



Consortium Technical Committee Meeting Summary

MARCH 2, 2022 CALLED TO ORDER: 1:32 PM ADJOURNED: 3:27 PM

QUORUM PRESENT – YES – 15 MEMBERS

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE

Approval of January 5, 2022 Meeting Summaries

Andrew Degner made a motion to approve the January 5, 2022 meeting summary as presented. Todd Heidgerken seconded the motion. The January 5, 2022 meeting summary was unanimously approved as presented. (15:0:0)

Director Report

CTC Chair & Vice-Chair Positions: Rebecca Geisen, Consortium Managing Director mentioned that today was CTC Chair Carrie Pak's last meeting. Carrie is leaving TVWD to work for a consulting firm. Rebecca recommended that current Vice-Chair Kari Duncan move into the Chair position and leave the Vice-Chair position vacant until elections in September. CTC members agreed with the recommendation. Rebecca thanked Carrie for her contributions and support of the Consortium.

February Consortium Board Follow-Up: Rebecca commented that the presentation from Director Phelps from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) seems to be well received by Consortium Board members. Rebecca will follow up with Director Phelps regarding the contact information he shared in the meeting. Rebecca advised that if members have any additional comments/questions for Director Phelps to let her know. The Board adopted the FY 2022-23 budget and work plan at the meeting as well. Rebecca mentioned that Maria Pope, CEO from Portland General Electric (PGE) will be coming to the October Consortium Board meeting to discuss energy and water and to learn more about Consortium.

Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC): With the departure of Carrie Pak, a new water/wastewater representative on MTAC is needed. The committee meets every other month for two hours. Rebecca was contacted by Metro about a new representative. Andrew Degner volunteered to fill the vacancy.

RDPO Fuel Tabletop Exercise: Rebecca reported that Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) is hosting a regional tabletop training exercise on September 22, 2022. The goal is to validate four county fuel plans (does not include Washington County as they are much further along in their fuel planning and have already completed a similar exercise), address components of the State plan, and identify gaps. It is anticipated

that up to 125 participants from federal, state, and local agencies, and private sector will attend the one-day training. The training objectives include addressing gaps in county emergency fuel management plans; identifying additional gaps in operational assumptions, as well as gaps between federal, state and local jurisdictions and other stakeholders; and discussing outstanding planning gaps identified during bimonthly work sessions. Rebecca is serving on the advisory committee representing water utilities and public works. The advisory committee had their first meeting to talk about fuel availability and calculating needs. Rebecca advised that if water providers have not already connected with their county emergency managers now would be a good time to do so to ensure their needs are captured. Rebecca noted that the Oregon Department of Energy wants to know where fuel is and what is needed, not to take away fuel from critical infrastructure but rather to know what is needed and help replenish it if needed.

Curtailment Tabletop Exercise: The Consortium is hosting a curtailment tabletop exercise on June 2, 2022. A save the date meeting invite will be sent out soon. The planning committee is comprised of representatives from all of the Consortium working committees. Exercise objectives include:

- Participants gain a broader understanding of drinking water curtailment including causes, impacts, and the different stages of curtailment and triggers among water providers.
- Participants learn the importance of coordinated messaging and effective ways to share timely information with each other during the life cycle of a curtailment event.
- Participants identify gaps for providing accessible and translated messaging to the public.
- Participants identify and understand regional communication tools and roles when there is a curtailment event.

CTC members were supportive of the exercise objectives and had no further recommendations.

Grant Opportunities: Rebecca shared several grant opportunities. Rebecca noted that there is a lot of opportunities and funds at the state and federal level available for grants, e.g., State Preparedness and Incident Response Equipment (SPIRE); Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC); Climate Adaptation grants; State Revolving Loan Funds; EPA Funds, etc. Rebecca will share out slides with links to information about these grant opportunities following the meeting.

ETRs – Emergency Transportation Routes: Rebecca advised that the RDPO is working on a grant-funded project to update the Emergency Transportation Routes (ETR) in the region which will include critical water/wastewater infrastructure facilities, i.e., treatment plants, critical reservoirs – larger infrastructure. Rebecca shared a list of facilities gathered to date which was sent to the Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) for their review to ensure their facilities were represented. Rebecca asked CTC members to review the list as well and let her know if there are facilities that need to be added. Rebecca will pass on the information to the RDPO Project Manager.

Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) Guest Speaker: Rebecca mentioned that Adam Mele from Oregon Titan Fusion Center will attend the next EPC meeting to talk about cyber-security. Mr. Mele heads up a Cyber Work Group and would welcome a Consortium representative in that group.

DRIP: Rebecca and Bonny are participating in a workforce development group- DRIP. The group was originally formed to develop a grant proposal for EPA to fund internships. The group is looking for ways to bring more water treatment operators into the industry and then potentially branch out into other parts of the water sector.

The Consortium is playing a role in this work by hosting a website that serve as a resource for people who may be interested in careers in the water industry. A small working group has been put together to develop content for the site.

