

Draft Minutes for Approval May 21, 2020 Meeting

Minutes
Water North Coalition (WNC)
May 21, 2020 10am-12pm
Video conference

Attendees

Bob Marshall – County of Grande Prairie
Grant Dixon – Advanced Technology Applications (ATAP)
Kristen Andersen – Associated Environmental
Tanya Hunter – Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP)
Vernice Bello – Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP)
Dan Rites - Alberta Water and Wastewater Operators Association (AWWOA)
Jamie Giberson – Aspen Regional Water Service
Richard Simard – Big Lakes County
Jennifer Besigner – County of Grande Prairie
Dalen Peterson – County of Grande Prairie
Sterling Johnson – Lac La Biche County
Jason Stedman – Lac La Biche County
Shawn Acton – M.D. of Greenview
Robin Guild – M.D. of Opportunity
Janice Reyda – M.D. of Peace
Andre Trudeau – M.D. of Smoky River No. 130
Eric Jorgenson – Mackenzie County
Adam Norris – Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance
Gaylene Whitehead – Northern Sunrise County
Chris Montgomery Hewett – Northern Lakes College
Brian Springer – Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
Colleen Sklapsky – Town of Grimshaw
Keith Straub – Town of High Level
Randy Dupuis – Town of Peace River
Kate Potter – Town of Sexsmith

Administration

Kim Pinnock, NADC, Manager
Melonie Doucette, NADC Senior Northern Development Officer
Lisa Williams, NADC, Administrative Assistant

Welcome, Attendance, and Information from Members

Chair Bob Marshall called the meeting to order at 10:03AM.

Review and Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes and Agenda

Adoption of Minutes of the January 16, 2020 teleconference meeting

Moved by Shawn Acton M.D. of Greenview that the minutes be accepted.

MOTION CARRIED

Draft Minutes for Approval May 21, 2020 Meeting

Adoption of the Agenda

Moved by Gaylene Whitehead of Northern Sunrise County to accept the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Attendance/Roundtable

Grant Dixon – Advanced Technology Applications (ATAP) – Stressful up north due to flooding. There is certification training online and information is in the meeting package.

Tanya Hunter/Vernice Bello – Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) – AEP updates will be provided further in the agenda.

Dan Rites - Alberta Water and Wastewater Operators Association (AWWOA) – Online training is available for operators. AWWOA has been working with ATAP and EPCOR.

Jamie Giberson – Aspen Regional Water Service – Nothing to report.

Richard Simard – Big Lakes County – New water treatment plant in Jousard is operational and working well.

Jennifer Besigner – County of Grande Prairie – Flooding affected both lift stations and water treatment plant. Lift did not overflow, but it was tight times. Power out at Tepee Creek. New water treatment plant in Bezanson. The Fire hall will be hooked up. Moving forward to adding services in La Glace. The emergency planning documents from AEP were very helpful. COVID changed processes.

Dalen Peterson – County of Grande Prairie – Nothing to report

Sterling Johnson – Lac La Biche County – Have been working on a backlog of small projects to get things done. Getting locals working on small projects to help our community and stimulate local economy. Working on roads and a Telus project.

Question: Bob Marshall (Chair) – At the last meeting you had issues with your treatment plant can you give an update on that?

Jason Stedman – Lac La Biche County – One side of the water treatment plant was impacted, the failure resulted from a construction deficiency on that wall. We will have to wait and see if the same deficiency effected the other side. We can provide an update at the next meeting on the other side. As Sterling mentioned we do have fibre optic going to every house and subdivision.

Shawn Acton – M.D. of Greenview – Major flooding in Grovedale. One lift station had high water.

Robin Guild – M.D. of Opportunity – Nothing to report

Janice Reyda – M.D. of Peace – Nothing to report

Andre Trudeau – M.D. of Smoky River No. 130 – Trying to get federal and provincial funding for water expansion.

Draft Minutes for Approval May 21, 2020 Meeting

Eric Jorgenson – Mackenzie County – Fort Vermilion had a boil water advisory. Found a 6” pipeline established in 2010 between La Crete and Fort Vermilion, to share water. Settling ponds were not effected by the flood. Water plant did get flooded and caused contamination in water. Garden River was evacuated and lots of people are still in hotels. Applying for DRP (Disaster Relief Program) funding. Pumping out lift station, houses were being emptied. Fred Weibb is DEM and he heard that in the 2018 flood river monitoring units were damaged. It is important that we gather all the information we can from history and monitors to help with planning.

Adam Norris – Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance – Working on source water protection plans, to get the best quality of water to the plants. Wapiti source water plan under development. Several communities have been on our radar for flood mitigation.

Gaylene Whitehead – Northern Sunrise County – Lots of conference calls including the town hall meeting. We need to keep updated. Learn from the past. Lock downs and curfews to try to prevent the virus.

Chris Montgomery Hewett – Northern Lakes College (NLC) – Working with ATAP to get some extra training on line. Face to face has been canceled, looking to have more online courses while people are at home. Lynn Panasiuk will be attending WNC moving forward, and will share her contact information.

