

*Draft Minutes for Approval July 25th, 2019 Meeting*

Minutes  
Water North Coalition (WNC)  
Thursday, May 16th, 2019  
Wabasca, AB

**Attendees**

Bob Marshall – County of Grande Prairie  
Cherie Friesen – Northern Lakes College  
Grant Dixon – Advanced Technology Applications  
Murray Kerik – M.D. of Lesser Slave River  
Ian Willier – Big Lakes County  
Willis Fitzsimmons – Saddle Hills County  
Jennifer Besinger – County of Grande Prairie  
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  
Richard Simard – Big Lakes County  
Keith Straub – Town of High Level  
Travis Johnson – Athabasca County  
Barry Schmidt – M.D. of Opportunity  
Robin Guild – M.D. of Opportunity  
Josh Knelsen – Mackenzie County  
Fred Wiebe – Mackenzie County  
Vern Lynburner – Town of Valleyview  
John Moen – Saddle Hills County  
Corinna Williams – Northern Sunrise County  
Colleen Sklapsky – Town of Grimshaw  
Janice Reyda – M.D. of Peace  
Sterling Johnson – Lac La Biche  
Brian Shapka – Lac La Biche  
Alex Neumann – Village of Boyle  
Paul Clyburn – Village of Boyle  
Janet Pomeroy – Athabasca Watershed Council  
Tracey Anderson – Aquatera  
Nicole Obee - Aquatera  
Jamie Giberson – Aspen Regional Water Services  
Dalen Peterson – County of Grande Prairie  
Randy Dupuis – Town of Peace River  
Dana Langer – Town of Peace River  
Cody Kelly – Town of Slave Lake  
Dan Rites – AWWOA

**Administration**

Ken Noskey, Acting Chair, NADC  
Susan Shave, NADC Manager

## *Draft Minutes for Approval July 25th, 2019 Meeting*

Melonie Doucette, NADC Senior Northern Development Officer  
Sheila Sikora, NADC Research Officer

### **Presenters**

Leland Jackson – University of Calgary  
Tanya Hunter – Alberta Environment and Parks

### **Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping:**

Chair Bob Marshall called the meeting to order at 9:04am and introduced Robin Guild, Councilor with the M.D. of Opportunity.

Councilor Guild delivered greetings from the M.D. of Opportunity at 9:05am.

### **Review and Adoption of Agenda**

Moved by John Moen of Saddle Hills County to accept the agenda as presented at 9:06am.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **Adoption of Minutes of the Lac La Biche, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting**

Moved by Andre Trudeau of the M.D. of Smoky River that the minutes be accepted at 9:07am.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **Business arising from previous minutes**

#### **Review of Action List**

Melonie Doucette of the NADC reviewed the action list:

Under Ongoing items:

- NADC will continue to work with the WNC for possible funding opportunities
- NADC along with the advocacy subcommittee has developed a 3 stage strategy to engage potential voting/non-voting and First Nations, Metis, Inuit members
- Connecting with an established coalition to present on how to establish a successful Coalition is part of long-term strategic planning

Under New items:

- A presentation on bacteriological testing and the results of the work done on delays in results of samples from the Ministry of Health has not yet been confirmed. Inquiries are being made to determine if the Ministry of Health representative can present at the July meeting
- Social media updates will be discussed today at the subcommittee meeting
- The Terms of Reference and strategic plan were voted on and accepted for the next three years
- Google Docs information has been sent out to the membership

Under Operational items:

- Thanks to Keith Straub of the Town of High Level for joining the communications committee.

**Update: AB Health/Health Services**

Alberta Health is working on a portal so that operators can access information from the lab online. It is expected that more information on this portal will be shared in July. There are now ways to expedite water tests, whether positive or negative. If results are required for a good sample, a form is to be filled out operators checking off a box on the form requiring that the results be sent back. The information is to be received in a timely manner instead of one to two weeks. Further, proper labelling is recommended to ensure samples are not rejected. Some issues with sample rejection were brought forward from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Progress on this issue is being made, but there may be a lag with the installation of the new government.

**Operator Attendance Guidelines**

New attendance guidelines replace the stand-alone document. Tanya will answer questions about these guidelines during her presentation.

**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.

Fred Wiebe, Mackenzie County – The County is working on water diversion licenses with Alberta Environment and Parks. The County is not getting grant funding for projects.

John Moen, Saddle Hills County – Bringing water to Bonanza and Bay Tree. A new fire hall has been built in Savanna. A fire hall has been built in Bonanza. The fire hall in Woking is under construction.

Corinna Williams, Northern Sunrise County – Brent Schapansky, water operator from Northern Sunrise County, is away due to illness. A part-time operator has been working (Tracy).