Legislative Update: Rebecca shared a brief update on several legislative bills:

- HB 4057 – Sprinkler efficiency bill – on Governor’s desk for signature (Consortium wrote a letter of support)
- SB 1567 – CEI Hub Bill – passed Senate – in House for vote
- HB 4061A – illegal water use – up for vote in Senate
- HB4141 – Clean diesel – creating task force

Program Updates

Bonny Cushman, Consortium Program Coordinator reported that each spring, the Consortium coordinates an order of printed materials of all conservation and emergency preparedness pieces which allows members and counties within the Consortium’s boundaries to plan for their yearly outreach needs and related printing costs. By ordering together, participants benefit from receiving lower costs than when ordering on their own. Bonny noted that the annual print order is happening now. Orders are due on Friday, March 4. New this year, the Consortium’s new conservation-focused print piece, Junior Leak Detective, is now available in Spanish, as well as a Junior Leak Detective-themed shower timer card in English and Spanish and a new hose nozzle hang tag. A free start-up supply of all new print pieces is available to Consortium members.

Bonny reminded CTC members that the Consortium has several emergency preparedness print pieces that have been translated into several languages as part of a partnership project with Multnomah County. These pieces are now being reviewed for cultural competence and will be ready to share out more widely with communities when the how-to-videos are released in the fall. Shooting for the how-to-videos is scheduled for next weekend. Bonny commented that practice sessions were held a couple of weeks ago and it was very exciting to hear the emergency preparedness information and tips in so many different languages.

Bonny noted that at the next Consortium Conservation Committee meeting representatives from the Alliance for Water Efficiency will give a presentation on their programs, tools and resources available to their members.

The Consortium Water Communicators Network conducted an accessibility survey for Consortium members to gather information on what members are currently doing for accessibility in their messaging or at meetings/events, i.e., translation of materials – which pieces in what languages, use of ASL translators, use of language lines, etc. The goal of the survey was to identify gaps, share resources and best management practices and to identify presentation topics for future Water Communicator meetings that would help to increase the base knowledge of practitioners throughout the region on how to conduct more accessible communications. 19 out of 25 members responded to the survey. Bonny noted that the key takeaway from the survey was that some things are being done but the barriers to doing more accessible communication is lack of resources – people, time and budget. It was noted that training is needed to increase the overall knowledge of resources and best

management practices for accessible communication, as well as looking for opportunities to share examples of good accessible communication pieces and developing templates when/where it makes sense.

Work is currently underway to develop a plan to move forward with making the Drinking Water Advisory (DWA) Tool available in multiple languages and completing an accessibility audit of the tool. This project will begin in earnest in FY 2022-23. The annual boundary updates for the DWA tool have been completed and will be uploaded in the next couple of weeks.

20 Consortium members completed the recent Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) survey. Results of the survey will be available soon.

Bonny is working on planning for the 2022 conservation, source water protection, and emergency preparedness media campaigns and other messaging strategies.

Bonny shared the completed interactive water map. The map has two views- water provider and water source. The map is housed on the Consortium website on the Our Region's Water page <https://www.regionalh2o.org/our-regions-water>. All of the information on the map is also available in an accessible PDF document that can be used with screen readers.

Member Roundtable

CTC members participated in a member roundtable discussion to share updates. Two prompts were provided to facilitate discussion – end of mask mandate and impacts of inflation and supply chain – labor, materials, and long lead times on capital projects.

Gresham:

- Mood meter has improved with end of mask mandate. Staff currently and will continue to work hybrid schedule.
- Experiencing supply shortages for meters – backlog especially for large meters.
- AMI battery life turning out to be shorter than originally thought – about 10-12 years. Some battery replacements are needed now. Batteries hard to come by.

Portland:

- Field crews have been working on site since pandemic began. Water Bureau-owned Interstate facility has been piloting shared workspace options since last fall.
- In City-owned facilities – initiating return to work in mid-April. Employees will report the equivalent to 1 day a week in office. Phase 1 will run through the summer and then will be evaluated and determine what comes next. Mask requirements have not been determined yet.
- Bull Run Treatment project – going through value engineering; maintain core components for regulatory compliance and facility operations – streamlining/postponing some elements of the project.
- Materials cost going through the roof. Short term = buy less and do less. Long-term = increased costs.

Tigard:

- Remote employees to return in some way back to offices in April. Currently discussing mask requirements. Not all departments on the same page. Do not have to wear masks outdoors.
- Desire to move forward with AMI but meters are difficult to get.
- Experiencing 30% increase in cost for materials. Tacking on contingency funds to CIP.

Clackamas River Water:

- Staff returned to office July 2021. Masks currently worn in office but will go away when mandate is over.
- Offices re-opening to the public on March 14. Going back to in-person public meetings and meetings with vendors.
- Finding that suppliers are not signing contracts or guaranteeing pricing. Looking to adjust inventory quantities.
- Received surprising bid (lower than expected) on recent CIP project bid opening. Good news.

