

*MINUTES*

*CAPITAL AREA GROUND WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION*

*December 9, 2014*

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The Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission met at 9:30 a.m. on December 9, 2014 in the U.S. Geological Survey conference room at 3535 S. Sherwood Forest Blvd., Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Dennis McGehee.

The following members were present: Ronnie Albritton, Trey Argrave, Dale Aucoin, Brian Chustz, Johan Forsman, Russell Hicks, Barry Huggins, John Jennings, Amelia Kent, Dennis McGehee, Matthew Reonas, Dan Tomaszewski, and John Westra.

Others attending the meeting were: Anthony Duplechin and Shawn Scallan, Capital Area Ground Water Conservation District; Joey Hebert, Georgia-Pacific; Don Dial, former CAGWCD Director, Megan Terrell, La. Attorney General's Office; Dr. Frank Tsai, LSU; Nelson Morvant, Entergy, Jeff Miller, Baton Rouge Water Company; Clark Vega, Harris, DeVille & Associates, Sayi Malineni, Environmental & Energy Professional; and Mark Walton, former Commissioner.

Mr. Jennings made a motion that the minutes of the September 16, 2014 meeting be approved. Ms. Kent seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**I. Report from the Administrative Committee**

At the request of the Chairman, Dennis McGehee, Ms. Amelia Kent reported on the meeting that was held December 9, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. Following is a summary of items discussed at the meeting and further discussion and action at the regular Commission meeting at 9:30 a.m.

1. Copies of the Financial Conditions as of November 30, 2014 were distributed for review and comment. Ms. Kent stated that the funding for Dr. Tsai's project was discussed. The funding will need to be in the next fiscal year's budget, 2015-2016. The Commission's share of the project will be \$5,000 per year for the next three years.

2. Ms. Kent reported that the Commission currently has a contract with Mr. Robert Schmidt, Adams & Reese, to establish a trust fund for postemployment health benefits. The contract will expire on January 31, 2015. Mr. Schmidt discussed with the Administrative Committee an overview of the trust fund. The Commissioners were emailed copies of a draft of the trust agreement for funded retiree health benefits for the employees of the Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission. Ms. Kent urged the Commissioners to review the draft.

Mr. Schmidt discussed the structure of the fund and how it effects the Commission. Mr. Schmidt suggested a VEBA (voluntary employee beneficiary association) trust fund. This fund must be for the exclusive benefits of employees of the employer, it must be limited to the payment of certain expenses, including medical expenses; and the funds cannot revert to the employer.

Upon Mr. Schmidt's recommendation, Mr. Huggins made a motion to request a formal legal opinion from the Attorney General's office as to whether the Commission can enter into a trust agreement for funded retiree health care benefits. Mr. Jennings seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. It was also noted that Mr. Schmidt's contract will expire on January 31, 2015. Megan Terrell stated that because of the holidays she did not think that there would be enough time to complete the work by the end of January. Therefore, Mr. Aucoin made a motion to extend Mr. Schmidt's contract through June 30, 2015. Mr. Huggins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3. Ms. Kent reported that Bill Gaines, CPA, gave a presentation to the Administrative Committee on the Commission's financial statements as of June 30, 2014. Mr. Gaines had no concerns. The Commissioners were given copies of the report for review.

5. Ms. Kent reported on the progress of the Commission's website. The proposed website was available to view by all Commissioners prior to the meeting. Some comments were received on the website at the September meeting and addressed. Ms. Kent reported that the website is ready to be launched. She stated that there are some fine tuning issues with the site at this time but no major structural issues. Mr. Reonas stated that he did not like the new logo. He stated that he preferred the old logo because it showed the geographic region of the Capital Area. Mr. Reonas did not like the pictures on the home page. He commented that they are not relevant to what the Commission is about. He stated that he has some concerns with the technical reporting on the education page. Mr. Reonas stated that the Commission needs to sell itself with their website. He stated that the Office of Conservation did a survey in September 2014 and some of the most interesting things provided from the survey were facets about what people knew about the Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission, how they thought sustainability issues were managed in the Capital Area in particular East Baton Rouge Parish, and whether or not they knew of any management actions that had taken place. Mr. Reonas stated that most people were not aware of the management actions by the Commission. He stated that the scavenger well and the model are management actions that should be highlighted on the Commission's website. Mr. Reonas stated that he will send the survey results to the Commission. After a lengthy discussion, Ms. Kent suggested that a subcommittee be formed to review the website. The members appointed were Matt Reonas, Jeff Miller, Johan Forsman, Amelia Kent and Dan Tomaszewski. The sub-committee decided to meet on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **III. Report from the Technical Committee**

At the request of Mr. McGehee, the report of the Technical Committee was made by Committee Chairman, John Jennings and minutes of the meetings were distributed (attached). Following is a summary of topics discussed at the meeting on December 2, 2014 further discussion and action at the regular Commission meeting on December 9, 2014.

