



REGIONAL WASTEWATER RECLAMATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Transamerica Building
Pima Association of Governments'
177 N. Church Avenue, 5th Floor Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 15, 2013

Committee Members Present:

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Ann Marie Wolf | Bill Katzel | Armando Membrila | Jackson Jenkins |
| Sheila Bowen | Kendall Kroesen | Amber Smith | Jeff Biggs |
| John Carlson | Rob Kulakofsky | Mark Stratton | |
| Bob Iannarino | John Lynch | Mark Taylor | |

Committee Members Absent:

Barbee Hanson

A. CALL TO ORDER. Ann Marie Wolf, Chair, called the meeting of the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Advisory Committee (RWRAC) to order at 7:45 a.m. Veronica Lopez took the roll call and a quorum was present.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

C. SAFETY SHARE. Jackson Jenkins, Director, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD), reminded the Committee to pay close attention to your surroundings to avoid preventable injuries.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

1. Meeting Minutes of June 20, 2013

ACTION: Mark Stratton made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2013 meeting. Bob Iannarino seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

E. COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS.

- 1. CITIZENS' WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CWAC) UPDATE.** Mark Taylor stated there is no update to report at this time.
- 2. RWRAC FINANCIAL SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE.** John Lynch, Vice-Chair, stated the Sub-Committee will reconvene on September 4, 2013 at 1:30 p.m. and will meet at the Public Works Building, 7th floor conference room.

F. DISCUSSION/ACTION.

- 1. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE.** Mr. Jenkins provided a Regional Optimization Master Plan (ROMP) update. The overall ROMP project is progressing well. The main treatment facility is being completed in 3 phases. Mr. Jenkins stated that Phase 1 has been completed but was put out of service to work on the adjacent BNRAS trains. Phase 1 is now being put back into service. Phase 2 is running and Phase 3 is

almost complete. The biological part of this process will be done by October. Mr. Jenkins stated there is still landscaping and remodeling work that needs to be done and this work will go past October.

The Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility is a new state-of-the-art facility that will replace the existing Roger Road Wastewater Reclamation Facility (WRF). This project is ahead of schedule and construction is almost complete. This project is below budget. The Committee asked various questions of Mr. Jenkins regarding the ROMP project. Mr. Jenkins stated that consideration is being given to renaming the Ina Road WRF as the Tres Rios WRF.

Mr. Taylor asked if a fish farm at the Roger Road facility is still being considered. Mr. Jenkins stated the department is still evaluating possibilities and has held discussions with Tucson Water and the University of Arizona for possible uses of this property.

Mr. Jenkins stated the department is still trying to determine the most beneficial use for the biogas that is generated at the Ina Road WRF. The department is currently advertising a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and will continue to evaluate all options. Mr. Jenkins stated the department received one good proposal, but they did not meet one of the criteria that was set and had to return that proposal as non-responsive. Mr. Jenkins added that there is interest on this proposal and the RFQ approach may provide more of a response.

The department held a Senior Management Annual Retreat, which was held at the state-of-the-art Pima Emergency Communications and Operations Center. Mr. Jenkins stated the purpose of this meeting was a strategic planning effort. The Committee received copies of RWRD's Annual Work Plan. One of the key efforts this year is to recognize RWRD employees more so than ever. Bill Katzel complemented the Customer Service Division for the outstanding assistance that they provided to him.

Mr. Jenkins announced that Sheila Bowen was reappointed to the RWRAC at the August 6, 2013 Board of Supervisors' (BOS) meeting. Mr. Jenkins also presented Amber Smith with a Philabaum Award for her service to the RWRAC.

2. **FINANCIAL END OF YEAR REVIEW.** Patrick McGee, Division Manager, Finance and Risk Management Department (FRMD), discussed the Period 13 Expense and Revenue Summary handout that was distributed to the Committee and explained the revision that was made to the data. Mr. McGee stated that as of July 31st, the department's expenses are coming in at 97% of what was budgeted. Staff is still working on accruals and Contra expenses. The Contra expenses will post in September and will be on the Period 16 report. Mr. McGee stated that a draft of the final numbers for FY 2012-13 should be available in October.