Janice Reyda, M.D. of Peace – Joint advisory committee with Grimshaw has developed a source water protection plan. This plan has been ratified by member municipalities.

Sterling Johnson, Lac La Biche – approved a project servicing areas around the lake (80 lots). The project is expected to lessen the impact on the lake.

Brian Shapka, Lac La Biche – cast iron replacement lines in Lac La Biche.

Andre Trudeau, M.D. of Smoky River – There are issues with funding (federal, rural) for water co-ops.

Janice Pomeroy, Athabasca Watershed Council – the Council has completed a first draft of a watershed management plan. Municipalities, Indigenous groups, industry and Athabasca University have contributed. The first draft will be disseminated, and opinions from watershed groups will be sought. The state of the McLeod River is completed. There was a gap in data. WRP grant will fund a GIS study in watershed.

## *Draft Minutes for Approval July 25th, 2019 Meeting*

Tracey Anderson, Aquatera – Aquatera is providing water to Wembley and the groundbreaking will be May 24<sup>th</sup>. The wastewater grand opening is planned for July 2019.

Jennifer Besinger, County of Grande Prairie – Looking at rectifying deficiencies identified in the La Glace study. A pilot project discussed in the BEAST presentation is moving forward. It is anticipated that the project will be operational at the end of summer. There is expansion of the water treatment plant in Bezanson. There is also an addition to the water source (extra well added onto system). A grand opening for truck fill in Bezanson will take place.

Terry Carbone, Birch Hills County – Agricultural spraying is putting a huge strain on water. Any ideas and suggestions on how to alleviate this stress are welcome.

Bob Buckle, City of Cold Lake – Involved in first of a three year project providing water to Bonnyville. Technical merit testing on wastewater treatment plant is being conducted.

Dan Rites, AWWOA – Training calendar is available for fall. Contact 1-877-454-7745 if interested in the courses. Instructors will travel to you if needed. Water Week is November 13-15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The first Water Week was held in Edmonton in November 2018. A report, Taking Care of Drinking Water, was passed around a few years ago. Some copies were left over at RMA, and if councilors wish, there are copies available at this meeting.

### **New Business and Updates**

#### **WNC Annual Progress Report**

Bob Marshall and Melonie Doucette informed the membership of the progress report, and how it contains good information to take back to councils, as it shows how the coalition is relevant to the North. The report outlines the milestones achieved throughout the year at quarterly meetings, the outcomes of the subcommittees, and other significant quantitative information on the coalition.

#### **Non-Voting Member Requests**

Melonie informed the membership that the Athabasca Watershed Council would like to be a member of the coalition. The matter will be decided during the organizational meeting in the afternoon. GWS Environmental Inc. (Taylor Rudrum) also expressed interest in becoming a member of the coalition. Taylor provides shared services as a contractor/operator for Hythe and other locales.

#### **WNC Promotional Video**

The updated WNC video was presented to the membership. Bob Marshall and Melonie Doucette suggested that a coalition member could voice the video and encouraged members to think about voicing it.

**Presentation: Professor Leland Jackson, Scientific Director, University of Calgary**

Professor Jackson's presentation illustrated the need for clean drinking water around the world, particularly in the developing world, as demand is expected to increase up to 70% by 2050. Professor Jackson discussed the consequences of drug therapy on the drinking water supply (pharma pollution). Impacts on sexual development in reptiles and fish, skewed birth ratios in certain populations, and antibiotic resistance are some of the consequences mentioned. Advancing Canadian Wastewater Assets (ACWA) develops wastewater treatment technologies that remove existing and emerging contaminants to improve ecosystem and human health. The technology has been tested at the University of Calgary for a community of 1000 people. Professor Jackson showed how the Netherlands is using wastewater as a potential resource (i.e. biogas to provide heat, run drinking water/wastewater, and power greenhouses). This technology is scalable. The idea is to change linear thinking to circular (recycling) thinking.

**Q&A:**

Question: What science is behind the City of Montreal dumping sewage in the St. Lawrence or Victoria dumping it into the ocean?

Answer: That thinking is 50 years old. Halifax stopped that practice four years ago. Victoria does it because they can. Alberta Environment, however, sets standards.

Question/Comment: Norway is using plastic in roads.

Answer: There are plastics that are produced that can be recycled. B.C. allows only high value plastics. A better option with regard to bottled water is not to use plastic but instead use reusable stainless steel bottles. Discouraging the use of bottled water could be part of a public education campaign.

Question: What is the cost? Government mandates limits for water/wastewater. There is limited funding for municipalities in how to deal with these limits. Sometimes there is no collaboration between the federal and provincial governments. Our education subcommittee is working on the cost of water for communities.

