

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 11, 2019

Santa Fe, New Mexico

I. This Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Steve Rudnick at approximately 5:00 p.m. on the above-cited date at the Santa Fe County Projects Complex, 901 W. Alameda, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

II. A quorum was achieved 20 minutes into the meeting and action items were addressed at that point:

Members Present:

Steve Rudnick, District 5
Ken Kirk, District 2
Bryan Romero, District 1
Shann Stringer, Soil & Water Conservation

Member(s) Absent:

Mary Helen Follingstad [excused]
Denise Fort, BDD Board

Staff:

Jerry Schoeppner, Utilities Department
Anjali Bean, Utilities Department
John Dupuis, Utilities Director

Visitor:

Anna Hamilton, Commissioner
Emily Wolf, River Source

Those present introduced themselves.

III. Approval of Agenda

The discussion topics for the upcoming joint City-County meeting scheduled for May was added as item A under VIII. Discussion Items.

The agenda was accepted by consensus.

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X. C. Status of Member Vacancies

Commissioner Hamilton said she would recheck with Deputy Manager Flores because she had expected the appointment of Mohamed Dahab to be on the last BCC agenda.

VIII. Discussion Items

A. Joint Meeting

Mr. Kirk, who serves on the City's WCC, said the WCC is excited to keep the joint meetings going with more time spent on discussion and less time on presentations. At the last WCC meeting, Councilor Romero Wirth proposed a format as follows:

- 30 minutes – 15 minutes per organization to discussion conservation issues
- 60 minutes to discuss pre-determined questions
- The last 30 minutes undetermined

WCC identified the following possible issues:

- Outdoor irrigation/wells
- Restaurant conservation audit program
- New resident education/information kit

Christina Chavez, the City Water Conservation Manager, in conjunction with the WCC, has developed a conservation score card which outlines areas of focus for conservation. The WCC is working on the City's five-year conservation plan and have held a few study sessions. The WCC is interested in working together with the WPAC on the plan.

Mr. Rudnick remarked that Santa Fe is one of the lowest water usage municipalities in the country and further conservation may be difficult to attain. It was suggested that, commercially, there is a lot to be accomplished.

The following items were mentioned as topics:

- The impact of education
- The private well user as an important component to conservation – how to reach them
- The update of Chapter 25

There was agreement that the joint meetings are useful and should be continued. An email soliciting joint meeting topics from those not present was recommended.

The joint meeting format can be formalized by Commissioner Hansen and Councilor Wirth.

Mr. Schoeppner said that the County's conservation methods appear to be more reactive than proactive. He said they do meet with realtors to discuss the .25 acre-foot per year restriction.

Regarding restaurant conservation, Mr. Romero mentioned it will impact the COD stream, which could cause an additional charge.

A discussion ensued regarding Aamodt as backup to the County/City system. It was determined that Aamodt would not be a productive topic to broach at joint meetings.

Tentatively, the joint meeting was scheduled for May 7th and the next WPAC meeting was May 9th.

IV. Approval of Minutes: March 14, 2019

With a quorum present, Mr. Kirk moved to approve and Mr. Stringer seconded. The motion passed without opposition.

VIII. B. Discussion of Drought Management Plan

Mr. Rudnick reminded the Committee that they have discussed triggers and the County's tie to the City. The County lacks specifics of what they would do in the event of a drought.

Mr. Rudnick mentioned the Environmental Review Act [postponed indefinitely] which creates a new agency responsible for EIS reviews. The act sets out that PWS (public water systems) would follow their emergency response plans making it incumbent on Santa Fe County to have such a plan. He asked how the new agreement on the Colorado River would impact San Juan-Chama and BDD. An emergency response plan could be based on the tier levels of drought.

Commissioner Hamilton said that the WPAC's expertise outlining the components needed for such a plan would be well received. The drought plan and emergency response plan are essentially the same thing.

