

Draft Minutes for Approval at May 16th, 2019 Meeting

Minutes
Water North Coalition (WNC)
Thursday, January 24th, 2019
Lac La Biche, AB

Attendees

Bob Marshall – County of Grande Prairie
Kelly Herman – Aquatera
Cherie Friesen – Northern Lakes College
Grant Dixon – Advanced Technology Applications
Meghan Payne – Lesser Slave Watershed Council
Murray Kerik – M.D. of Lesser Slave River
Ian Willier – Big Lakes County
Willis Fitzsimmons – Saddle Hills County
Jennifer Besinger – County of Grande Prairie
Tom Burton – Rural Municipalities of Alberta
Duane Lay – City of Cold Lake
Bob Buckle - City of Cold Lake
Cal Mosher – Town of Beaverlodge
Terry Carbone – Birch Hills County
Andy Trudeau – M.D. of Smoky River
Reuel Thomas – Portage College
Richard Simard – Big Lakes County
Lyle Farris – M.D. of Lesser Slave River 124
Keith Straub – Town of High Level
Rory Card – Town of Rainbow Lake
Wally Olorenshaw – Town of Rainbow Lake
Travais Johnson – Athabasca County
Barry Schmidt – M.D. of Opportunity
Marcel Auger – M.D. of Opportunity
Robin Guild – M.D. of Opportunity
Earl Gullion – M.D. of Opportunity
Brad Trimble – Town of Bonnyville
Khalil Shaikh – Lac La Biche
Erin Ritchie – Lakeland Industry and Community Association
Jason Stedman – Lac La Biche
Colin Cote – Lac La Biche

Administration

Susan Shave, NADC Manager
Melonie Doucette, NADC Senior Northern Development Officer
Sheila Sikora, NADC Research Officer

Presenters

Elkan Environmental Engineering – Rhonda Hewko
County of Grande Prairie – Jennifer Besinger
Anuja Ramgoolam – Alberta Water Council

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Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping:

Chair Bob Marshall called the meeting to order at 10:01am and introduced Omer Moghrabi, Mayor of Lac La Biche.

Mayor Omer Moghrabi delivered greetings from Lac La Biche County at 10:02am.

Review and Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Andy Trudeau of M.D. of Smoky River to accept the agenda as presented at 10:08am.

MOTION CARRIED

Adoption of Minutes of the St. Isidore, November 15, 2018 meeting

Moved by Keith Straub of the Town of High Level that the minutes be accepted at 10:09am.

MOTION CARRIED

Roundtable Introductions

Bob Marshall asked members to introduce themselves and to give an update on anything new going on in their communities with respect to water and wastewater.

Cal Mosher, Town of Beaverlodge – a disastrous rainstorm last summer revealed weaknesses found with infrastructure. Infrastructure will be a big issue with regard to the budget.

Terry Carbone, Birch Hills County – G5 project is in the preliminary stages.

Andy Trudeau, M.D. of Smoky River – upgrades are being performed in hamlets as infrastructure is 60 years old.

Reuel Thomas, Portage College – partnering with Lac La Biche for water training.

Ian Willier, Big Lakes County – commissioned pump house in Kinuso, grants funding 50% water treatment construction in Joussard.

Bob Buckle, City of Cold Lake – construction of regional line to Bonnyville.

Jennifer Besinger, County of Grande Prairie – Valhalla lift station complete, truck fill for Bezanson community is anticipated to be completed by the end of February, water treatment upgrade for Bezanson, looking at community water system project for the hamlet of La Glace, regional transmission line from Grande Prairie to Wembley is 85% complete.

Willis Fitzsimmons, Saddle Hills County – upgrading lift stations in Woking, new water treatment plant at Savannah (4th water treatment plant in County), transmission distribution system at Bonanza and Bay Tree.

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Grant Dixon – Advanced Technology Applications – lead instructor for Northern Lakes College, minimum operator regulation changed January 4th, 2019. Operators-in-training need to be attended by an experienced operator. This regulation change will have impacts on potential training and staffing needs. Letter from Environment and Parks received January 6th, 2019.

Lyle Farris, M.D. of Lesser Slave River No. 124 – 30 million spent on regional water since 2011, million dollar upgrades in Smith, improving water quality source from Slave Lake, Canyon Lake treatment plant is membrane only.

Meghan Payne, Lesser Slave Lake Watershed Council – preparing integrated watershed plan and working with stakeholders.

Keith Straub, Town of High Level – funding in regional water line program, working with First Nations.

Rory Card, Town of Rainbow Lake – aging infrastructure, corrosion, pump stations, difficult to access resources, interested in the Coalition with respect to finding and retaining operators.

