

Draft Minutes for Approval October 3rd, 2019 Meeting

Minutes
Water North Coalition (WNC)
Thursday, July 25th, 2019
Kakut Lake Resort, AB

Attendees

Bob Marshall – County of Grande Prairie
Murray Kerik – M.D. of Lesser Slave River
Ian Willier – Big Lakes 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
Travis Johnson – Athabasca County
Barry Schmidt – M.D. of Opportunity
Robin Guild – M.D. of Opportunity
John Moen – Saddle Hills County
Corinna Williams – Northern Sunrise County
Sterling Johnson – Lac La Biche
Brian Shapka – Lac La Biche
Nicole Obee - Aquatera
Dalen Peterson – County of Grande Prairie
Randy Dupuis – Town of Peace River
Dana Langer – Town of Peace River
Tom Burton – RMA
Jeff Johnston – Aquatera
Dion Hynes – Birch Hills County
Albert Poetker – Birch Hills County
Gerald Manzulenکو – Birch Hills County
Taylor Rudrum – GSWT Water and Environmental Inc.
Meghan Payne – Lesser Slave Watershed Council
Megan Mader – Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance
Isak Skjaveland – Town of Sexsmith
Diahann Potrebenko – Village of Rycroft
Anna Underwood – Town of Wembley
Wally Olorenshaw – Town of Rainbow Lake

Administration

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

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Presenter

Becky Devaleriola – Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)

Welcome, Introductions, and Housekeeping:

Chair Bob Marshall called the meeting to order at 10:14am and introduced Gerald Manzulenکو, Reeve of Birch Hills County.

Reeve Manzulenکو delivered greetings from Birch Hills County at 10:16am.

Review and Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes and Agenda

Adoption of Minutes of Wabasca, May 16th, 2019 meeting

Moved by John Moen of Saddle Hills County that the minutes be accepted at 10:17am.

MOTION CARRIED

Adoption of the Agenda

Moved by Diahann Potrebenکو of the Village of Rycroft to accept the agenda as presented at 10:18am.

MOTION CARRIED

Roundtable Introductions

Bob Marshall asked members at 10:19am to introduce themselves and to give an update on anything new going on in their communities with respect to water and wastewater.

Bob Buckle, City of Cold Lake/Chair of the Cold Lake Regional Utilities Commission – The City is halfway through the regional waterline project.

Tom Burton, M.D. of Greenview/District 4 RMA – The M.D. is incorporating the hamlet of Grande Cache. The water and wastewater infrastructure is more of a challenge than realized. There is a need to invest money into it, and to try to protect the water source (Victor Lake) from runoff that ends up in the lake. The M.D. is trying to solve filtration issues.

Terry Carbone, Birch Hills County – water, wastewater systems are aging.

Diahann Potrebenکو, Village of Rycroft – the village has had issues with water. In May, the water main failed and a state of emergency was declared, as there was no water for a week. Infrastructure is aging, and the village is working towards upgrades, and valves. Taylor Rudrum of GWST Water and Environmental Inc. helped with improving the situation.

Ian Willier, Big Lakes County – rural water expansion is on the books. It is shovel ready and waiting for funding. The County is commissioning Jousard water treatment plant next week.

Richard Simard, Big Lakes County – new plant going up shortly (Jousard).

Andy Trudeau, M.D. of Smoky River – two hamlets will have new lift stations installed. There are problems with pumps.

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Murray Kerik, M.D. of Lesser Slave River – commission of raw water intake line. There is a big water plant in Slave Lake, lift stations. The M.D. is still looking for a utility director.

Travaiz Johnson, Athabasca County – with regard to groundwater, Alberta Environment and Parks is checking cattle producers on the creek bed. The department appears to be taking water act seriously.

Wally Olorenshaw, Town of Rainbow Lake – installing 480 water meters (50 left). Environment Canada inspected water treatment plant and sewage. Planning a 10-year turnaround for water treatment. The plan is to overhaul water infrastructure (upgrades to cells, water valves). Using GIS/GPS mapping technology to determine what is in the ground and to do a forecast of maintenance. This technology will help with repairs.

John Moen, Saddle Hills County – there is a challenge with the gravelling program due to weather. Upgrades on the water plant in Woking are underway and the lift station is finished. There is a new fire hall in Woking now. Rain has put down crops.

Taylor Rudrum, GWST Water and Environmental Inc. – contract operations for First Nations, Rycroft, and small communities. Services include troubleshooting.

Jeff Johnston, Aquatera – July 1 – major project (lift station). Construction on water line to Wembley completed. Should have water in 10 days.

Corinna Williams, Northern Sunrise County – New clients are joining water company (500 residents and another company) and as a result, more water will be pumped. Brent Schapansky is feeling better.

Jennifer Besinger, County of Grande Prairie – Bringing on a new well in Bezanson, water treatment upgrade, and truck fill, as well as upgrades in La Glace. The Wembley regional water line should be completed in a couple weeks.

Dalen Peterson, County of Grande Prairie – construction of BEAST technology in Bezanson.

