

WINNIPESAUKEE RIVER BASIN PROGRAM

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 18, 2021 – Conducted Electronically

Members Present: The meeting was called to order by Wes Anderson (Laconia), chair, at 10:01 am. Sharon McMillin (NHDES), Tom O’Donovan (NHDES), Rene Pelletier (NHDES), Ron White (DAS), Jeanne Beaudin (Belmont), Glen Brown (Northfield), Justin Hanscom (Franklin), Brian Sullivan (Franklin), Ray Korber (Bay District), and Meghan Theriault (Gilford) were present at that time.

Wes announced that due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu’s Emergency Order No. 12 and Executive Order 2020-04, that the meeting would be conducted electronically, and was being hosted via Laconia’s Zoom Video Communications account.

Minutes: Jeanne moved, seconded by Glen, to approve the February 18, 2021 meeting minutes as written. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Monthly Summary Report: Sharon distributed the *Monthly Summary Report* for February 2021 by email prior to the meeting.

- Energy Efficiency Upgrades – No updates at this time.
- Solids Handling Process Upgrades – Of note, this was a new project on the summary report, although it has been forecasted in the WRBP CIP since 2018. Phased projects included in the Solids Handling Master Plan developed for the WWTP are being identified for completion of the alternatives analyses (10 percent of the design) to move forward to a 30 percent design. Budgetary costs are being developed as the project phases are advanced to the 30 percent design.
- Asset Management (AM)/Collection System Evaluations Incentive – No updates at this time.
- WRBP Infrastructure O&M Responsibilities – No updates at this time.
- Replacement Fund – No updates at this time.
- Governance Work Plan – No updates at this time.
- Rate Assessment Formula – No updates at this time.

Sharon described the first phase of the Solids Handling Process Upgrades project as being driven by a deteriorating biogas system that heats both the digesters and the main building, and that the deterioration has resulted in leaks and safety hazards. Brown & Caldwell (BC) has been working with the WRBP staff to evaluate the heat balance, heat exchangers, additional mixing in the primary digesters, and side-stream thickening.

The Solids Handling Master Plan is available for review and covers more than just this project; since it is a 20-year planning document. When the first phase is better defined the Advisory Board’s input will be solicited for the viable alternatives. Ray expressed an interest in looking at the Solids Handling Master Plan so Sharon will send to the members via email.

Wes asked if the money for the design was in the 2020/2021 budget. Sharon explained that pre-applications for SRF loans have already been submitted to cover both the wastewater upgrades and the solids handling engineering and construction, and that they were on the CWSRF priorities list for available funding. Additional funding would go into subsequent fiscal years as the solids handling project was just in the initial stages.

Wes asked if the construction project (as a whole) was included in the CIP. Sharon explained that currently it was prospective only until more definitive figures are developed by the consultant and WRBP project team. Those budgetary amounts should be available for the CIP sub-committee to work with in September or October if it chose to meet. Ray expressed an interest in the CIP sub-committee meeting to update the CIP.

Citizens Comments for Agenda Items: Wes asked if there were any guests from the member communities participating on the call and if they had any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the agenda items. As there were no guests participating, he moved on to the next agenda item.

Governance Guidelines, MOA, and Bylaws Update: Wes announced that there were no updates at this time, but the bylaws may be on the agenda next month.

Rate Assessment Formula Update: Wes asked the membership to refer to the PDF copy of the handouts that were distributed by email prior to the meeting, specifically to Item 5. The four southernmost communities met with Underwood on March 4th to review the model. Wes recapped the summary information provided in Item 5 and at the previous meetings.

Unknown flow was the topic at the meeting. It was defined as consisting of: I/ I in the WRBP interceptor from the Winnisquam pump station to the last meter before the WWTP; water consumption from the unmetered areas in the four southern communities; and I/ I in the unmetered areas of those four communities.

For water consumption in the unmetered areas, the four communities considered: Using an average consumption factor based on historical water use that Underwood had developed while performing its I/I studies in Belmont; applying the I/I factors from Belmont's recent study to Northfield, as their systems were similar in age and material; and applying the I/I factors from Franklin's recent study to Tilton. as their systems were similar in age and material.

At the April meeting, it is Wes' goal to review these considerations along with Underwood's suggested changes to the WRBP model and to establish a timeline for moving forward with a decision. Wes asked if there were any issues anyone wished to discuss now.