Brian Springer – Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – first time at WNC and is the new representative for RMWB. Still in recovery mode from the flood. Complete system wide flushing. Waiting on confirmation of bacteriological testing results before moving on to next stage of water recovery. Boil water advisory is in effect and will be lifted in stages, the priority is the hospital and lower town site.

Colleen Sklapsky – Town of Grimshaw – Managing COVID well, divided shifts for treatment. Trying to get a second operator trained up. Doing upgrades this summer and the regular water main came in underpriced so happy about that.

Keith Straub – Town of High Level – Will need to update the contact on file for the CAO. Busy with carry over projects, gravity sewer extension. Regional water main to move to Dene First Nations entered into an agreement, RTP for treatment. Footner Lake study, discussing issues with hydrometric measures. We are doing a chlorine oxide manganese trial. New hydro excavator on order. We have been holding off on our tenders.

Randy Dupuis – Town of Peace River – Made it through Spring break up, with no hiccups, except Pat’s Creek’s backed up for the second time in eight years due to ice/log jam. Damage was mitigated. New replacement reservoir in June. The old one was built in 1940.

Kate Potter – Town of Sexsmith – Concern at one lift station because of creek flooding. We did have Aquatera come in for the whole event because of concerns with the water flow. Advocating for Federal funding for storm water masterplan. To address areas in and around the town to mitigate floods in the future.

Question: Bob Marshall (Chair) – Mighty Peace Water have any information?

Draft Minutes for Approval May 21, 2020 Meeting

Adam Norris – General information on that area. Happy to share what we have.

Melonie Doucette - Brent Schapansky from the Northern Sunrise County had emailed an agenda item from NSC. Add to the agenda for the next meeting.

Question: Bob Marshall (Chair) – This is one of the issues we have been talking about with Alberta Health Services (AHS). Has COVID hampered testing and couriers?

Northern municipalities have courier service three days a week to Edmonton. We need more pick-ups. Often have issues with couriers getting there late or frozen upon arrival. Has anyone up north had more issues since the pandemic?

Keith Straub - No real issues because of COVID.

Bob Marshall – Northern Sunrise County must be having further issues with this. We have followed up and are working with AHS, but that has slowed down. Forward the email to Tanya Hunter, she will get it to the appropriate person for input or to address issues.

Business arising from previous minutes

Review of Action List

Melonie Doucette of the NADC reviewed the action list:

Under Ongoing items:

- We are following up on presentations. We want to follow up with Alberta Health. We have AEP on the line today. Waste Go wanted to delay their presentation to a face-to-face meeting.
- The next two items are to develop a brainstorming session to generate ideas for presentations on topics of interest to members and to conduct a review of the strategic plan (and subcommittee work plan. These items will be covered when we talk about the sub committees.

Under New items:

- Debrief of Teleconference – How did members feel how it went and going forward (after COVID) if they would like to continue having a teleconference for the winter month meeting.
 - Bob Marshall - I have 4 or 5 different apps on my computer, looking for feedback on video or teleconferencing.
 - Keith Straub – January meeting was good. I like going out to the communities but I would like not to have to drive in the winter.
 - Colleen Sklapsky – Either format is fine.
 - Adam Norris – Video is better with presentations.
 - Bob Marshall – Winter is better for video, the other three can be face-to face.
 - Eric Jorgenson – More interaction, face-to-face.
 - Jennifer Besinger – Likes video, it is easier to follow presentations.
 - Shawn Acton – No travelling in the winter.
 - Robin Guild – No winter driving.
 - Gaylene Whitehead – Spring, summer and fall meetings in person.
- The feedback is in wintertime to have a video conference and have regular meetings in spring, summer and fall.
- Thank you Grant for setting up this conference.
- Send non-voting membership to Kristen Anderson Associated Environmental (AE) – Complete, she will provide an update later in the agenda.
- Certification and lead guidelines – Complete

Draft Minutes for Approval May 21, 2020 Meeting

- Update membership list – Complete

Under Operational items:

- Call for vice-chairs for each of the three subcommittees (Recruitment, Training and Retention Vice-Chair position filled) – still looking for the Advocacy subcommittee.

AEP Certification Advisory Committee WNC member

AEP reached out, the committee was short one member and wanted representation from WNC. We had two applications and Keith Straub is our representative.

RMA/AUMA Resolution Update

RMA was canceled but we did have the resolution session at the end of April on line. The resolution was passed with an amendment. The amendment to the resolution was to include water partners and coops. Passed 97%. WNC will lobby RMA to bring that forward.

Wetland Restoration Funding Update

Kristen Anderson provided an update on the benefits for source water protection, wetlands. In the past we have talked about wetland protection and where funding may be available. ICIP's in the last year of funding. New opportunity for AEP wetland replacement program. 2015 wetland policy was updated. Ducks unlimited collected funds and there is millions of dollars available. AEP currently working with four municipalities to restore and reconstruct wetlands, which allows local municipalities to address local priorities. Webinars are available for further discussion.

Eric Jorgenson – Sees areas where this information would be useful up north. Eric will reach out for more information.

Bob Marshall - A list of funding?

Kristen Anderson – It was a list of grants available.

Tricia Fleming – Who should we contact if we want more training in wetland restoration?