Wally Olorenshaw, Town of Rainbow Lake – upgrading water meters for conservation, upgrading water valves (2 million), rehab project planned for water treatment plant, corrosion on side of plant and grants are being sought to help with this, difficulty with getting operators (level 2).

Travis Johnson, Athabasca County – redoing the intake from the Athabasca river for the water treatment plant. Everything is on track. The project is anticipated to start next year.

Kelly Herman, Aquatera – Bernd Manz has retired, a datashare program is available and can improve access to water information on Smartphone with the roll out expected in the summer.

Marcel Auger, M.D. of Opportunity – working with First Nations (Bigstone) on water use agreement to provide water to the First Nation, capital upgrades, Loon River, partnering for viable water source, Peerless Trout, transit to First Nation status, M.D. to be operator and service, Federal government is providing 80% funding to province, negotiate if that becomes an option.

Earl Guillon, M.D. of Opportunity – will be losing four operators in the next 12 months.

Khalil Shaikh, Lac La Biche – thank you for attending the tour of the water treatment plant. Activities include extending water and sewer to communities along the Lakeshore to protect the environment and keep lake healthy, installed a 3 km long water and sewer system to Mission Beach subdivision last year and will extend it another 5.5 km to the rest of the subdivision, replacing aging cast iron pipes with plastic pipe, completed two phases of the water treatment plant upgrades to produce best quality water, made significant changes on the heating system at water treatment plant to treat effluent effectively, busy construction season this year.

Colin Cote, Lac La Biche – protection of source water, membership includes Lakeland Industry and Community Association, Alberta Lake Management, Athabasca Watershed, water treatment is state of the art, focus is going toward starting with a good water source (need a good healthy lake for good water).

Business arising from previous minutes

Review of Action List

Melonie Doucette of the NADC reviewed the action list:

Under Ongoing items:

- Recruiting for Indigenous and other industry representatives are ongoing and a priority.
- Securing long term funding a priority moving forward.

Under New items:

- Reporting back to members about discussions around bacteriological testing in the north.
- Reviewing how to login and use Google Docs
- Social media accounts for the Coalition
- Grants brochure – copies are available at the table and on the NADC website
- The communications and strategic plans were adopted in the last meeting. The Terms of Reference will be adjusted with respect to terms for Chair and Vice-Chair.

Under Operational items:

- Communications committee is always looking for new members. The tasks involve approvals through email.

Review of Terms of Reference

Chair Bob Marshall outlined the suggestion made at the last meeting with regard to the Terms of Reference. At the November meeting, it was suggested that both the Chair and Vice-Chair serve a 2 year term instead of a one year term and that the terms be staggered. During this meeting, discussion ensued over the duration of the terms for each of the positions. Members pointed out that there is no opportunity for the Vice Chair to move into the Chair position in the event of the Chairperson stepping down or not being re-elected. A suggestion was made for the Chairperson election to coincide with municipal elections, with another noting that a four year term is a big commitment.

Moved by Willis Fitzsimmons to make the following change in the Terms of Reference at 10:35am: The term of Chair is to be two years, not one, and the term of Vice-Chair will remain a one year term.

MOTION CARRIED

Update: Teleconference with Minister of Health on Bacteriological Testing

Chair Bob Marshall recounted for the membership the activities that occurred in the last six months with respect to the issues around bacteriological testing. Bob mentioned the call with the Health Minister in August, and a teleconference with Shane Hussey of Alberta Health Services and Debra Mooney of Environment and Parks in November. Bob updated the membership on a recent email sent by Shane Hussey on some of the issues discussed during the teleconference in November:

- Faxing process for water samples has been shared with Bob. Keith Straub noted he has not yet used the faxing process.
- Environment and Parks are aware of the change in the process of reporting results in that some types of satisfactory samples are being expedited and sent to Environment and parks offices via fax.

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- The deadline for creating a best practices document has been extended due to work undertaken by the Provincial Drinking Water Committee. Some of the problems encountered with samples include missing information (date/time), no label, testing outside of the 24 hour time limit, unapproved container, insufficient volume for processing.
- Capacity issues were not identified as a reason for ProvLab rejecting water samples as samples that arrived the night before get registered in such a way that they are not rejected due to the 24 hour cut off.
- The membership was asked if they know of any provinces that use such data sharing tools. Saskatchewan and the Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia) were mentioned. Grant Dixon offered to research the provincial data sharing tool used in Saskatchewan. Sheila Sikora of NADC to share information already gathered on this issue. Keith Straub mentioned that it would be nice to have a dashboard to see water testing results as they come in.
- Chair Bob Marshall indicated he would like to have both Shane Hussey and Debra Mooney present to the Coalition to discuss data fields municipalities would like to have on the dashboard and to answer questions. Bob will follow up with both Shane and Debra.