Business arising from previous minutes

Review of Action List

Melonie Doucette of the NADC reviewed the action list:

Under Ongoing items:

- Recruitment efforts - Letters of engagement and the WNC progress report were sent to all northern MLAs and relevant ministers, WNC members who were not attending meetings and members who were on WNC but have resigned. Next steps include sending letters of engagement to communities within the NADC boundary that are not part of WNC. The advocacy subcommittee will discuss recruitment efforts with regard to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit representatives.
- Bacteriological testing/Ministry of Health – an invitation was sent to the Ministry of Health to present at WNC. The Ministry of Health sent a response last week that indicated consideration

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of presenting in the fall. The Ministry of Health also stated that water results might be moved from the Provincial Lab to Alberta Environment and Parks.

- Social Media – A Twitter account and a Facebook page have been created for WNC. The Facebook page is linked to the NADC profile. After this meeting, the NADC page will no longer be used to share WNC news and updates. Members are encouraged to like and share the Twitter and Facebook handles/pages with others. A communications meeting is scheduled to determine how WNC shares news on the social media accounts as the NADC receives many water-related posts.

Under New items:

- Tanya Hunter (AEP Advisory Committee) – Tanya Hunter indicated at the last meeting that a space on the Alberta Environment and Parks Advisory Committee will be reserved for a WNC member. The process of how this committee will work is still ongoing. Tanya Hunter will be in touch once the process is worked out. Bob Marshall pointed out that the member who would sit on this committee would be a technical person.
- Progress report – this report has been emailed to the coalition, has been shared on the Facebook and Twitter pages, and is available on the NADC website.
- WNC Promotional video – Corinna Williams offered to provide the voice-over for the WNC video. The video has been completed with Corinna's voice-over but there are technical issues in sending it out. Until the video with Corinna's voice-over is uploaded, the video with Sheila's voice is still relevant and will be shared on social media.

Under Operational items:

- The WNC has two new non-voting members.
- The operational documents include new members and the appointment of the new Vice-Chair.
- Alternative Land Use Services will be presenting at today's meeting.

New Business and Updates

Bob Marshall noted that Hythe has a new CAO and council. Bob stated he presented on WNC and shared WNC documents, and is hopeful Hythe will re-engage with WNC.

Bob Marshall also mentioned he attended a Utility Stakeholder Group meeting, which had Epcor, and representatives from Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Red Deer attending. Tanya Hunter of Alberta Environment and Parks also attended and mentioned that if a person is training at Northern Lakes College or NAIT to attain Level 1 and they can't write the exam, it really isn't a selling tool to take such training. As of January 1, Tanya stated the department will be allowing people to challenge level 1 exams. It will not mean the person will be certified (as they still need experience), but they can take the exam, which could help people when they go to municipalities as it shows they have the ability.

Tom Burton asked if transferring the issue of bacteriological testing from the Ministry of Health to Alberta Environment and Parks would solve the problem. Bob Marshall indicated there are a number of Ministries that deal with water/wastewater (Health, Transportation, Environment and Parks). He stated that transferring the issue from Health to Environment and Parks might be a good outcome. Melonie indicated that the communication from the Ministry of Health was very recent, that the Ministry will be working on details in the summer, and plans on getting back to WNC in the fall.

Welcome New Members

Bob Marshall indicated that Tracey Anderson of Aquatera has moved to B.C. Nicole Obee and Jeff Johnston of Aquatera are new members. Reuel Thomas of Portage College has moved on and Al Bertschi is the new representative for Portage College. Janet Pomeroy of the Athabasca Watershed Council and Taylor Rudrum of GWST Water and Environmental are also new members to WNC.

Operator Attendance Requirements and Certification Letter to Alberta Environment and Parks

Jennifer Besinger stated that a letter to Alberta Environment and Parks has been drafted suggesting two options to help northern operators attain experience in a timely manner. The first option is a training center in the north, where a neighbor could receive training. Training in other facilities is often more valuable than book learning. Tanya Hunter of Alberta Environment and Parks indicated at the last meeting that the department is interested in working on a program for peer training to attain experience to move up a level, but not to attain CEUs (continuing education credits). The second option involves operators-in-training that have attended NAIT or Northern Lakes College and to recognize experience (practicum program) as sufficient in attaining certification. Tom asked for clarification with regard to whether there was two letters or one. Bob stated one letter, two options. Sterling Johnson suggested that Jennifer check with Portage College as they are trying to get funding for a functioning lab with water treatment within the College. Bob Marshall stated the letter tries to get such an option recognized. Jennifer indicated that she has the information regarding Portage College and pointed out that such training would not be recognized as experience from a visiting neighbour. Jennifer also added that peer cross training would be useful for emergency planning.

Moved by Diahann Potrebenko of the Village of Rycroft to forward the letter to Alberta Environment and Parks as presented at 10:50am.