Revenues are coming in at \$144.7 million, which is lower than what was budgeted. The Capital Contributions have not posted, but should also be available in October. Mark Stratton asked without the proceeds from the Town of Marana, revenues are approximately \$23 million less than what was projected. Mr. McGee replied yes. Discussion ensued regarding the growth factors used in the budget assumptions.

3. **SONORAN INSTITUTE "LIVING RIVER" REPORT.** Emily Brott, Sonoran Institute, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Living River Project – Lower Santa Cruz. Ms. Brott stated that Sonoran Institute is a 501c3 non-profit organization, which is working on this project with three Pima County departments: Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department, Regional Flood Control Department, and the Office of Conservation and Sustainability. Ms. Brott provided various handouts for the Committee and gave an overview of each handout.

Ms. Brott provided background information on the Sonoran Institute. Their mission is to inspire and enable community decision regarding public policies that respect the land and people of Western North America. Ms. Brott stated that their vision is a West of healthy landscapes, resilient economies and vibrant communities. Ms. Brott displayed a list of the Sonoran Institutes guiding principles. The Sonoran Institute has offices across the western states, including: Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona; Bozeman, Montana; Glenwood Springs, Colorado and Sheridan, Wyoming, as well as in northern Mexico.

Ms. Brott explained that in 2005, the upper Santa Cruz experienced a massive tree die-off and no one understood why. There was concern and desire to get a handle on the river health. Sonoran Institute conducted research around the country in an attempt to determine how river conditions are changing and on river health. A technical advisory committee was formed to assist in determining what the key indicators of river health would be, both for riparian and aquatic systems. The committee came up with 10 indicators and three reports were produced. Ms. Brott provided the results of their research. They found that fish were returning and the water quality was improving. However, the river was not flowing as far. The river used to flow to Amado and it is now stopping short of Amado. Ms. Brott provided explanation as to why this has occurred. Ms. Brott stated that there was also a concern of metals and E. coli in the upper Santa Cruz River.

The upper Santa Cruz River monitoring project was so successful that Pima County moved to set up its own program for the lower Santa Cruz River.

Ms. Brott provided a list of partners who initially wrote a letter of support for the \$300,000 grant that Pima County was able to secure from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The members of the Technical Committee volunteer their time and meet monthly. Ms. Brott complimented the Technical Committee on their outstanding work and participation and noted that Kendall Kroesen is also a member of this Technical Committee. Ms. Brott explained the Technical Committee's role with this project. Ms. Brott went on to discuss the integration of the lower Santa Cruz Living River into other efforts that are occurring in Pima County. Ms. Brott continued to explain the community benefits that will result from the river health tracking.

Ms. Brott discussed the data collected from the various agencies. The Technical Committee developed the Draft Indicator List. Ms. Brott gave a brief summary of each of the categories on this list. Discussion ensued regarding the process for measuring odor from the treatment plant, the river and manholes. The Historical Conditions Report has been produced by Pima County and is independent from the Living River Report. This report establishes a much longer baseline of data and discusses various factors, such as water infiltration, geomorphology and water quality. Mr. Katzel asked how far back does the historical data go. Ms. Brott stated she would have to check on that information and will get back to him.

The Living River Annual Report summarizes changes to wetland conditions and it is also used as an outreach tool. Mr. Stratton asked if this annual report is intended to be a continual annual review. Ms. Brott stated that it is. The first 3 years are being paid with the EPA grant and the Sonoran Institute is looking for funding for the subsequent years. Mr. Taylor asked if the cause of the tree die-off was ever discovered. Ms. Brott stated yes, it was due to a perfect storm of events. There was an extensive clogging layer, long-term drought and lack of monsoon scour for a period of years. With no flood waters coming through to scour the clogging layer out, it built up over time. There was also continued and increased ground water pumping in the area that all contributed to the tree die-off. The new Nogales Treatment Plant is also now providing higher quality water.

