

**FORT WORTH WATER DEPARTMENT
WHOLESALE WATER AND WASTEWATER
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TCC SOUTH CAMPUS
(SETC FUSION ROOM-NORTH BUILDING)
5301 CAMPUS DR. FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76119
Thursday, December 1st, 2022
2:30 p.m.**

The following cities' representatives were present:			
City	Attendee	City	Attendee
Aledo	Absent	Lake Worth	Absent
Benbrook Water Authority	Brad Hill	Northlake	Absent
Bethesda Water Supply Corp	Absent	North Richland Hills	Boe Blankenship/ Caroline Waggoner
Blue Mound	Absent	Pantego	Bob Neal
Burleson	Kevin North	Richland Hills	Kelly Morris/Scott Mitchell
Crowley	Matt Elgin/Randal Manus	River Oaks	Gordon Smith
Dalworthington Gardens	Juan Rodriguez	Roanoke	Robby Wallace
DFW Airport	Brian Yancy	Saginaw	Absent
Edgecliff Village	Absent	Sansom Park	Absent
Everman	Absent	Southlake	Kyle Flanagan
Forest Hill	Absent	TRA	Matthew Jalbert/Kim Probasco
Grand Prairie	Cora Snyder	Trophy Club MUD #1	Mike McMahon
Haltom City	Greg Van Nieuwenhuize	Watauga	Paul Hackleman/Taylor Alvarez
Haslet	Absent	Westlake	Absent
Hudson Oaks	Absent	Westover Hills	Tim Chambers
Hurst	Greg Dickens	Westworth Village	Absent
Keller	Absent	White Settlement	Larry Hoover/Krystal Crump
Kennedale	Absent	Willow Park	Absent

1. Call to Order

Greg Dickens (Chair) called the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Paul Hackleman (Secretary) conducted the roll call.

3. Introduction of Water Department Staff and Guests

Chris Harder (FW Water Director) introduced Doug Black (FW Attorney) and identified other staff present.

4. Approval of Minutes

Gordon Smith moved for approval of the meeting minutes from June 09, 2022. Krystal Crump seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

5. Operational Reports

a. Plant Operations – Water Operations

Presenter: **Shannon Dunne (FW Asst. Water Director)**

- Update on recent water demands
- Update on plant operation and tank cleaning status

b. Plant Operations – Wastewater Operations

Presenter: **Shannon Dunne (FW Asst. Water Director)**

- Update on the biosolids dryer
- All projects are moving along on the wastewater side. The digester project is almost ready for bidding.
- Design work commencing on the primary clarifiers.

c. Field Operations: Roy Teal (FW Asst. Water Director)

- Leak Detection Program:
 - Proactive for the water distribution system.
 - The City was broken up into four quadrants to split up efforts between in-house staff and a contractor.
 - In-house staff have been able to survey approximately 137 miles of pipe.
 - There were 59 leaks discovered mostly on the valves.
 - Two leaks were discovered on the larger pipes which consist of the 16” and above as well as two leaks on the 30” and 36” pipes at the joints.
 - Approximately 60 million gallons of water loss were attributed to these leaks.
 - The effort has been beneficial with a huge return on investment.
 - In the past 3 months there was 35 main breaks.
 - During the summer months there is usually an increase in main breaks with an average of about 47.
- Collection System:
 - Total of 102 SSO’s for the entire year.
 - In 1998, there were 1,415 SSO’s.
 - Investments into the collection system were made for the improvement and reduction in SSO’s.
- Overall Operations:
 - Supply chain issues with availability and longer wait time for orders.
 - An assessment of materials is being conducted to identify critical materials needed to keep up with the work demand.
 - Vacancies are at 14% and is being managed with the use of contracts.

6. Biosolids Facility Update

Presenter: **Steve Nutter (FW Environmental Program Manager)**

- The facility is close to being finished with all construction activity.
- Rotary drum driers will utilize natural gas to heat the biosolids and create a small pellet.
- Pellet (product) size is about 2mm.
- There is very little waste associated with this system.
- System is very energy efficient and uses reclaimed water not potable for processed water.
- Construction activities were close to being finished back in May 2022.
- Acceptance testing has been completed on all equipment installed to ensure operation of equipment as designed.
- Synagro has submitted the test report to the City for review.
- The engineering support consultant is Jacobs Engineering.
- Since July 2022, almost 8 tons of fertilizer has been produced. FW is currently registered in Texas, Alabama and seeking to register in Florida.
- Synagro is currently evaluating the feasibility as a bio fuel.

7. Mary's Creek WRF Update

Presenter: **Chris Harder (FW Water Director)**

- FW hired Plummer Associates for the Mary's Creek Water Reclamation Facility design. Jacobs Engineering will be a sub-contractor to Plummer, focusing on the treatment process evaluation, which is required prior to preliminary design.
- The discharge permit has a very strict nutrient limit that must be complied with.
- A Mary's Creek reuse feasibility study has been prepared with the goal of providing effluent to resale to reclaimed water customers.
- The feasibility study is the first step towards the application with the Bureau of Reclamation for a grant.
- The application would request funding for plant disinfection, pump station, and pipelines associated with the reclaimed water system.
- FW is looking into ways to minimize cost due to increasing inflation and construction costs
- FW plans to get the best value financing and will be making an application for a clean water SRF loan, along with looking into grant opportunities.
- FW anticipates the plant to be operational for summer of 2028.

