guest and others to attend Board meetings to give presentations on their projects and programs