Answer: Ratepayer increases occur. The cost for the concept is roughly 1.5 million for 1000 people (SNEEK in Netherlands). This cost is similar to the cost of flying in bottled water to remote communities. A challenge with this technology exists for more widely distributed communities.

Question: How does the concept relate to lagoons and septic systems?

Answer: For septic tanks, there could be a large tank as used in the SNEEK example from the Netherlands, a feed for anaerobic digestion (including kitchen waste).

Question/Comment: Aquatera has methane taken from wastewater. Sludge is for the landfill.

Answer: The excess could power greenhouses.

**Presentation: Tanya Hunter, Alberta Environment and Parks**

Tanya Hunter outlined developments with regard to standardized exams, online exams, Compliance 365, and Attendance Guidelines. Tanya stated that the exams are all computer based, with one session being hours in length. The pass mark is 70%. The department is monitoring the pass fail rates. The fail rate is higher for distribution level 2 exams. Tanya stated that Compliance 365 is long overdue and reviewed the software/dashboard with the membership. She highlighted the fact that consent is required from operators so that the admin person can see accounts. Operators need to select supervisor on the software so that their application is pushed forward. The supervisor is notified to verify experience. Tanya thanked WNC, AWWOA, and the Utility Stakeholder Group for lobbying for automated changes. With regard to attendance guidelines, the attending operator must have at least small systems certification. Pen and pencil exams can be ordered at no charge. Attendance has been changed from once a month to once a week. The change was instituted because the certified operator is responsible for a reasonable number of facilities, the progression of responsibility is open with advancement through certification levels, and enables remote monitoring. Tanya said there was need to revisit the guidelines as they have not been reviewed for a decade. There was a need to create some boundaries when the certified operator needs to be on site. Sometimes certified operators would only be on site once a year. She noted that the new guidelines have not garnered too many complaints and are an achievable goal for smaller communities. Tanya described a certification advisory committee. It is a 12 member Minister appointed committee that provides guidance on policy issues. There is a formal process for applying. Tanya suggested to the agency board that one of the positions be reserved for a WNC member. Members would need to go through the screening process, and send a resume. The date to appoint would be the end of 2019. Tanya also mentioned that a five year certification program strategic plan will be distributed once finalized.

**Q&A:**

Question: Tanya asked the group what method of communication is preferable (letters or email). She referenced the fact that operator attendance letters were sent out January 1<sup>st</sup>, but some of the members indicated they did not receive them.

Answer: An email is preferable as the letter may not be sent to the right person.

Question: Are the exams professionally proctored?

Answer: Yes. There are five testing centres. Computer based testing occurs every two months starting in May. Notifications are sent through Compliance 365.

Question: How long are the exams good for?

Answer: Operators must renew every three years. If the certification is inactive, operators may be asked to rewrite. The recommendation is to write 2 exams once a month instead of four in one month.

Question: There are often challenges in travelling. Sometimes the 30 day window is challenging to meet as one is waiting for the board to get application approved.

Answer: Tanya said she will look into making communication better. There are no deadlines anymore. The committee meets six times a year. It would be helpful to find a college in Mackenzie and to put operators in contact with people there.

*Draft Minutes for Approval July 25th, 2019 Meeting*

Question: Does the committee approve CEUs six times a year?

Answer: Yes.

Question: With regard to approved testing centres, what about high school access?

Answer: The centre needs to be an approved testing site. Tanya to send Bob Marshall criteria to use for testing site as Tanya is open to more testing sites. Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche, Grande Prairie are all current northern testing sites. Grande Prairie does not have many seats. Members are asked to let Tanya know and she'll extend the window so that operators can get in and don't need to apply again.

Question: What if a supervisor is not an operator or not computer savvy? The operator has to walk them through Compliance 365 software.

Answer: Explain to your supervisors that they need to operate Compliance 365 as paper is no longer accepted.

Question: When should new operators sign up?

Answer: Anytime. Apply for exam/renewal and get training certifications in system first.

Question: What is relaxed with operator attendance guidelines?

Answer: No remote monitoring and the certified operator must be on site once a week as opposed to daily or five days/week.

Question: With regard to small systems, what is the process?

Answer: Six months of work experience, and completion of small systems water course through AWWOA. Bursaries are available for this course for communities with less than 5000 people. Discounts and entrance training bursaries are also available. There are more opportunities to take the course and AWWOA could send an instructor to the community.

Question: Could a plant have a supervising operator (not one person) Level 2 with Level 1. Level 2 would come in once a week, and any one of level 2 operators (not just one person).

Answer: Yes.

Question: What about water treatment/distribution?

Answer: Water distribution – yes. Wastewater, no.

Question: With respect to the advisory committee, would the WNC member serving be someone with operating/technical experience?