1. Dale Aucoin reported that the ad hoc group was waiting to see Dr. Tsai's presentations before proceeding with site selection for a test well.

2. Mr. Walton then presented a recap of pumping rates from the “2,000-foot” and “1,500-foot” sands to monitor compliance with agreed on reductions and/or commitments, stating that reported pumpage was within limits.

3. Director Duplechin read a letter from USGS explaining the reorganization of numerous state Water Science Centers in the southeast United States. The Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee Water Science Centers have been combined to form the Lower Mississippi-Gulf Water Science Center. Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina have become the South Atlantic Water Science Center. The Caribbean-Florida Water Science had already been created. The Director of the Lower Mississippi-Gulf Water Science Center, Mr. Scott Gain, assures us that we will have the same access to USGS’ scientists, data and cooperative funding, and that each state will continue to have an active USGS presence in support of the research and monitoring throughout the southeast. With these consolidations, USGS will be better able to meet your needs and address large-scale regional water issues, and improve the management of the stream gaging network in the Southeast Region.

4. Director Duplechin gave an update on the progress of funding for Dr. Tsai’s proposal to the Louisiana Board of Regents (BoR). The proposal, “Conjunctive Management of the Baton Rouge Aquifer System for Saltwater Intrusion Mitigation” has been submitted to the BoR for consideration. Matching funds for the project have been promised by ExxonMobil (\$10,000), Georgia Pacific (\$5,000) and the CAGWCC (\$5,000) per year for the three year span of the project. Dr. Tsai said that the BoR will make its selection by the end of April, 2015. Dr. Tsai expressed his appreciation to the Director, Commission, ExxonMobil and Georgia Pacific for their funding support of his project.

5. Dr. Frank Tsai presented a workshop titled:

Managing Saltwater Intrusion Underneath the Baton Rouge Area. The workshop covered three topics:

- a. Complexity of the Baton Rouge Aquifer System: Knowing Our Aquifers
- b. Saltwater Intrusion Problems and Modeling of the "1,200-foot" sand, the "1,500-foot" sand, the "1,700-foot" sand and the "2,000-foot" sand
- c. Groundwater Planning and Management: Extraction, Injection, and Reduction

### **III. Director’s Report**

Mr. Duplechin reported that he along with Commissioners Dale Aucoin and Matt Reonas were asked to participate in workshop, Into the Blue, which was hosted by the Water Institute of the Gulf. This was a one day session that focused on ground water and surface water that covered an area from Pearl River to Acadiana. Mr. Reonas added that the workshop focused on both ground and surface water, how they are used, what is their value and what people want to focus on for water resources in the future.

The Director reported that he attended a SONRIS (Strategic Online Natural Resources Information System) workshop at the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. The Director urged the Commissioners to go on DNR's website and view the SONRIS section. He stated that it has a large amount of information both hard data and interactive GIS sites.

Mr. Duplechin stated that the Commission staff has continued to work with Dovetail Studio on the website. He also has worked on the agreements for ExxonMobil and Georgia Pacific for the funding for Dr. Tsai's project. Mr. Duplechin thanked Matt Reonas and Commissioner Welsh for allowing the Commission use their facility for the December technical meeting/workshop.