Kristen Anderson – Reach out to me and we can do a webinar presentation.

Share Kristen Anderson information:

andersonk@ae.ca

780-446-5803

Update from Alberta Environment and Parks

Tanya Hunter provided an update on the November 4th letter. Response to the request from the education committee. AEP met and reviewed the request and sent a letter.

Tanya read the letter; posted on WNC's google drive. AEP has posted a bulletin on our webpage regarding certifications and COVID.

Information on certification included here:

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/5d3b894e-9aad-4be8-9a1e-d9619a34b80b/resource/30d0a775-ab08-450d-ab14-a0a3974f0fa6/download/aep-certification-bulletin-covid-19-water-wastewater-operator-updates-2020-05.pdf>

We will be providing discipline specific training examples for renewals a little later this fall (post on our webpage and hope to be able to provide a presentation on this to the WNC in person – fall meeting, time permitting if wanted by group).

Draft Minutes for Approval May 21, 2020 Meeting

Vernice Bello – Not collecting renewal fees, they have been deferred to January. Training providers on line. We are processing exams, but we are backlogged as testing centers are closed, except the one in Calgary. Equipment and safety measures are in place due to COVID at the Calgary office and operators said they felt safe. We will continue to extend the exam window until people have a chance to get caught up. AEP added these updates to our website and we will email operators next week.

Tanya Hunter – Keith Straub's appointment to the Certification Advisory Committee will hopefully be signed off by the end of July. The next meeting will be September 2.

AEP would still like to do a presentation on the new Lead sampling program –possibly this fall as well.

Thank you to everyone who was involved in answering survey questions during the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic so AEP could update a tracker tool to determine the status of all the systems across the province.

New Business and Updates

Annual Progress Report

NADC completed the annual progress report and it was included in the package, please share with the organizations.

The Communications Committee discussed going to three quarterly and one annual progress report in March to keep everyone updated.

Subcommittee Update: Review of Work Plan, Presentation Topics and Meeting Status

Refers back to the action list. Met with the subcommittee chairs. In light of COVID and not being able to meet in person we will move forward with video conferencing. Melonie will do a call out to see if anyone is interested in being on one of the subcommittees.

Doing a review of the work plan, some of the items have been completed or other priorities have come up. When the subcommittees meet, they will discuss the work plans and come up with a list of different presentation topics.

Subcommittee Updates

Advocacy:

Melonie provided an update for this subcommittee group. WNC has been working on a letter with Mackenzie County on interpretation water act. Fred has been working on this, so it may be delayed. Truck fills and water diversion source; Eric stated that when pumping up La Crete and filling up a truck, there is a lot of paper work. When one municipality transfers to another one. The county has to report the diversion, seems like a red tape issue. Inter-basin water transfer letter regarding Cold Lake, no response received to date. WNC will continue to support Cold Lake with this ongoing issue. Recruitment and Indigenous representation in WNC has been postponed because of COVID, will connect after COVID. Bob Marshall (Chair) had already updated the Coalition on the last item of AUMA and RMA resolution for stable and reliable funding.

Recruitment, Training, and Retention

Draft Minutes for Approval May 21, 2020 Meeting

Jennifer Besinger stated that the subcommittee is connecting with stakeholders for training high school students. Five year strategic plan on certificates and training required. Working with AEP to get information to operators on what is required. Looking for funding opportunities for students and wanting to bring in the Advocacy committee for support. Developing a letter that will be sent out to municipalities to share for operator guidelines and resources. Alberta Public Works Association has a list of operators across the Province and we will look into accessing this information. Operator certificate proposal, trying to attract local residents. Develop regional operator relief pool. Certificate needed, but need experience to get hired, can't get experience when you can't get hired, it is the chicken and egg scenario. ATAP and AWWOA has online training as well as the colleges – information on this is also included in the meeting package.

Education and Awareness

Melonie provided an update of the activities of this subcommittee. Trade shows and conferences have been canceled for the rest of the year. We are looking for other ways to engage the public. Cost of water model, still a work in progress, very complex. Aquatera is producing these fact sheets and would like to work on an ongoing template. Brainstorming session coming up will offer an opportunity to provide input. There are four fact sheets on google drive to share out.

Next Meeting

Location and date of future meetings

Bob informed the group that meetings for the rest of the year will be video conferencing and subcommittees will continue to meet via videoconferencing. The next WNC meeting will be held in August. If things open up in the fall, we can reevaluate for the November meeting. Bob thanked the communities for offering to host in person.

Future agenda topics, upcoming presentations, and potential exhibitions discussion

Subcommittees will work on presentation items and what can be done through video conferencing. The WNC will be looking at other ways to engage the public. If you have something, you would like to discuss or a topic please forward it on to Melonie.

Dan Rites – If any of the communities had operators in Banff for training and they missed Friday because it was canceled due to COVID. They will have point 3 CU's missing, they will be offered free of charge.

Please take a closer look at your roundtable discussion and minutes. Members are encouraged to send in their written update to our NADC staff.

Stay safe

Adjournment:

Moved by Keith Straub – Town of High Level at 11:55am to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION CARRIED