8. Workforce Discussion

Presenter: **Chris Harder (FW Water Director)**

- Met with some of the larger water utility directors, i.e. Houston, El Paso and San Antonio, etc.
- The meeting takes place annually to discuss issues effecting their industries. Majority of the time is spent discussing workforce issues.
- FW has 143 vacant positions in our utility which is about a 14% vacancy rate.
- There are a great deal of vacancies within the equipment operator and maintenance worker positions.
- FW also has recruitment issues. It is difficult to recruit engineers and people in the I.T. area. Looking at strategies to try to address these issues.
- Other utility directors mentioned areas that FW does not partake in at this time. Such as, paying staff to be on-call.

- Certification pay (licenses for operators) was a big item for discussion. FW has made a slight pay increase in this area. Odessa's certification pay is \$600.00 per month, which is higher than what most utilities are paying.
- A barrier to entry into FW is CDL's.
- Equipment operators are required to have a CDL. As such, hiring for this position is very difficult.
- FW has been trying to grow their workforce by sending people to CDL school.
- Gordon Smith (River Oaks) is looking at training for some of his staff, and enlisting an instructor that can get them certified.
- FW has great interest in learning more about what is required to have an in-house trainer that can actually move people to CDL's.
- Currently, FW is paying upwards of \$5,000.00 or more to send staff to CDL school. Greg Dickens (Hurst) mentioned that he has not actually done this yet, but has investigated the pricing which is currently in the realm of \$5,000.00 to \$7,000.00.
- Feedback was requested from the Wholesale Advisory Committee in terms of vacancies and where their pain points are in relation to classifications.
- The path to go from a maintenance worker to an equipment operator is obtaining a CDL and potentially a C license along with experience.
- Inquiry was made with the Wholesale Advisory Committee if certification to get to the CDL comes from the TDLR in order to become a trainer. If committee members are struggling with this, perhaps something could be worked out regionally. As this matter does not just effect water and wastewater utilities, but also transportation departments.
- Inquiry was made if any of the committee members pay their staff to be on-call.
- The last time there was a discussion with the group it was mentioned that FW would be putting out hiring bonuses to engineers. This may be an area that FW is a little behind on.
- FW was down 7 crews last summer when there were main breaks.
- When FW doesn't have sufficient staff in place, they look for alternative means in order to meet their performance requirements.
- When there is a backlog of leaks, FW has to hire contractors and pay a premium. It is a challenge to keep up with leaks and breaks.
- If someone accepts a sign-on bonus, they must sign an agreement stating they will stay with FW for a certain amount of time. There is a similar agreement that must be signed when sending staff to school.

9. Master Plan Updates

Presenter: **Matt Kusnir (FW Engineering Manager)**

- Impact Fee reminder – In January 2023, the rates are increasing.
- The new rates will remain in effect until the next study which occurs every 5 years.
- Water Master Plan will be concluded in July 2023.
- Sewer Master Plan is set for completion by summer of 2024.

10. Cost of Service and Rate Study FY2024

Presenter: **Kristen Nutter (FW Sr. Utility Rate Analyst)**

- FW's consultant reviewed the cost of service methodology for determining Wholesale rates in 2024.
- FW will revise rates in 2024 due to the use of updated volumes and budget numbers.
- The RFP for wholesale water cost-of-service study will be advertised per the contract.
- The wholesale wastewater cost-of-service study will be conducted in-house.
- The RFP will be advertised by December 29, 2022 and due January 29, 2023.

- The sub-committee will evaluate the RFP and provide recommendations by February 26, 2023.
- They will meet on May 18, 2023 to review the preliminary rate reports.
- The committee will then meet to discuss the final cost of service rate and impact fee reports in June 2023.
- FW will provide a final report to the committee for feedback to be adopted by council.

11. Lead and Copper Rule

Presenter: **Stacy Walters (FW Regulatory and Environmental Administrator)**

- **Lead and Copper Rule Update:**
 - The LCRR compliance date is approximately 22 months away. Remember compliance applies to all public water systems.
 - The lead inventory template must be completed and submitted to TCEQ regardless if you have lead or not in the system.
 - If lead is identified, a lead replacement plan must also be submitted to TCEQ by October 16, 2024.
 - EPA will provide the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI).
 - FW anticipates changes by 2023.
 - FW is learning what needs to be included in the inventory and requirements.
 - Lead and copper compliance testing must be completed every 3 years unless trigger or action levels are exceeded.
 - FW is looking to identify ways to notify a customer if lead service has been identified.
 - Public outreach is very important for the customers which involves lead and copper replacement, water quality parameter testing, and compliance testing.

12. PFAS

Presenter: **Stacy Walters (FW Regulatory and Environmental Administrator)**

- **Drinking water side:**
 - Schedule starts in January 2023 to monitor all drinking water plants.
 - Findings must be reported in the CCR.
- **Wastewater side:**
 - FW is working with the Pretreatment group to review collection basins and assist in mitigation with the PFAS process.

13. CCR Rule Changes

Presenter: **Mary Gugliuzza (FW Media Relations/Communications Coordinator)**

- The National Drinking Water Advisory Council did not have this item on their agenda.
 - There was no progress report available.
- Possibility of a new report twice a year may be needed.

14. Officer Elections in December

Presenter: **Mary Gugliuzza (FW Media Relations/Communications Coordinator)**

- **Officer Election By-Laws:**
 - Officer elections occur every even numbered year.
 - Two-year terms.
 - Maximum of 3 successive terms in any single office. Greg Dickens and Gordon Smith are not eligible for re-election to their current offices of chair and vice-chair, respectively.
 - Only authorized voting members can vote and be an officer. Paul Hackleman is eligible for re-election as secretary.

- Elections:
 - Chair – Paul Hackleman (City of Watauga)
 - Vice Chair – Greg Dickens (City of Hurst)
 - Secretary – Taylor Alvarez (City of Watauga)

15. Future Agenda Items and Comments

Please forward any future agenda items to WaterWholesale@FortWorthTexas.gov

16. Adjourn