Social Media

Melonie outlined the problems encountered when attempting to set up a Facebook page for the Water North Coalition and a LinkedIn page. In order to make a Facebook page, a profile must be attached to it. Fake profiles were attempted but are not accepted in Facebook and as a result, Facebook has locked the account. Melonie has tried to contact Facebook to deactivate the account that has been created. The Twitter account has been created but is not activated. Currently, the NADC publicizes the Coalition's activities through its social media accounts. Melonie stated she is open to advice on creating the Facebook page. Melonie indicated that the process document for social media accounts has been drafted and outlines guidelines for approval. The process for posting content is similar to the current process of vetting documents/information through the communications committee.

Moved by Willis Fitzsimmons to accept the process document as it is at 10:48am.

MOTION CARRIED

New Business and Updates

Google Docs

Melonie presented the Google Docs page to the membership and noted that the meeting package is available using the link provided in the email she sends. The subcommittee documents are also available on Google Docs using separate accounts. Melonie showed the membership how to login to Google Docs and how to drag and drop documents into the drive. Bob Buckle indicated he had difficulty accessing Google Docs using the City system. The membership was told they can type in Google Docs in the search bar or download the app available. Melonie to email login information to membership. She also informed members that if they are still having difficulties accessing the Google Drive to call her and she will walk them through it. Melonie noted that documents are capable of being changed on the Google Drive. Members were also advised to use caution when opening their own personal gmail

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accounts at the same time as opening the Coalition gmail accounts as some personal information has migrated over to the Coalition accounts in the past.

Mutual Aid Documents

Jennifer Besinger informed the membership that there are two documents that have been finalized. One document is a contractor document for operators filling in for an absent operator. The other document is designed for longer terms of operation. She indicated that the documents are templates for municipalities to use so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel in creating documents for their operations. Grant Dixon stated that disclaimer recommends that the documents be vetted by legal departments, and Melonie noted that a line has been added absolving the Water North Coalition of any liability.

Moved by Keith Straub to approve the documents for upload to the NADC website at 11:08am.

MOTION CARRIED

Presentation: Rhonda Hewko, Elkan Environmental Engineering and Jennifer Besinger, County of Grande Prairie.

The presentation from Rhonda Hewko and Jennifer Besinger illustrated the benefits of BEAST (Bioelectrochemical Anaerobic Sewage Treatment) technology, developed by the National Research Council, for wastewater systems. The presenters informed the membership that sewage was not effectively biodegrading and causing problems downstream and potential health concerns. The pilot for the BEAST technology involved a lagoon in Bezanson. Results indicated that BEAST increases degradation rates, the quality of effluent was high, and was cost effective for large communities. Further, the technology works well in cold climates, is easy to operate, and uses a small footprint.

Q&A:

Question: What about ionized ammonia and phosphorus?

Testing has been done and there is a trade off in removing ammonia and phosphorus as the voltage has to be increased to 1.5. The system does a better job of removing ammonia.

Question: What about recirculating effluent?

No, not yet. Looking for a spot to test.

Question: What is the rate of flow change? Constant rate? For efficiency?

Need to run it for a fairly constant rate. The electrodes speed up anaerobic process. 1.5/full treatment. It also depends on the wastewater profile and strength. For Rosebud, there was an eight hour retention.

Question: What about applying this technology to a residential septic tank? Some subdivisions have septic tank pump outs.

Yes, the technology can be downsized. Discussions are taking place with a company in Grande Prairie about subdivisions.

Presentation: Anuja Ramgoolam, Alberta Water Council; Clean Air Strategic Alliance

The presentation from Anuja Ramgoolam outlined the importance of protecting sources of drinking water in Alberta. The project described in the presentation involved developing a common approach for establishing source water protection plans to be used in all watersheds. The Council worked with the Government of Alberta to create an inventory of treatment systems, and surveyed the following: targeted organizations involved in safe water practices in Alberta, individuals who rely on a private source of water on their property, and organizations that provide drinking water to communities. Raising awareness of the importance of safe water practices, collaboration, coordination of information, and access to data were some of the best practices gleaned from the survey results. The Council is currently working on a jurisdictional scan, and analyzing data. A guidance document is being drafted that will include tools, resources, best practices, and case studies for public and private organizations and individuals. The Council is anticipating a report to be completed by the end of 2019.

Question: Is the Council working with watershed groups?
Yes and there are two representatives.

If anyone has follow-up questions regarding these presentations please email NADC secretariat for follow-up.

