Water for 2060 Advisory Council

DRAFT Minutes of Second Meeting, 1:00 P.M., November 19, 2013

OWRB Board Room, 3800 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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ATTENDEES:

***Advisory Council Members and representation (from Sign In and/or Introductions)*:**

Lauren Brookey, Tulsa Municipal Utility Auth.
Tom Buchanan, Lugert-Altus Irrig. Dist. (Altus)
Bob Drake, Agriculture (Davis)
Danny Galloway, City of Stillwater
Roger Griffin, Weyerhaeuser, (Broken Bow)
Charlette Hearne, Oklahomans for Responsible Water Policy (Broken Bow)
Mark Helm, Dolese (Oklahoma City)
Phil Richardson, Agriculture (Minco)
Trent Smith, Small Business (Choctaw)
Kevin Smith, Ward Petroleum (Enid)
J. D. Strong, Chair, Oklahoma Water Resources Board (Oklahoma City)
Joe Taron, Pottawatomie County Development Authority (Shawnee)
Jerry Wiebe, Oklahoma Panhandle Agriculture & Irrigation (Hooker)

***OWRB Staff and Consultants*:**

Mary Schooley, OWRB
Owen Mills, OWRB
Darla Whitley, OWRB
Brian Vance, OWRB
Julie Cunningham, OWRB
Ed Fite, OWRB Board Member
Terri Sparks, OWRB
John Rehring, Carollo Engineers
Bryan Mitchell, CH2M Hill

Speakers:

Kris Neifing, City of Edmond
Murali Katta, City of Enid
Afsaneh Jabbar, City of Lawton
Ken Komiske, City of Norman
Shawn Lepard, representing City of Guymon
Jimmy Seago, Osage County RWD #15
Collins Balcombe, Bureau of Reclamation
James Gammill, Oklahoma Rural Water Assoc.
Joe Freeman, OWRB
Jennifer Wasinger, OWRB

***Others*:**

Josh McClintock, Creative Capitol Strategies
Mike Mathis

Introductions and Goals for Today

Mr. J.D. Strong, OWRB Executive Director and Advisory Council Chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees, providing a brief background of the Council's responsibilities and goals, and an overview of the discussion from the first Water for 2060 Advisory Council meeting held in August 2013. Mr. Strong then asked the Council members and attendees to introduce themselves. Mr. John Rehring facilitated the meeting. He reviewed the agenda and logistics for the meeting, noting that the primary goal for today's meeting was to gain insights and ideas from public water suppliers (both municipal and rural water districts) regarding water efficiency practices across Oklahoma, programs already in place that help support water efficiency in the public water supply sector, and the types of activities and incentives that would be most useful to public water suppliers.

Existing Practices and Programs in Conservation and Reuse

Several speakers were invited to participate in the meeting, starting with public water suppliers that provided insights on the following:

- Existing conservation/reuse practices: What's working for you now?
- Current incentives/disincentives for water-efficient practices and education programs
- Additional conservation: What's holding you back?

The six public water supply representatives included:

- Mr. Kris Neifing, City of Edmond
- Mr. Murali Katta, City of Enid
- Ms. Afsaneh Jabbar, City of Lawton
- Mr. Ken Komiske, City of Norman
- Mr. Shawn Lepard, on behalf of the City of Guymon
- Jimmy Seago, Osage County Rural Water District #15

The presentations and related discussions resulted in the following lists of opportunities for water efficiency as well as constraints/obstacles:

Opportunities

- Education about the value of water
- State-led public outreach programs
- Use of high efficiency fixtures
- Indirect potable reuse (IPR) incentives
- Direct potable reuse (DPR) opportunities
- Additional non-potable reuse
- Water loss repair through capital improvement plans (CIPs) and/or sales tax funding
- Repair of distribution lines
- Replacing old lines
- Meter replacement
- Conversion to non-potable sources
- Conservation rate structures/billing systems
- Irrigation/ ordinances
- Legislative appropriations (financial incentives)
- Hydraulic analyses for water loss
- Rebates for high-efficiency fixtures
- Rewards for finding/reporting leaks
- Improved accounting for leaks, fire use, and other non-revenue water
- Regionalization/consolidation

Constraints

- Cost of infrastructure for reuse
- Willingness to pay, recognition of the value of water
- Lack of support for any mandates tied to state funding (e.g., requirement for an approved conservation plan)
- Impacts of reuse on downstream users
- Performance of high efficiency fixtures
- Revenue implications of reduced use
- Priorities for funding "optional" reuse projects vs. basic minimum requirements
- Lack of mechanisms for regional funding
- Water rights forfeiture laws (use it or lose it disincentive)
- Objection to statewide tap fees to generate funding
- Geographic constraints to regionalization
- Regulations for household gray water reuse

Next, invited speakers provided an overview of existing programs that are available to assist public water suppliers implement water efficiency projects and programs.

