



Consortium Technical Committee Meeting Summary

NOVEMBER 6, 2024 CALLED TO ORDER: 1:35 PM

ADJOURNED: 3:30 PM

QUORUM PRESENT – NO – 11 MEMBERS

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE

Approval of September 4, 2024 Meeting Summaries

The Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) did not approve the September 4, 2024 meeting summary as the committee did not meet quorum requirements. Approval of the September 4, 2024 meeting summary will be held over to the next CTC meeting.

Director's Report

Rebecca Geisen, Consortium Managing Director shared the following updates:

- FY 2025-26 Consortium Budget and Work Plan Concepts – FY 2025-26 budget and work plan concepts were shared with the Consortium Board at their October meeting. Consortium staff anticipates getting staffing costs from the City of Portland in mid-December and will come back to the CTC at their January meeting with final budget and work plan recommendations.
- FY 2023-24 Consortium Annual Report – The FY 2023-24 Consortium Annual Report is complete and was emailed out to Consortium members. Hard copies were mailed to all Consortium Board and CTC members. Additional hard copies are available upon request.
- Meet & Greets: Rebecca and Bonny will be conducting meet & greet connections with members over the winter/spring. Rebecca will be reaching out soon to begin setting up these opportunities to meet with CTC members and their staff to talk about the Consortium, member priorities, answer questions and check-in on how things are going.
- Upcoming Workshop - AMI Workshop – November 14 – Water providers who are at different stages of their AMI planning and implementation will participate on a panel and share information and lessons learned. Not too late to sign up.

Program Updates

Bonny Cushman, Consortium Program Manager, shared the following updates:

- Member Involvement Matrix – Bonny reviewed the member involvement matrix which outlined member opportunities to participate in Consortium project planning, development and implementation, and the time commitment and timing for each project. It was decided that time would be embedded into Consortium Conservation Committee and Water Communicators Network meetings for youth education and messaging work. Trade ally and tabletop exercise planning work would be done outside of regular committee time. Recommendations for trade ally initiatives will be ready to share in early 2025 and a save the date for the Consortium tabletop exercise will be sent soon.
- Contract Updates –
 - KUNP is no longer carrying Spanish language content so the Consortium will no longer be advertising on that station. Bonny will be working with a PR firm to figure out next steps for Spanish language outreach.
 - The Consortium will be going out to bid for a new Youth Education program contract. A draft scope of work has been shared with the Consortium Conservation Committee and Bonny hopes to have the request for proposal go out in December/January.

Workforce Development Panel and Discussion

Robert Scott and Elizabeth Toups from BAYWORK, Ty Kovatch from the Portland Water Bureau, Wade Hathhorn from Sunrise Water Authority, and Chris Wilson from the Joint Water Commission/City of Hillsboro joined the CTC meeting to share their workforce development programs, experiences and lessons learned.

BAYWORK: BAYWORK is a network of water and wastewater agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area focused on workforce reliability through regional collaboration. BAYWORK helps agencies maintain their operational resilience; reflects the water sector’s need for a workforce based on diversity, equity and inclusion; and trains employees to embrace innovation and lifelong learning. BAYWORK provides training for staff and leaders; networking with other water professionals; recruiting through BAYWORK’s Job Board; and teacher externships. Elizabeth shared examples of their programs including workshop on wheels, training buffets, operator certification prep, career fairs, regional training programs, women in trades programs, racial, equity and inclusion programs, and BAYWORKS jobs board.

Portland Water Bureau: Ty Kovatch, Maintenance and Construction Group Director gave an overview of the bureau’s water distribution trainee program (formerly utility worker apprentice program). Ty noted that attracting a quality workforce is often difficult which necessitated the need to “grow our own”. The foundation of success is in the development of a quality workforce. The trainee program consists of multiple functions and skills to allow for a flexible workforce. The bureau does a large external recruitment for trainee candidates. The program is a one-to-two-year program, depending on experience, and will earn the successful trainee their

water distribution I certification through the training program. The bureau then recruits from within the water distribution workers for other M&C positions, e.g., backhoe operators, crew leaders, etc.

Sunrise Water Authority: Wade Hathhorn shared opportunities/ideas Sunrise Water has explored over the years to meet workforce challenges including working with other government agencies through MOUs and IGAs to share labor and paid scholarship and internship programs through Clackamas Community College.

Wade provided information on potential partnership opportunities with the private sector to run, manage, and support water operations. Wade advised that recently NW Natural has created a water services division that offers trained labor in water treatment and distribution. Sunrise recently put out an RFP seeking on-call administrative and field operations support services. NW Natural was the successful bidder on that contract and they are working to finalize the contract and beginning to learn how to work together.

Joint Water Commission/City of Hillsboro: Chris Wilson identified workforce challenges including the increase in water utility workforce needs with a decreased workforce due to retirements; limited number of Water & Environmental Technology Programs and a lack of awareness of water utility career opportunities; and competition for limited qualified and experienced operators. As a result, Hillsboro/JWC developed two programs the OIT – Operator in Training Program and the H2O – Hire to Operate Program. Chris provided an overview of both programs. The OIT program is in its third year and has had several successful hires. The Joint Water Commission and City of Hillsboro submitted a grant application on behalf of the H2O Program and other regional Utilities of \$1.5 Million for the EPA’s Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program. Although the program was not awarded funding this time around, positive feedback was received; the application ranked 6th nationally with a score of 84/100 and only two grants were awarded totaling \$6 million. JWC/Hillsboro will be ready to apply again should the opportunity arise.

A question and answer and group discussion followed.

Meeting Attendees:

Todd Heidgerken – Clackamas River Water

Jessica Dorsey and Chris Wilson – City of Hillsboro

Dave Trotter – City of Lake Oswego

Sarah Santner and Ty Kovatch – City of Portland

Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD

Ryan Wood – City of Sandy

Wade Hathhorn – Sunrise Water Authority

Brian Rager – City of Tigard

Pete Boone – Tualatin Valley Water District

Mike Grimm – West Slope Water District

Delora Kerber – City of Wilsonville

Robert Scott and Elizabeth Troups - BAYWORKS

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

Next CTC Meeting: January 8, 2024 via Zoom/videoconference.