

MINUTES

**CAPITAL AREA GROUND WATER
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

March 17, 2015

The Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission met at 9:30 a.m. on March 17, 2015 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 Vice-Chairman, Mr. Dale Aucoin.

The following members were present: Ronnie Albritton, Trey Argrave, Dale Aucoin, Johan Forsman, Barry Huggins, Amelia Kent, Jeff Miller, Nelson Morvant, Matthew Reonas, Thomas Stephens, 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; Dennis McGehee, Baton Rouge Water Company; Bruce Duhe, Layne Christensen; Todd Talbot, Exxon; Henry Graham, Louisiana Chemical Association, and Mark Walton, former Commissioner.

Mr. Huggins made a motion that the minutes of the December 9, 2014 meeting be approved. Ms. Kent seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

I. Report from the Administrative Committee

At the request of the Vice-Chairman, Dale Aucoin, Ms. Amelia Kent reported on the meeting that was held March 17, 2015 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 February 28, 2015 were distributed for review and comment.

2. Copies of the proposed budget for fiscal year 2015-2016 were distributed for review. The budget includes a salary increase for the Administrative Assistant. Travel expense was increased by \$1,000. Ms. Kent stated that the Director's hourly rate was discussed. The Director's pay rate is \$31.61 per hour. The Administrative Committee voted to increase the Director's rate to \$35.00 per hour effective July 1, 2015. The budget will be approved at the June 2015 meeting.

3. Ms. Kent reported on the progress of the Commission's website. The Commission formed a subcommittee at their December meeting. The committee members are Matt Reonas, Jeff Miller, Johan Forsman, Amelia Kent and Dan Tomaszewski. Mr. Reonas reported that a work list has been developed and forwarded to Dovetail Studio. He also stated that they are in the progress of revising the logo. Mr. Reonas stated the the subcommittee will meet one more time and then hopefully send a beta-version of the website to the Commissioners for comment. Mr. Reonas hopes to have this done by early April.

4. Ms. Kent reported that the Commission's newsletter is currently published quarterly. The Administrative Committee suggested that the Commission print the newsletter twice a year

and eventually go to once a year. The goal is to phase out the printing of the newsletter and just posting an annual newsletter on the website. Mr. Reonas inquired about the number of people who now receive the newsletter by mail. Ms. Scallan reported approximately 350 people. Mr. Duplechin reported that three years ago a mail out was sent to all the individuals on the mailing list asking if they would prefer to receive the newsletter by email. The Commission only received three responses. Mr. Reonas stated that he is ok with the newsletter being available online. The Director stated that a note would be put in the second quarter newsletter informing everyone of this change. Mr. Reonas suggested that the District staff start building an email distribution list. Mr. Duplechin stated that he would like to get the State Water Commission's email distribution list to add to the Commission's current mailing list. Mr. Hebert commented that he finds the quarterly newsletter to be very helpful and would hate to see the Commission stop sending it out. He also said that by not mailing a newsletter the Director will need to spend a significant amount of time updating the website. He stated that the Commission's endeavor is to provide education to the public. Mr. Hebert stated that he would not be in favor of a semi-annually published newsletter. Mr. Forsman stated that he pays attention to the printed newsletter; however, he receives many emails and is not as likely to read it. He stated that all the recipients of the newsletter are different. Some may be more attentive to an electronic version of the newsletter where others would prefer to have it printed. After a lengthy discussion, Ms. Kent made a motion to publish and print the newsletter semiannually with an emphasis on building an email distribution list to eventually email the newsletter quarterly. Dr. Westra seconded this motion and it passed unanimously.

5. Ms. Kent stated that the Commission's representative on the State Water Commission was Eugene Owen. His term has expired and is not eligible for another term. Mr. Huggins made a motion to recommend the following three people as the Commission's nominees to the State Water Commission: Anthony Duplechin, Dan Tomaszewski and Mark Walton. Dr. Westra seconded this motion and it passed unanimously. Mr. Duplechin requested that the nominees send a current resume to the District office.

6. 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 June 30, 2015. The Commission requested 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. The Commission has not received the opinion yet.