Jeanne expressed her concern about Johanna's (Tilton's) absence at the last two Advisory Board meetings and at the meeting on March 4th. Jeanne felt it was crucial for Tilton to be part of these conversations. Wes said that he has talked with Johanna, and that she seemed to agree with the concepts discussed during these meetings and confirmed that Tilton did not plan on doing an I/I study. Brian thanked the group for meeting with Underwood on the 4th and felt they had made a lot of progress.

Brian also announced that Franklin and Belmont have signed agreements with Underwood and planned to continue using them throughout this process. He hoped that doing so would give Johanna some of the support that she would need moving forward. Brian will be more involved in the discussions going forward.

Ray requested members look at the strength parameter again since the Bay District lagoons could be considered a pre-treated discharge. Wes noted that it was possible to include strength; however, the formula would require tweaking to include it. He asked Ray if he had suggestions in that regard. Ray suggested the CIP sub-committee to put together a proposal to incorporate strength.

Wes asked, with regard to the timeline, if strength was an immediate concern for Bay District or if Bay District was comfortable addressing it later on. Ray acknowledged that he would like the CIP sub-committee to get together to discuss it sooner than later.

Wes asked Sharon if she would be able to walk them through the consideration of strength as a component of the rate formula. He asked if the industrial-type operations bought their effluent down to a much lower level before releasing into the system. Sharon affirmed that they did. She noted that the WRBP did one study regarding community strength contributions (CBOD, TS, etc.) at different locations within the collection system. Findings did not indicate, outside of one discharge in Belmont, that any of the member communities had any significant differences in strength.

Sharon recommended revisiting the analytical data from the studies and offered to send Ray a copy of results. She also noted that Bay District discharged a significant amount of algae from its lagoon into the collection system, which is inhibitory of WRBP's treatment process, although that is the nature of lagoons. Ice cream shops and breweries also increased the CBOD flows to the WWTP. It may be beneficial for each member community to enforce strong sewer ordinances to control the commercial discharges; as DES controls the industrial discharges. Previous discussions had included a surcharge for strength, so members or individual dischargers paid their fair share of treatment costs.

Wes asked if the analytical data was on the WRBP website or if Sharon could provide the data. Sharon noted that it has already been distributed but would send to Ray and Wes prior to Tuesday the 23rd. Jeanne requested the analytical data be updated because it was at least two years old and Belmont had addressed the discrete high strength discharge (ice cream) in Belmont.

Sharon indicated another collection system study could be performed to update the analytical strength data; however, she noted that it would not be possible to do so until after May. A new study may not be deemed necessary or cost-effective given the prior Advisory Board's decision not to include strength. The Advisory Board had voted not to include a strength parameter both because there were no significant differences between the member communities and also because of the potential on-going cost. Updating the analytical data was possible if the Advisory Board wished to consider strength moving forward but she suggested spot-checking as an option.

Wes thought that the available analytical data was helpful enough to develop the concept. Ray concurred. Wes did not believe that updating the analytical data would result in significant changes to the results.

Authority Workgroup Update: Wes announced that the City Manager of Laconia has talked with the decision makers in the other member communities, and it seemed as though Gilford and Meredith were not interested in pursuing a separate state agency.

Meghan explained that it was her understanding that Scott was not interested in pursuing a separate state agency unless there was unanimous support for doing so. Brian confirmed that Franklin, Tilton, and Northfield felt the same way.

Ray noted that some of the member communities still wished to have more control over how the money was spent and asked if amending the MOU help. Jeanne believed that doing so would not change anything, because it would not change the ownership.

Brian moved, seconded by Glen, to remove this agenda item from the agenda for future meetings. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

Wes asked if the money in the escrow account should be left in the account or reimbursed to members. If it was left in the account, it could assist with the rate assessment formula project. Brian, Ray, Jeanne, and Meghan were in favor of leaving it in the account. Brian indicated that Franklin would not provide additional money into the fund, but their current balance could assist with the rate formula work.

Replacement Fund: Wes asked, if based upon the discussion earlier about the rate assessment formula, if there was an interest in presenting a proposal to the NH Legislature to modify the replacement fund statutory language before the upcoming legislative session began in September. The effort had been on hold pending a decision to move forward with different governance. The general consensus was to move now forward with proposed changes since members had reached a consensus not to move forward with governance changes; so this discussion item will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Other Business: Sharon announced that Ken Noyes, the WRBP's Chief Operator, retired last month. He has been with DES for over 27 years and will be greatly missed. There is an Interim Chief Operator at present, and DES has begun the hiring process to replace Ken.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 am. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 10:00 am via Laconia's Zoom Video Communications account. The minutes were prepared by Pro-Temp Staffing.