MOTION CARRIED

Presentation: Becky Devaleriola, Northern Sunrise County, Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Coordinator

Becky Devaleriola's presentation outlined the aim of Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS), which is to partner with producers to improve air and water quality, and biodiversity. She highlighted a success story in improving water quality results in the Heart River in Northern Sunrise County over the last decade. There are 14 municipalities in Alberta that have signed on with ALUS, with three in the north: Northern Sunrise County, Big Lakes County, and the M.D. of Greenview. Ms. Devaleriola summarized the outreach that takes place, the project proposal and review process, project establishment, monitoring, and payments and verification process that take place. She also pointed out the importance of ALUS' partners to tap into resources.

Q&A:

Question: The partnership between agencies and municipalities – what portion of money do municipalities pay?

Answer: The money from the municipality pays for her salary. ALUS pays 50% of her salary – but out of that amount, only 15% is designated for administration.

Subcommittee Updates

Education and Awareness

The subcommittee revisited target audiences and determined that there are internal (members), members' organizations and their staff (employees), and external (the general public – ratepayers). Social media was considered a good tool for the public and the subcommittee suggested that the appeal to members to like/follow/ the accounts and share news items be sent out to the coalition again. The subcommittee also suggested that the resource library be used to create social media posts to like/share. There was also the suggestion for NADC to add WNC members as administrators of the social media accounts. With regard to the cost of water, the subcommittee determined that it is unable to do an effective job in determining such costs, as any given place will have a different cost associated with it. The video from the Alliance for Water Efficiency on the cost of water should be shared, as there is no easy way for municipalities to determine the cost of water. A system or water audit was suggested where municipalities can put dollar values in via a template. More work and exploration on this idea is required. The subcommittee also suggested that emails be sent to the communications staff in municipalities containing short information releases on water news. Communications staff could put such news in the next mail out, or newsletter. Topics could include runoff, road salt, fertilizer use, camper dumping. These releases could occur 4-6 times a year with WNC members giving the releases to communications people in municipalities, with the municipality disseminating the information to ratepayers. The path would be: subcommittee to WNC, to members, to communications staff in municipalities, to ratepayers. There is a need for literacy on septic sense. The subcommittee suggested finding the provincial contact with members holding workshops, and partnering with watershed councils.

Recruitment, Training, and Retention

The subcommittee revisited their work plan and determined where efforts will be focused. In the area of recruitment, there was discussion on creating a water and wastewater operator career package and bringing it to the schools. It would also be beneficial to bring students to career fairs and to have this information available at such fairs. The package would only be useful if an opportunity to work at a water/wastewater plant was offered throughout the summer. There was a discussion on how to get operators to other plants as everyone needs their own. The subcommittee decided to draft a letter to municipalities referencing the Inter-municipal Collaboration Framework (ICF).

Advocacy

The subcommittee is waiting for more information on the water diversion licenses issue. Mackenzie County had mentioned it was required to get another license for a truck fill station that used the same water source. Once the subcommittee receives a written response from the Ministry to Mackenzie County, a letter may be sent to the Ministry. The City of Cold Lake is drafting a letter using City of Cold Lake letterhead seeking clarity on exemptions by cabinet on inter-basin water transfers. There have been four cases in Cold Lake alone. There is a need to revisit this legislation. The resolution to AUMA and RMA for reliable, stable funding for water and wastewater will likely be brought forward in March. The fall may be too soon to distill questions from the research conducted in the spring. The aim is to bring the same resolution to both AUMA and RMA. Recruitment efforts are ongoing. There is a desire to have more government representatives attending meetings, as there may be more municipal interest

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if they attend. There was also the suggestion to include Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada on WNC as having a representative from INAC may result in a better response from First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities. AUMA and RMA conventions are coming up in the fall. Members will be provided a key messages document so that if members meet Minister at these events, they will know what to communicate depending on the Minister.

Next Meeting

Location and date of future meetings

The next meeting is October 3, 2019 in Grande Prairie. Aquatera is hosting. Volunteers for hosting are needed for the January, April, July, and October meetings in 2020. Municipalities interested in hosting, should take turns, East to West. If interested, please let Melonie or Bob know. John Moen of Saddle Hills County indicated interest in hosting a meeting in 2020. Melonie to follow up. Members are also encouraged to RSVP to NADC so that a proper head count can be given to the host community.

Future agenda topics, upcoming presentations, and potential exhibitions discussion

Associated Engineering will be presenting at the meeting in October in Grande Prairie. Members are encouraged to think of challenges in their own municipalities or topics discussed from past presentations so that an invitation can be sent to the presenter to provide updates. Meghan suggested that more updates be given from Government of Alberta ministries (Alberta Health, Environment and Parks). Both Tanya Hunter and Okey Obiajulu of Environment and Parks have presented to WNC. The budget may be a good time to provide updates from the Government of Alberta. Melonie indicated other presenters and suggestions have been put forward but have not yet been confirmed. A BEAST update could be scheduled for October 2020. With regard to upcoming potential exhibitions, members are encouraged to let NADC know.

Adjournment

Moved by Corinna Williams of Northern Sunrise County to adjourn the meeting at 2:01pm.

MOTION CARRIED