7. Ms. Kent reported reported that the Administrative Committee discussed changing the times of the meetings. No action was taken.

III. Report from the Technical Committee

At the request of Mr. Aucoin, the report of the Technical Committee was made by Committee Chairman, Johan Forsman and minutes of the meetings were distributed (attached).

Following is a summary of topics discussed at the meeting on March 10, 2015 further discussion and action at the regular Commission meeting on March 17, 2015.

1. Dale Aucoin reported that the ad hoc group has held several meetings since the December meeting of the Technical Committee. The focus of these meetings is to look at the next step in the management of saltwater intrusion in the 2,000-ft sand. Based upon the modeling that USGS and Dr. Tsai have done, it was decided that the best approach is the installation of scavenger wells in the 2,000-ft sand. The group has been discussing different avenues for funding. In order to know where to install a scavenger well, it will be necessary to drill one or more test wells.

The current statute allows for the Commission “to assess against all users within the district a charge based upon the annual rate of use of each user sufficient to meet costs and expenses of operation. Such charges must be uniform as to all users, being assessed on the basis of units of water used, whether a cubic, acre-foot, or other unit be used, and without distinctions or graduations as to total amounts of water produced by individual users or classes of users, except that no charge shall be made against the quantity of water pumped from the Mississippi River alluvial aquifer. Further, such charges shall be assessed and income therefrom used only to defray the costs and expenses of operation of the district assessing them.”

After much discussion it was decided to present to the Technical Committee for consideration an amendment to the Statute that would allow the Commission “to designate areas, after detailed research, and establish a surcharge for users of an affected aquifer or aquifers within the designated area to defray the cost of installation and operation of associated withdrawal well, injection well, or water treatment systems. The surcharge may be limited to the users benefitting from installation of such systems.”

Discussion ensued as to the wording of the proposed revision, as well as whether some language was necessary. It was decided that the Ad-hoc group would meet again to re-visit the proposal, in light of the comments made, and to forward any changes to the Commission for their consideration at the regular meeting. Mr. Duplechin reported he had discussed amending the statute with legislators and that it was suggested that the Commission wait until 2016 before pursuing this legislation. He reported that by waiting another year, this would give the Commission more time to review the language and talk with the users and legislators in the Capital Area. It would also give the Commission more time to gather financial impact information. Mr. Aucoin agreed with Mr. Duplechin stating that they have not been able to find an author for the bill. He recommended that the Commission hold off on any action until 2016. Mr. Reonas added that he feels it would be wise for the Commission to wait on the proposed legislation. Mr. Duplechin stated that it would also give the Commission time to better educate the public on saltwater encroachment and possible solutions to the problem. No action was taken by the Board on the proposed revision of the Commission’s Enabling Act.

2. Mr. Walton 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. John Lovelace of the USGS gave an progress report on the Baton Rouge model:

PROGRESS AND SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS:

The SE Regional Groundwater specialist reviewed and approved the digital model archive associated with the report entitled “Simulation of Groundwater Flow and Chloride Transport in the “1,200-foot” Sand with Scenarios to Mitigate Saltwater Migration in the “2,000-Foot” Sand in the Baton Rouge Area, Louisiana.”

The report was submitted to a USGS Publications Unit for editorial review and format enhancements necessary for final publication.

In consultation with the CAGWCC, the previous work plan was modified to prioritize flow and transport simulation within the “2,400-foot” and “2,800-foot” sands during the next year.

Work began to re-discretize of the model grid and reformulate model input that is defining boundary conditions and calibration targets to ensure accurate simulation of transport within the “2,400-foot” and “2,800-foot” sands in the areas of concern.

Work continued to refine the hydrologic structure used in the model. About 250 wells in the Baton Rouge area have been analyzed to date. The work has primarily focused on the Baton Rouge metropolitan area. Data from the logs were used to create preliminary contours of the tops and bottoms of area aquifers. The contours were analyzed for inconsistencies and anomalies, which were researched and adjusted as necessary. Production wells and existing maps of the aquifers also were used to check and adjust the work.

PLANS FOR NEXT QUARTER:

Respond to editorial comments and submit the report for USGS Bureau approval.