Because of the County's relationship with the City, Mr. Schoeppner said an emergency response plan would need to be developed together. He suggested that the Chapter 25 update would be the appropriate time to work on it.

Mr. Stringer suggested staff ask the City whether they have a response management plan. Mr. Schoeppner said he'd like to see if any state agencies or other counties have plans.

Mr. Rudnick said he sensed that it would be more productive to research plans which other counties have, rather than trying to write one from scratch. The research will provide a functional outline of who does what, stated Commissioner Hamilton.

What constitutes drought in Santa Fe County needs to be determined. The triggers on a statewide basis are provided from a meteorological standpoint.

The issuance of a declaration of drought is a judgment call from the City manager. Currently, if something happens then a plan will be developed. There was agreement it should be science-based. A trigger could be the level in the river and whether the diversion can actually divert water.

The state's triggers appear to lag and are based on the Palmer Drought Severity Index.

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Mr. Romero said the trigger depends on where the source is for the customer. He noted that an emergency could be something other than a drought. It is probably easier for the City to declare a drought, since it is a one utility-based customer area, and is more homogenous than the County.

These points were offered:

- Vulnerability to drought and who can respond to it needs defining
- There was agreement not to re-invent the wheel and instead, research other plans
- An outline is important and the starting point is the source of water
- A well will not have a drought emergency, for a well either has water or does not
- Conservation efforts for wells should be identified and shared
- Static water levels in the well should be a trigger for conservation
- Wells ought to be monitored
- The state is responsible to make sure water is safe for drinking but not to ensure the well runs
- A position statement from the State Engineer that, during periods of drought, one is not expected to use their entire water right
- Education as part of a drought management plan
- The County's sustainability group is considered a way to subsidize conservation improvements in homes of well owners
- The County utility delivers 1,600 acre-feet a year with 3,400 connections
- With 60,000 county residents on wells – a rough estimate is 6,150 afpy
- With septic systems, approximately half of the water use goes into the recharge
- Assuming the lifespan of a home is 50 years, then conservation measures can be implemented through subdivision regulations
- An emergency plan can be conceptualized based on water sources, and a GIS exercise can identify those on wells
- The County utility users were identified as the easiest source to start with
- An easy trigger could be the BDD ceasing diversion due to low flows
- Three triggers were suggested: watch, exceptional drought and emergency
- The plan needs to be data driven
- Water from the City wellfields is more expensive for the County than BDD water

There is a clear distinction between what can be accomplished with utility customers versus those on wells. Mutual domestics can be County regulated, but well users will require state input.

The County can develop/enact an ordinance metering all wells

B. Utility Master Plan for SDA-1

Mr. Dupuis said he anticipated the plan would be presented to the BCC in June.

IX. Matters from the Committee

None were offered.

X. Matters from County Staff

A. Update on Aamodt Regional Water System

Ms. Bean said Aamodt has been busy with a plan for County representation to go to DC to advocate for more funds. Phase 1 is 90+ percent. The Ranney wells are still under consideration because they have been moved, which reduced the capacity of the wells, and more discussion is needed to fully explain to the partners the implication of that move. Phase 2 designs are at 60 percent and will be on hold until a consensus design is reached in principle.

B. Update on Community Systems

The BCC accepted the Hyde Park Estate agreement/system. The contract to drill a well in Chupadero and will be scheduled soon.

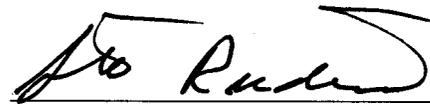
C. Status of Member Vacancies [See page 2]

Ms. Wolf was provided information in the event she would like to serve on the committee.

XI. Adjournment

Having completed the agenda, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Approved by:


Steve Rudnick, Vice Chair

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Farrell, Wordswork

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COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

WATER POLICY ADVISORY
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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 14TH Day Of August, 2019 at 09:25:33 AM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1893850
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Deputy  County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM
Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Geraldine Salazar