Answer: Yes – this is something to think about. We will send out more information when it is ready. The person will have to apply.

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

## **Subcommittee Updates**

### **Education and Awareness**

NADC is working on the Facebook page and the Twitter account is already made. Cost of water and conservation materials are underway. The WNC video is looking good. With regard to the guidelines for municipalities to obtain the true cost of water: Everyone's numbers would help with this task. The subcommittee is looking into hiring an intern to create the fact sheets and use their hours towards a degree. There is a desire not to duplicate but to enhance what is already there. A summer program to obtain youth and train them up is a good start. RV waste – looking into getting information on dump stations, as well as developing a fact sheet on grey water being as bad as black water.

### **Recruitment, Training, and Retention**

Training links will be on the website (Training in the North document). AWWOA bursaries – a link to this page would be helpful to have on website. The subcommittee is excited to have the Facebook page. Members are encouraged to send Sheila pictures of water/wastewater plants with the metadata stripped off said pictures for the Facebook page. With regard to the list of contractors, members are encouraged to forward any contractors they know of to Sheila. Overlaying the list of operators with the map of facilities is ongoing. The Mutual Aid templates will be loaded to the NADC website. With regard to peer cross training in the community to a neighbor facility, the subcommittee is working on presenting Alberta Environment a framework that includes what the information looks like and the knowledge gained.

### **Advocacy**

The subcommittee is seeking clarification from Alberta Environment and Parks with respect to water diversion licenses for truck fills. The policy appears to be applied inconsistently. A letter on this matter will be prepared for the next meeting. With regard to the inter-basin water transfer letter, it was felt that it would be best to delay drafting this letter until the government changeover has been completed. Clarification needs to be ascertained with the criteria for accepting and denying water transfer requests, and to prevent politicization of the issue. Efforts on recruiting more Indigenous representatives to WNC are underway. There was a suggestion to reach out to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada as a stakeholder. Highlights from the analysis of five questions sent out to the membership on stable, reliable funding for water and wastewater were summarized. There is a wide range of liability amounts over the next 10 years, with the average being 36.4 million. The issue will be a continued concern. Key issues for municipalities include a lack of adequate funding, increasing water and sewer rates and training and personnel. Grants criteria eligibility are exclusionary, with limitations on rural projects and the types of projects. Sewer/water/wastewater and lift station projects were among the many cited projects from respondents. Issues respondents want WNC to advocate for include funding, grant criteria, education on the availability of grants, changing legislation, and quality training. The subcommittee needs to determine the "asks" to craft some resolutions for RMA and AUMA. The profile of WNC is being raised by attending events such as RMA in March.



## *Draft Minutes for Approval July 25th, 2019 Meeting*

### **Next Meeting**

#### **Location and date of future meetings**

The next meeting will be held in Birch Hills County, specifically Kakut Lake on July 25<sup>th</sup>. The fall meeting will be hosted by Aquatera in Grande Prairie on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Hosts for next year have not been ascertained for meetings in 2020 (January, April, July, and October). Anyone interested in hosting should let Melonie know.

#### **Future agenda topics and upcoming presentations and potential exhibitions discussion**

An invitation has been sent to Alberta Health Services to deliver a presentation on bacteriological testing at the July 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Communications committee has approved a request to present from Associated Environmental. Any other ideas for presenters and trades shows for WNC to exhibit at should be forwarded to NADC.

### **Adjournment**

Moved by Randy Dupuis of the Town of Peace River to adjourn the meeting at 1:56pm.

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **Organizational Meeting**

#### **Non-Voting Memberships**

Melonie announced that members need to vote on Athabasca Watershed Council becoming a non-voting member of WNC.

Moved by Bob Buckle that Athabasca Watershed Council becomes a non-voting member of WNC.

**CARRIED**

Melonie announced that members need to vote on GSW Environmental (Taylor Rudrum) becoming a non-voting member of WNC. Grant Dixon added that Taylor works in Rycroft and Hythe and has been a remote operator for Aquatera.

Moved by Keith Straub that GSW Environmental (Taylor Rudrum) becomes a non-voting member of WNC.

**CARRIED**

#### **Vice-Chair Nomination**

Melonie explained that the adjusted Terms of Reference reflect a one year term for the Vice-Chair and a two year term for the Chair. A call for nominations will be conducted, and if there is more than one nomination, members will vote by secret ballot.

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

*Draft Minutes for Approval July 25th, 2019 Meeting*

Janice Reyda nominates Corinna Williams as Vice-Chair. Corinna Williams accepts the nomination. Second and third calls for nominations are made but none are put forward.

Bob Marshall moves that nominations for Vice-Chair have ceased at 2:00pm.

**CARRIED**