Make final modifications to the report per comments of the approving official.

Submit the report to the Publications Unit for final formatting and publication.

A USGS Fact Sheet will be written to summarize the modeling project and results to date. The fact sheet, which will be 4 to 6 pages in length, will provide interested parties with a short, less technical summary of the work.

The “detailed area” of the model will be expanded northward to enable accurate simulation of flow and transport simulation within the “2,800-foot” sand along and north of the northern edge of saltwater in that sand. Cell assignments for pumping wells and observation wells will then be adjusted in model input files.

Analysis of geophysical log data to refine the hydrologic structure simulated in the model will continue. The work will continue to expand into eastern and northern East Baton Rouge Parish and into West Baton Rouge Parish.

Begin compiling water-withdrawal, water-level, and chloride data to update the model input through 2014.

4. Director Duplechin noted the work that Dr. Tsai and Commissioner Tomaszewski have been doing on identifying possible locations for a test well associated with a possible scavenger well in the “2,000-foot” sand. Mr. Tomaszewski stated that Dr. Tsai provided ten or more cross sections showing the geohydrology of the aquifer in the Baton Rouge area. Dr. Tsai also has a well log portal that is available to the public which will give you the data on the wells used in the cross sections. This data will help locate the best area for a test well. Mr. Tomaszewski stated that test wells are needed for two purposes. Those being to locate the

scavenger well and to have a better understanding of the saltwater in the base of the aquifer. Mr. Tomaszewski stated that he will email the well logs to the Commissioners.

III. Director's Report

Mr. Duplechin reported that he attended a meeting for the State Water Resources Commission held in Lake Charles. Most of the presentations were focused on surface water. He stated that he also attended the Groundwater Management District's Association meeting in January.

Mr. Duplechin reminded the Commission that all Board members will need to complete their financial disclosure requirements for the Board of Ethics. The members of CAGWCC fall under Tier 2.1 financial disclosure requirements. The report will be due on May 15, 2015. The Commission staff will notify the Commissioners by email.

Mr. Duplechin stated that the Commission received a letter from Commissioner Jim Welsh asking that updates be sent to parishes and municipal officials in the District. Commissioner Welsh requested that the letter be presented to the Board for their consideration. The letter was emailed to all Commissioners prior to the meeting. Mr. Reonas commented that Commissioner Welsh's interest was the consistency and transparency of the Commission's message to the public. Mr. Reonas stated that updates to these legal authorities help gain trust. He suggested an annual report summarizing plans and actions taken by the Commission to date. Mr. Miller suggested that the newsletter be used for this purpose. The Director stated that the Commission has a representative from each parish on the Board. It was noted that all parish municipalities are included on the newsletter mailing list. Mr. Reonas offered his office's assistance with any public relations that the Commission may need.

IV. Chairman's Report

Mr. Aucoin thanked the subcommittee members for their work on the website. Mr. Aucoin encouraged the Commissioners to stay focused on the statute revision change and determining how the Commission will fund the next step of the management plan. Mr. Aucoin stated that postponing the legislation is not a delay and that the ad hoc group will continue to work with a resolution.

Mr. Aucoin inquired if there has been any 2015 bills introduced in the legislature that deal with ground water. Mr. Duplechin stated that he has not seen any but will alert the Commission if he does.

V. Public Comment

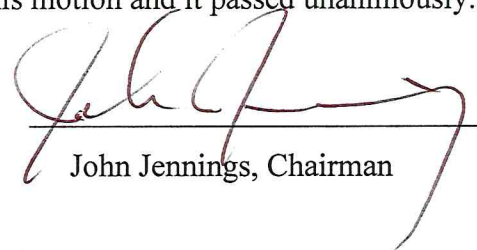
Mr. Walton commented that the Commission's goal earlier was to reduce the costs of the mailing of the newsletter when in turn they will add more names to the list and increase the cost. Ms. Kent stated that the cost was not the primary concern.

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, June 16, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. in the U.S. Geological Survey conference room. The next Technical Committee meeting will be Tuesday, June 9, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment

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



John Jennings, Chairman



Amelia Kent, Treasurer