

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 11, 2019

Santa Fe, New Mexico

I. This Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) meeting was called to order by Chair Mary Helen Follingstad at approximately 5:10 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 with the following members present:

Members Present:

Mary Helen Follingstad
Shann Stringer, Soil & Water Conservation
Bryan Romero, District 1
Ken Kirk, District 2

Member(s) Absent:

Steve Rudnick, District 5
Denise Fort, BDD Board

Staff Present:

Anjali Bean, Utilities Department
John Dupuis, Utilities Director

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was accepted by consensus.

IV. Approval of Minutes: June 13, 2019

A couple of typos were noted and, by agreement, approval of the minutes was postponed to the next meeting.

V. Introductions - Deemed unnecessary

VI. Matters from the Public - None were present

VII. Action Items - None were listed

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VIII. Discussion Items

A. Continued Discussion of Draft Outline for Santa Fe County Drought Management Plan

Chair Follingstad said she hoped to develop a draft by the end of the year or provide notes for a consultant to write the plan.

Mr. Kirk said drought management came up as a topic at the last City Water Conservation Committee and was thought to be an appropriate discussion point for the joint meetings. The idea was to limit the discussion to the Santa Fe Basin. He understood Councilor Romero Wirth would contact Commissioner Hamilton and the next joint meeting would occur in August.

WPAC agreed that dedicating the entire joint meeting to drought management was a good idea. Chair Follingstad asked that the City's committee be advised that WPAC has developed a discussion draft outline based on the State's drought plan.

Defining triggers seems to be WPAC's next priority. Chair Follingstad said the state drought plan calls for meetings to discuss the triggers which are determined by the percentage of dry areas in the state. The State drought plan is focused on bringing groups together, and although the plan cites a state drought coordinator at the OSE, currently there is not one. The maps appear to be generated by NOAA or Arizona.

Mr. Stringer said he envisioned a joint task force holding regular meetings on drought watch and drought warning. He added that the state plan is geared bottom-up. The drought watch would be continual. Other entities use small task forces that meet monthly to make status determination.

The recent wet winter has improved the drought. Farmington endured a year and a half with 1" of precipitation. Ten more dry winters would eliminate water in the Colorado Basin for storage.

Water Watch

Mr. Romero brainstormed the notion of water watch and developed five main headings: organization, educational outreach/partnerships, funding, data, and drought triggers. He also included an illustration of the static or rest water level. The main takeaways include the following:

Organization:

- Requires an internal County division, i.e., Sustainability Office or Public Utilities
- GIS involvement is paramount

Educational Outreach/Partnerships:

- Including young adults and kids in data review will assist in conservation
- Programs consistent with science standards
- Use established resources
- Resource-wise it is important to partner with the City to create a regional drought management program

Funding:

- Recurring funding is necessary for the program's success
- Requires the support of elected officials to be successful

Data:

- Identify wells for monitoring static levels
- Expand data mining
- Determine locations and how many wells are required to be statistically significant to use as a model

Data Analysis and Distribution:

- Populate data on a GIS platform that is divided into similar geographical locations to make it useful for the target areas
- Review data as received
- The data needs to be placed within one model

Drought Triggers:

- Data points to be used to establish drought trigger

Mr. Romero noted that money, a plan, goals and objectives, and boots on the field are necessary for the water watch program. He emphasized that without the necessary resources, the program will not succeed. In terms of partnering, the City of Santa Fe could participate with the GIS data set.

Mr. Stringer said usually the drought contact person is designated staff within different divisions and they would attend monthly water watch meetings. The meeting notes would be provided to the governing body. He was not familiar with any communities having a designated drought czar: "It's more a team effort."

Ideally, there would be a City-County Drought Task Force would be formed with individuals identified within different departments attending the meetings. Merely meeting together would promote regional planning. Identifying targeted areas, while useful, may not be helpful for regional development.

Tying data to decision making power is important. WPAC may want to recommend that the County consider changing its relationship with well users, mutual domestics, etc.

Rulemaking is under consideration that would require periodic reporting to ED of well level measurements. A higher frequency of such reporting would be required during drought situations. Water providers/water wholesalers would be required to conduct a stress test based on a 180-day period, stated Mr. Stringer.

Overview of Drought Management - Mr. Rudnick's paper was distributed.