Hillsboro:

- Not extending mask mandate but messaging mask wearing is individual decision and employees should feel comfortable continuing to wear masks indoors. Will still be providing masks to staff and maintaining safety protocols.
- Teleworking employees to return to office once a week. Will continue to assess. Remote work agreements were done. Have experienced trend of losing employees to other companies that offer full remote work schedules so looking to keep some sort of hybrid model to offer as benefit to keep employees.
- Meters = the new T.P. during pandemic. Everyone stocking up. Hard to find.
- Currently full AMR. Found old meter boxes not tall enough for AMI antenna. Cost to change out meter boxes cost prohibitive. Testing AMI in a new development, however.
- Non-pipeline projects seeing 20 – 30% price increase.
- Pushing with EWEB to lift 50% cap on WIFIA to help with cost increases.

West Slope Water District:

- Will drop mask requirement when mandate expires but will have employees carry masks to use as needed. Switching messaging from “mask required” to “mask welcome”.
- Have been in office/field since July 2020. Remote work was difficult for small utility. Office has been open to public since July 2021. Will continue remote meetings with Board until fall; need to set up for hybrid meeting capability.
- Pipe supplier raised costs 7% in October 2021 and again 13% in February 2022. Lead time for pipe delivery – 2 months; fittings and hydrants – 6 months.

Rockwood Water PUD:

- Employees largely in office, only couple of staff working remotely.
- Staff was surveyed about mask and are ready to not be required to wear them.
- In-person Board meetings will return right away, likely the April meeting. Board room is set up for hybrid meetings.
- Ductile iron pretty available; plastic harder to get; fittings and valves even harder to get – long lead times.

- Vehicle replacements – almost impossible to get even a quote/costs for vehicles; was told to just add 20% to normal costs. May defer some vehicle replacements.

Tualatin:

- Returned to in-person work January 1. Vaccine mandate in place. Employees working hybrid schedule that includes two days a week working remotely. Working well- part of an annual review process.
- Will drop mask requirement when mandate expires but will have “mask welcome” messaging.
- Doing budget now. Costs are increasing. Anticipating 11% rate increase next year.
- AMI not an interest of Tualatin. Contracted out meter reading is working fine. Want eyes on meter every month.

Oak Lodge Water Services:

- In midst of doing capital planning based on new water master plan. May need to adjust budget to accommodate increasing costs.
- Discussion had on how much back stock should have on hand, where to store and how storing equipment for longer periods of time may affect warranties.

South Fork Water Board:

- Will be lifting mask requirement when mandate expires. Researching if max occupancy and social distancing recommendations are still in effect.
- Carrying a little bit higher than normal chemical inventory. One big project in the works, new chemical feed building – cost have increased.

Beaverton:

- Being impacted by supply chain issues on \$160 million WIFIA project.
- All employees to return to City facilities as soon as the mask mandate is over.

TVWD:

- Board has not made decision on when employees will return to in-office work.
- Zoom/MS Team is silver lining of COVID. Hybrid/remote meetings have increased public participation and made it easier to reach more customers. Will be reconfiguring Board meeting space to include hybrid meeting options.
- Anything with roof and 2x4s much more expensive.
- Challenges with recruiting new employees.

Wilsonville:

- City never really shut down; have been in-person for most of pandemic. Maximum occupancy – room analysis for communal meeting spaces was done at beginning of Covid to set maximum occupancy rates. Will be keeping those in place.
- Will stop requiring masks when mandate lifts. Do like the mask welcome messaging.
- Been hoarding supplies – but can't get large meters.
- Sanitary survey being done March 16th.

- Building \$22 million new public works complex. Admin building – 17,000 square foot, IOC, seismic grade 4 and 18,000 square foot, IOC, seismic grade 3 warehouse facility.
- Have AMR. Did AMI pilot project with PGE and Sensus but not totally sold on the return on investment.
- New program – Wilsonville Ready Community Preparedness Campaign. Working with Barney & Worth. Monthly preparedness topics; five avenues of outreach – webpage, community survey, activities, exercises and partners. Opportunities for partnerships.

Sunrise Water Authority:

- All staff returned in November 2021 and open to the public.
- Board still meeting remotely.
- Meters very difficult to get.
- Challenges with retaining staff and hiring new staff.
- Opening bid today for new public works building and are anticipating higher costs.

Meeting Attendees:

David Winship – City of Beaverton

Todd Heidgerken – Clackamas River
Water

Greg Robertson – City of Forest Grove

Andrew Degner – City of Gresham

Niki Iverson and Jessica Dorsey – City of
Hillsboro

Sarah Jo Chaplen – Oak Lodge Water
Services

Edward Campbell – City of Portland

Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD

Wyatt Parno – South Fork Water Board

Tim Janssen – Sunrise Water Authority

Brian Rager – City of Tigard

Rachel Sykes – City of Tualatin

Carrie Pak and Nick Augustus – Tualatin
Valley Water District

Mike Grimm – West Slope Water
District

Martin Montalvo – City of Wilsonville

Ted Labbe – Urban Greenspace Institute
(UGI)

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

Next CTC Meeting: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 via Zoom/videoconference.