Subcommittee Updates

Advocacy

Interbasin Water Transfer: Bob Buckle informed the membership that transferring water from one basin to another has been difficult to do historically. He indicated that one transfer was done last year, and there are two others from Beaver River basin to the North Saskatchewan basin. Bob is proposing that a letter be sent to the Minister of Environment and Parks to clarify the process. It is important to ensure municipalities have the opportunity to get water. It takes a special act in the legislature for a transfer to occur. However, Bob explained that there appears to be a loosening of the rules from Environment and Parks with actions differing from the process with regard to the three recent transfers. A letter requesting information from the Minister is to be approved and sent forward.

More Indigenous Representation on the Water North Coalition: This issue is challenging and opportunities out there need to be identified.

Proposal for RMA/AUMA for fall: Need to gather information from municipalities from the four questions.

- What is your water/wastewater infrastructure deficit/liability amount in the next 10 years?
- What is the greatest challenge in meeting those needs/liability?
- What do municipalities require from WNC, what would you like us to advocate for?
- Do qualifying criteria restrict your ability to apply for grants?

These questions are to be sent to the membership for CAOs to answer. These data from these questions will help draft a resolution.

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Water North Coalition Presentation at RMA – A suggestion was made to have WNC exhibit at RMA with Aquatera.

Recruitment, Training, and Retention

Grant Dixon gave an update for Jennifer Besinger.

Mutual Aid documents: Grant stated the subcommittee will review Tom Burton's changes to the Mutual Aid documents.

Map of Operators/Systems: Grant described how the subcommittee is trying to overlay a list of operators over a map of water and wastewater operations from Water for Life.

Training in the North document: Grant noted that the Training in the North document will be revised to reflect links to educational institutes that provide training instead of a listing of courses.

List of Contractors: Grant stated a list of private operators is being compiled that could be used when someone needs an operator to fill in.

Competency Based Peer Cross Training: Grant told members the subcommittee is also working on competency based training that allow Continuing Education Units to be accumulated during cross training. Grant stated he will approach Environment and Parks to discuss using the ABC (Association of Boards of Certification) model for these competencies.

New Business: Grant indicated that the dual credit program for high school students with regard to non-credit courses will end in 2020. He also indicated that the subcommittee would like to clarify with Environment and Parks the minimum operator attendance guidelines. A letter from the Chair would be helpful in clarifying the issue and whether there is some latitude with respect to northern operators. The subcommittee suggests that this item be put on agenda for the May meeting.

Education and Awareness

Facebook Page: Meghan Payne offered to be one of the administrators for the Water North Coalition Facebook page as she administers a page already for her organization. She noted an individual will have to be an administrator eventually. Once the page is created, the membership is urged to like or follow it.

Cost of Water documents/videos: Meghan informed the membership that computing the cost of water from source to tap will be difficult to do because it will not be the same for all operators/communities. She described some videos from the Alliance for Water Efficiency, <http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/default.aspx>, that the Coalition could use to describe the process of creating drinking water from source to tap. Meghan said that she is looking into a student internship to assist in the development a visual/text document to complement videos from the Alliance. She noted a job description will need to be drafted to attract students. Reuel Thomas of Portage College offered to send the job posting to the Student Association and the Environment and Natural Resources Tech Program. Meghan suggested the membership contribute some money to pay for the student to prepare the documents. An estimate of the cost is needed and perhaps a call out to municipalities. She

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stated that the Lesser Slave Watershed Council account could be used to hold the funding for a student intern.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in the M.D. of Opportunity either on the 16th or 23rd of May. The date has not been finalized. Chair Bob Marshall informed the membership to RSVP to Melonie if inviting water operators so that the host community knows how many people will be attending. There is currently no host for the meeting in July or August. The membership is encouraged to contact Melonie if there is an interest in hosting the summer meeting. Upcoming presenters include the University of Calgary and Alberta Environment and Parks.

Moved by Keith Straub at 2:08pm that Alberta Health Services present to the Water North Coalition on bacteriological testing.

MOTION CARRIED

Members are encouraged to forward suggestions for presenters to Melonie. The aim is to have one presentation per meeting.

Adjournment

Moved by Duane Lay to adjourn the meeting at 2:11pm.

MOTION CARRIED

Organizational Meeting

Melonie called for nominations for Chairperson to serve a two year term, and nominations for Vice-Chair to serve for a one year term.

Nominations for Chair of the Water North Coalition to serve a two year term commencing January 2019-January 2021:

Willis Fitzsimmons nominates Bob Marshall as Chair. Bob Marshall accepts the nomination. Second and third calls for nominations are made but none are put forward.

Terry Carbone moves that nominations for Chair have ceased at 2:12pm.

CARRIED

Nominations for Vice Chair of the Water North Coalition to serve a one year term commencing January 2019 to January 2020:

First, second, and third calls for nominations are made, but none are put forward.

Bob Marshall moves that nominations for Vice Chair have ceased at 2:14pm.

CARRIED

The nomination for Vice-Chair will be carried over to the next meeting.