John Carlson stated that this area is of interest to bird watchers and asked Ms. Brott if she had any thoughts related to that. Ms. Brott stated that Sonoran Institute is working with Tucson Audubon to report on their data for birds in this area. Kendall Kroesen added that the number and types of birds

may change gradually over time with the change in the water. Ms. Brott pointed out that Claire Zucker of Pima Association of Governments' is also on the Technical Committee and recognized RWRD for providing funding for this project. The Committee thanked Ms. Brott for her presentation.

4. **SANITARY USER FEE ORDINANCE.** Matt Matthewson, Special Assistant to the Director, RWRD, reminded the Committee that this update relates to the presentation given by Charles "Chuck" Fatum, a member of the public. Mr. Fatum addressed the Committee at the June 20, 2013 meeting. Mr. Matthewson provided background information on Mr. Fatum's concerns regarding the sewer user fee ordinance.

Mr. Matthewson stated Mr. Fatum presented his case to the BOS last year and staff provided C.H. Huckelberry, County Administrator, with a background paper on the subject of separate and secondary water meters. Mr. Huckelberry issued a memorandum to the BOS regarding this issue. The Committee received this memorandum in their meeting packets. Mr. Huckelberry recommended to the BOS that the County retain the current code provisions as being equitable to wastewater customers. This recommendation was unanimously adopted by the BOS. Since this matter has been reviewed and heard by the BOS after thorough evaluation by the County Administrator, staff recommends that the Committee take no further action on this issue. However, staff recognizes that there may be options for making the acquisition of separate irrigation meters more affordable for customers and have engaged in discussions with Tucson Water on this point.

5. **DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW.** Ed Curley, Program Manager, RWRD, distributed draft copies of the RWRAC Annual Report to the Committee. Mr. Curley asked that the Committee review the report and provide any comments and/or edits to Ms. Lopez within the next couple of weeks. The Annual Report will be finalized in September.

G. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

- Effluent Utilization Report

Ms. Bowen asked if the Committee would have the opportunity to tour the Agua Nueva Water Reclamation Facility. Mr. Jenkins stated that could be arranged and the Committee approved of a tour. The Committee decided they would like to arrange a tour for October. Discussion ensued regarding inviting the CWAC members to tour the facility, as well.

Mr. Kroesen suggested inviting Ms. Brott back in a year to present on the Living River project and provide an update.

Mr. Carlson stated that he recently saw an interview John M. Bernal, Deputy County Administrator, Public Works Administration, gave on television regarding the Marana WTF and complimented Mr. Bernal for doing a superb job with that interview.

Laura Fairbanks, Community Relations Manager, RWRD, introduced Ricky Wascher to the Committee. Mr. Wascher is a new employee to the Community Relations Section.

Mr. Stratton announced that the upcoming WESTCAS meeting will be held in Tucson this year and is scheduled for October 30th through November 1st at the Westward Look Resort. Mr. Curley stated details on the meeting will be sent out to all Committee members.

Mr. Katzel suggested moving the Call to the Audience back to the beginning of the meeting. Mr. Curley stated the Chair has the ability to rearrange the agenda, as needed. Ms. Wolf stated this matter can be placed on a future agenda item for further discussion.

Mr. Jenkins introduced two new RWRD employees to RWRD, Jennifer Tate and Brandy Peterson. Mr. Jenkins also introduced Chris Schumacher, Information Technology Department, who is currently working closely with RWRD on a couple different projects. The Committee welcomed all of the new employees.

H. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE.

ACTION: Rob Kulakofsky made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Iannarino seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

I. ADJOURNMENT. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 a.m.