- It was determined that the definition of emergency drought for planning purposes is the inability of the County to meet the demand for water at any given time
- The definition would include without dipping into the savings/contingency supplies which is what the groundwater supply is considered

- Rather than “drought” the utility may want to use “Stage 1,” (not to be confused with rainfall accumulations or other measures that determine drought)
- Developing a definition of drought that predicts action requires public acceptance which may be better addressed under the “watch” outreach
- The low water use appliance program had strong public support
- The programmatic approach is sustainability which is drought resiliency
- Prohibitions/conservation programs are drought management

Referring to the Pojoaque BRWS, Mr. Dupuis spoke of the requirements that included design for extreme drought. Historic records show that the level in the river directly affects the yield. The level may drop to the extreme drought of record value for a period which, depending on how storage is configured, may be greater than the amount in storage. Operations need adjustment to maintain storage for that period with a buffer.

- There was consensus that the 2055 graph was appropriate for a long-term water plan, not for a drought management plan
- Drought resiliency as a long-term plan can prevent drought management from having to occur
- The utility pays attention to the ISC’s annual river level projections based on snowpack of previous years. In the beginning of 2018 the models were negative and that was a red flag that triggered action
- The Drought Monitoring Index is nine months after the fact and not useful for drought management
- The ideal drought resiliency program will have appropriately prepared the community to continue on a normal path rather than declare drought emergency measures
- If groundwater is being used to meet demand, rather than to prevent going artesian, or if the projections of the annual primary supply are insufficient, then emergency measures are appropriate
- Until model projections are downscaled for the Sierra Nevada, the projected change in seasonal precipitation map was deemed unhelpful

Mr. Dupuis said the strategies that can be employed to help mitigate drought vulnerability are resiliency measures: shortage sharing agreements, emergency drought restrictions for public water supplies, drilling backup wells, conjunctive use strategies to rest aquifers, renewables when available and water banking rather than permanent transfer of water rights to address temporary shortage. AWRM (Active Water Resource Management) is assigned for the NPT Basin. He noted that along the Chama River there is a shortage sharing AWRM policy between the upstream junior users with the downstream senior users.

The ideal is that resiliency be built into a plan so that an emergency is avoided.

BOR’s WaterSmart grant program was mentioned as the correct venue to obtain funds to write the drought management plan. Plugging into the State’s programs under DFA may be successful.

Next month Members Kirk and Stringer will present material.

IX. Matters from the Committee – None were presented

X. Matters from County Staff

A. Update on WaterSmart Grant for ASR Project

Ms. Bean said the County applied for a WaterSmart grant for an ASR project under the drought resiliency program. The project being proposed is in partnership with Rancho Viejo's developer Warren Thompson. Rancho Viejo previously conducted an ASR pilot program south of the Community College District which resulted in an estimated 250 acre-feet per year could be injected into the well. Mr. Thompson is interested in pursuing this further and the County applied with him. The grant will cover up to 50 percent of the project or \$300,000. Mr. Thompson will cover the match.

Because of contamination concerns, injecting treated wastewater into an ASR well has not occurred in New Mexico. Mr. Stringer said there is the list of regulated contaminants and a non-list of unregulated contaminants: it is the non-list of unregulated contaminants that is of great concern.

Mr. Thompson needs 1,200 acre-feet to complete his development. The current plan is to inject the County's excess BDD water into the ASR well. The technology for treatment and the permitting for ASR may change so that effluent from Mr. Thompson's treatment plan can be used.

In regard to enhanced resiliency, Mr. Dupuis mentioned that NM ED will permit effluent placed in the arroyo, and that effluent goes back into the aquifer. Then the State Engineer will provide a return-flow credit for that water to a well, that had no water rights, to extract the effluent that was placed in the arroyo. If it is well water going into an ASR project, there are few permitting issues relative to effluent treatment. The same quantity that was placed in the arroyo can be put in an ASR well and count as an ASR benefit.

Mr. Stringer pointed out that there is a lot of natural treatment that occurs in surface flow.

Mr. Dupuis asked WPAC to consider an update to the 2014 resolution regarding ASR. He said Thompson's project addresses the shortcomings identified in the previous resolution. The infrastructure is provided by private development and the cost supplemented by grant funds and the private developer Thompson.

B. Update on Aamodt Regional Water System

Ms. Bates said Aamodt is moving forward with the presentation of the 611 G agreement – the consensus design, and cost share negotiation agreement between all the parties – to the BCC.

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C. Update on Community Systems

Hyde Park Estates agreement is being completed.

The Cañoncito water line will run from Rancho Viejo's tank through Eldorado to Cañoncito. The County contracted with Molzen Corbin to design the connection from Eldorado to Cañoncito.

D. Status of member vacancies

Emily Wolf's name as a candidate for the WPAC will come forward to the BCC in August.

XI. Adjournment

Chair Follingstad declared this meeting adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Approved by:



Mary Helen Follingstad, Chair

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Farrell, Wordswork


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COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 14TH Day Of August, 2019 at 09:25:35 AM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1893852
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

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