In the absence of John Lovelace, USGS, Mr. Duplechin gave an update on the Baton Rouge model. The progress included a scenario to increase industrial withdrawals from the "1,200-foot" sand was revised and rerun to include withdrawals from well in an industrial facility that had previously been expected to cease operation. The report documenting the revised groundwater model and future pumping scenarios in the "1,200-foot" and "2,000-foot" sands was completed and submitted for peer review, and work continues to refine the hydrologic structure used in the model. Mr. Lovelace requested that the Commission determine the priorities of the sands for this year's modeling effort. Modeling the "1,500-foot" and "1,700-foot" sands together, or the "2,400-foot" and "2,800-foot" sands together are being considered. Mr. Walton stated that the USGS wants to model two adjacent sands together because it would be more efficient. Mr. Hebert stated that he would prefer to model the "2,400-foot" and "2,800-foot" sands first. Mr. Tomaszewski commented that it should be up to the water users in the District. He said in his opinion it would be best to model the "2,400-foot" and "2,800-foot" sands. Mr. McGehee agreed. Mr. Aucoin inquired if there would be any additional costs with this change, and Mr. Tomaszewski asked if the time line would remain the same. Mr. Duplechin stated that he would check with Mr. Lovelace on both of these questions. Mr. Reonas made a motion to modify the order of sands modeled for the USGS project to "2,400-foot" and "2,800-foot" sands for October 2014 through September 2015. Mr. Duplechin stated that he would inform USGS that the Commission would have the "2,400-foot" and "2,800-foot" sands modeled next pending the information requested from USGS on funding and time line for the project. Mr. Tomaszewski seconded this motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Reonas requested that the Director send this modification of the project to the Commissioners showing the change in order of sands modeled.

Mr. Duplechin stated that the letter to the Governor's office regarding appointments to the Board has been sent. Commissioners whose terms have expired are: Russell Hicks III, Amelia Kent, Dennis McGehee, Brian Chustz and Rosemary Rummeler.

#### **IV. Chairman's Report**

Mr. McGehee reported on the accomplishments of the Board over the past year. He stated that the Commission developed and approved a plan for management for the Southern Hills Aquifer System in the Baton Rouge area in April 2014. He stated that the Director dealt with seven legislative proposals regarding the operations and enabling statute of the Commission. The Commission further developed plans to address the saltwater encroachment in the “2,000-foot” sand with the addition of an ad hoc group. The Commission also continues to work on the website and the completion of the trust fund. Mr. McGehee added that it’s up to the Commission to use the technical tools available to determine the real risks to ground water and to develop practical remedial solutions and evaluate and manage these solutions. Mr. McGehee thanked the Commission for their work over the past year.

Mr. McGehee reported that the new officers for Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission for 2015 are: John Jennings, Chairman; Dale Aucoin, Vice-Chairman; and Ms. Amelia Kent, Treasurer. Mr. Duplechin presented Mr. McGehee with a plaque of appreciation for his dedication and hard work.

#### **V. Other Business**

Mr. Matt Reonas handed out brochures for the Water-Wise in BR campaign at DNR. The Water Wise has funding from Baton Rouge Water Company, Georgia Pacific, ExxonMobil, and Entergy. DNR worked out an agreement with the Baton Rouge Foundation to manage the funds. Mr. Reonas stated that the program has been focused on public awareness with an emphasis on education in the schools on the value of water.

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Reonas reported that the Office of Conservation conducted a survey, East Baton Rouge Water Resource Management Survey in September 2014. The survey asked questions on ground water, Capital Area Ground Water, Southern Hills Aquifer System, saltwater intrusion, scavenger well, modeling of saltwater intrusion, etc. Mr. Reonas stated that he did have some issues with the demographics of the survey. He stated that the survey indicated that the public did not have a lot of knowledge about the two main management actions of the Commission that being modeling and the scavenger well.

#### **VI. Public Comment**

Mr. Sayi Malineni stated that he appreciates Matt’s work on educating the public on water along with the Commission’s projects on saltwater encroachment. Mr. Duplechin stated that the Commission will continue to work on educating the public on the Commission and their work on ground water use and saltwater intrusion. Mr. Reonas suggested that when the website is ready that the Commission may want to send out a notice to media with a link to the site.

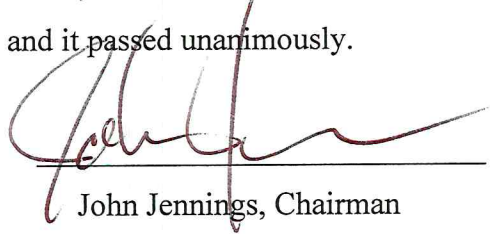
#### **VII. Next Meeting**

The Chairman reported that the next regular Commission meeting of the Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission will be scheduled on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 at 9:30

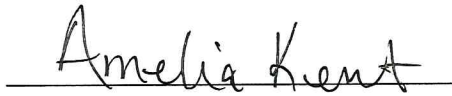
a.m. in the U.S. Geological Survey conference room. The next Technical Committee meeting will be Tuesday, March 10, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Commission, Ms. Kent made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Aucoin seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.



John Jennings, Chairman



Amelia Kent, Treasurer