



Georgia Water Planning

Meeting Summary

Lower Flint-Ochlockonee Regional Water Council Meeting

By Teleconference

November 9, 2020

Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Overview

Kristin Rowles (Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center, or GWPPC) started the meeting by checking who was in attendance. Meeting attendees are listed at end of the meeting summary.

Richard Royal (Chair) welcomed members and thanked everyone for their attendance and for their flexibility in participating in a virtual format. He encouraged the Council to keep moving forward in planning under less than ideal circumstances. The Chairman noted that Dan Ponder has moved and submitted his resignation from the Council. He also expressed thanks to Steve Sykes for his service on the Municipal Forecast Stakeholder Group and then reviewed the meeting agenda.

Update on Regional Water Planning Process

Kristin introduced three brief presentations to update the Council members on the water planning process. The slides from these presenters (and others from this meeting) are available on the Council's website. Jennifer Welte (Georgia Environmental Protection Division, or GAEPD) provided an overview of the timeline and process for updating the Regional Water Plans. She also provided brief updates on water demand forecasting and resource assessments modeling. She noted that the current target date for completion of the next regional water plan revisions is late 2022.

Steve Simpson (Black & Veatch) gave a detailed presentation on forecasting water demands from the municipal, industrial, and energy sectors. He gave members additional information on the stakeholder driven process led by Black & Veatch to develop the municipal forecasts. Following a question, Steve noted that per capita use for Mitchell County appears large due to the poultry processing facility near Camilla. Steve Sykes offered that Mitchell County per capita use adjusted to reflect only household use would be in line with other counties in the region.

Mark Masters (GWPPC) updated the Council on the methods and timeline for completing the agricultural water demand forecasts. Mark mentioned that the same team, including the GWPPC at Albany State University and researchers from the University of Georgia, that completed the 2015-16 forecasts have been engaged to complete the 2020-21 work. He noted improvements in the wetted acreage database and incorporation of meter data to improve estimates of crop water needs used to develop the current conditions and forecasted needs. Mark provided specific examples of increased field data collection as a result of the metering program as well as the conversion of thousands of acres of irrigated farmland to solar panels in the Council's planning region. Responding to a question, Mark noted that the annual average agricultural use in the region is around 600 mgd but that the monthly distribution of that use can vary greatly depending on time of year and climatic conditions during the growing season. Responding to another question, Mark explained that the estimates and forecasts are based, in part, on agricultural meter data, but on other data sources as well, including wetted acreage data, crop projections, and estimates of water applied by crop.

Seed Grant Proposal: City of Thomasville Stormwater Planning

Pam Schalk (City of Thomasville) presented the Council with an overview of a seed grant proposal submitted to GAEPD related to development of a Stormwater Master Plan and possible creation of a stormwater utility. The City of Thomasville also plans to increase water quality monitoring, outreach and education as well as explore an opportunity to become a "WaterFirst Community." Chairman Royal submitted a letter of support for this grant on behalf of the Council in October.

Updates from GAEPD

Jennifer Welte (GAEPD) reported that the recommendations for Council member appointments are currently being evaluated by the Governor's office and then will be passed onto the Lt. Governor's and Speaker's offices. The Supreme Court has not yet scheduled a hearing in the *Florida v. Georgia* equitable apportionment case, but it is expected that they will set a hearing date after January 1 with an anticipated ruling prior to the end of the current term (which ends in June 2021). Last, Jennifer reported that GAEPD issued new Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) permits to the City of Albany on September 21, 2020. The new permits require additional monitoring, submittal of a revised long-term control plan prior to December 31, 2021 and criteria to meet a system-wide capture rate of 85% within the next five years. Kristin noted that she will send out an informational packet on the Albany CSO permits to Council members in the coming days. Responding to a question, Jennifer noted that the Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House have the flexibility to make appointments separate from the process in the Governor's office.

Public Comment

No one wished to make a public comment.

Next Steps/Meeting Adjournment

Chairman Royal thanked members for attending and the meeting was adjourned.

Council Members Attending November 9, 2020 Meeting

Richard Royal (Chair)	John Heath
Jimmy Webb (Vice Chair)	Hank Jester
Steve Bailey	George McIntosh
Jimmy Champion	Calvin Perry
Casey Cox	Steve Singletary

Other Attendees

Pam Schalk (City of Thomasville)	Steve Simpson (B&V)
Gregory Cherry (USGS)	Stephanie Whitacre (B&V)
Chris Manganiello (Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper)	Nick Morgan (B&V)
Steve Sykes (City of Camilla)	Regina Nasrallah (GWPPC)
Debbie Warner Gordon (USGS)	Kristin Rowles (GWPPC)
Jennifer Welte (GAEPD)	Mark Masters (GWPPC)