Collins Balcombe, Bureau of Reclamation, gave a PowerPoint presentation on Reclamation's WaterSmart grants, and focused on a new authority under their Water and Energy Efficiency Grants—"On-The-Ground Conservation and Efficiency Projects." Access to the grants, eligibility and types of projects allowed are summarized in the PowerPoint presentation accessible on the OWRB's Water for 2060 website: http://www.owrb.ok.gov/supply/2060council/BalcombeUSBR_11-19-13.pdf.

James Gammill, Oklahoma Rural Water Association, talked about programs they have to assist small communities and rural water districts. He noted that they have 11 "circuit riders" in the field providing water, wastewater and source water assistance. Staff helps check meters for accuracy and can get a good indication of water loss by looking at the amount of water that is withdrawn or otherwise taken into the system vs. amount of water sold. They have several methods to try and isolate leaks, which employ different methods of varying degree of difficulty. He emphasized that many systems have miles of lines in rural areas, with one person in the office and one person out in the field, making it very difficult to quickly locate system leaks. The Oklahoma Rural Water Association is able to provide assistance to these systems free of charge. The Association also provides water and wastewater certification training for system operators and Board Member training.

Joe Freeman and Jennifer Wasinger, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, provided an overview of loan and grant programs administered through the Water Board and the Drinking Water SRF which is jointly administered between OWRB and ODEQ. It was noted that some of these programs have provisions applicable to water conservation, water reuse and regionalization projects. A brief introduction to management tools available for water and/or wastewater system operations was also given. Additional information is included in the PowerPoint presentation available on OWRB's website: http://www.owrb.ok.gov/supply/2060council/Freeman-WasingerOWRB_11-19-13.pdf.

The speakers each answered questions from the Advisory Council and other meeting participants through the course of their presentations.

Brainstorming: Incentives and Education Programs

Mr. Rehring then encouraged the group to identify key areas for which public water supply efficiency incentives could be developed, drawing on the information presented and discussed earlier in the meeting. Among the focus areas and concepts discussed were:

- Non-revenue Water Reduction
    - Prepare and distribute a "best practices" manual for reducing non-revenue water
    - Identify leak detection methods and document examples of return on the investment made in identifying/repairing leaks
    - Increase awareness of ORWA field services
    - Identify water loss audit methods (e.g., free audit software at http://www.awwa.org/resources-tools/water-knowledge/water-loss-control.aspx) and increase awareness/use thereof

- Public Outreach
    - Public outreach and education materials; focus on schools
    - Promote the Water's Worth It campaign (see http://www.waters-worth-it.org/) or similar initiatives
    - Proclamation for Water Awareness Month
    - Establish a state-level recognition program for water-efficient communities
    - Develop a model web page for public awareness of water source (conservation tips, lake levels, groundwater levels, etc.)
    - Education needs to be diverse to target specific motivations to save, i.e. avoidance of penalties, scare water supply, reuse to resolve discharge limitations, etc.

- Funding/Monetary Incentives
    - Dedicated water conservation fund
    - Penalties for wasting water, awards for identifying leaks
    - Conservation-based pricing (e.g., increasing block rate structure): provide examples

The group discussed each of these items, with certain pros and cons for each. One Advisory Council member inquired about the relative cost-effectiveness of each item (e.g., dollars spent per unit of water conserved), as one way of potentially ranking the options for further consideration. The group also discussed how "one size won't fit all," and that public water suppliers need a portfolio or "toolbox" of efficiency practices and programs to choose from, as appropriate to suit their individual systems and customers. Finally, the group discussed how there are many additional measures that could be considered by the Advisory Council, but time did not allow full discussion of all topics and incentives at this meeting. OWRB noted that the next Advisory Council meeting will focus on the Crop Irrigation water use sector, following a similar pattern as today's workshop. The meeting after that may be a good time to summarize ideas discussed at the public water supply and crop irrigation meeting.

Next Steps and Group Resources

Following a schedule of holding Advisory Council meetings approximately once per quarter, the Crop Irrigation meeting may be scheduled to coincide with the February 18, 2014 OWRB Board Meeting. OWRB will firm up the date and send confirmation to the Council members. OWRB will also develop an agenda for that meeting and circulate it in advance.

Additional pertinent information will be e-mailed to the Advisory Council members and/or placed on the Water for 2060 Website (http://www.owrb.ok.gov/supply/conservation.php) as it becomes available.