

Memorandum

To: Middle Ocmulgee Regional Water Planning Council

*From: Ted Hendrickx, Georgia Environmental Protection Division
Michelle Vincent and Laura Hartt, Jacobs*

Date: March 15, 2017

*Subject: Council Meeting 4 Summary (March 1, 2017)
Middle Ocmulgee Regional Council
Regional Water Plan Review and Revision Process*

This memorandum provides the meeting summary of the Middle Ocmulgee Regional Water Planning Council Meeting 1, held on March 1, 2017 at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC) in Macon, Georgia. The meeting began at 9:35 AM. A brief adjustment was made to the agenda to skip breaks other than lunch to finish the meeting ahead of time.

1. Welcome and Introductions/Approve Agenda

Council Chairman Elmo Richardson called the meeting to order and thanked members and guests for attending. Chairman Richardson expressed sorrow on the sudden passing away of Jim Ham in a car accident and acknowledged his long service to the council. Chairman Richardson asked for a motion and a second to approve the minutes from the previous council meeting and the agenda for the current meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously by all council members present.

There was a discussion concerning not able to get a quorum and whether conference calls would be a better alternative to face-to-face meeting. Council member Copeland Jr asked Ted if there are going to be any new appointments or re-appointments. Ted did not have any updates on that front and agreed that they could do a conference call as well. Michelle discussed the schedule with the council and mentioned that they can have a conference call the week of March 24 based on everyone's availability.

2. Questions from Office Hour Calls

Council member Seleb mentioned that they would like a template of the drought contingency plan to help other utilities in their development.. The Council also discussed the water loss audit process and that EPD does not have the data available parsed by region or Council. Council member Seleb mentioned that there are flaws in the auditing process and that it needs to be addressed. Council member Rojas mentioned that utilities do not want to focus on how much water loss was occurring; it is a time consuming process. He also added that his utility takes these audits very seriously. Ted agreed that EPD has been delayed in posting data and added that he will look into how the state has been handling publishing audit data in light of some recent staffing changes. Regarding the water loss data, Ted said that all water infrastructures

are different and that data comparison is more appropriately done with historic data from the same utility itself and not with another utility.

3. Review of the Demand Forecast Technical Memorandum

Municipal Water Forecasting

The Council discussed the pros and cons of per capita forecasting. Council member Rojas mentioned that forecasting on a per capita basis does not account for the industrial and commercial growth in the area and that the focus should be on ensuring secure reservoirs and robust infrastructure so that needs for growing industries like Kumo tires are met. He added that permits should not be impacted because of failure to forecast growth. Council Chairman Richardson agreed, and also provided certain examples like Bibb County and Newton County. Council Member McMichael added that we cannot avoid using per capita forecasting method. Council Member Rojas agreed as it is the simplest methodology. Rojas added that permitting crosses county boundaries and hence it is not really aligned with county needs. He also added that the Master Plan does not forecast a negative or flat growth and it may be more appropriate for communities to forecast their own needs. Council member Seleb added that forecast should be tied to economic development and new industries should be directed to where there is excess supply. She also added that if we need to target per capita conservation, then we need to identify trends based on sector. Ted commented that directing industries to places with excess supply is complicated, since it involves decisions regarding land use.

Municipal Wastewater Forecasting

Chairman Richardson mentioned that the same discussion of per capita applies to Municipal Wastewater Forecasting as well. Council Member Rojas expressed his concern how the septage is accounted for in these forecasts. He gave the example of Houston County, how its population is doubling and most of it is going septic tanks. Also, no wastewater treatment facility capacity is being built for treating more septage. He added that there is a need for a system or program where people on septic pay monthly based on where the eventual septage pump out is to be treated, unless land applied by the septage pumpers. He also stated that the state should ask local governments to speak directly on how they will manage the septage. Ted replied that the Middle Ocmulgee Council was one of the few councils to have this issue in their plan. The state now has a two-tiered permit system for land application of septage, Tier 1 is for small land application done by septage pumpers and Tier 2 is for large regional land application sites. Council member Rojas provided the example of Spartanburg model where residents pay fee because of the State Law and the stipend goes towards expense of pumping and disposal.

Council Chairman also mentioned that leachates from landfills are also an issue and that needs to be addressed as well. Council Member Seleb mentioned that she had similar problems in the region.

Ted explained some of the legislative history behind the recent State action regarding septage disposal and that the Metro District is now taking a hard look at septage disposal manifests to ensure that it is being disposed of legally.

Industrial Forecasting

No comments on this section

Agricultural Forecasting

Council Member McMichael pointed out that the agricultural growth for Houston County is way too high as shown in the Table 5.2. Council Member Copeland Jr added that the use of water per acre is going down because of the high costs associated with it. He also said that there are fewer unpermitted agricultural users today which used to be the reason for high use. Also, different crops require different quantities of water.

Energy Forecasting

Council Member Shipman mentioned that there are a lot of basic assumptions used in this section, but Georgia Power can live with it.

Summary (Section 7)

Mark Wyzalek suggested that we could change “unassigned industrial” in Figure 7-2 and Table 7-1 to “all counties/total industrial.” He also suggested that in Figure-7-5 and 7-5, the word “discharge” can be replaced with “wastewater flow” or “volume”. Ted mentioned that for agricultural and septic, there will not be any return flow calculated; it will continue to be considered as 100% consumptive for forecasting.

4. Section 3 Review

There were a few changes and comments made in this section. They are as follows.

- The Council discussed the language in Section 3.2.1 on page 3-5 and decided to retain the original language for the first sentence and keep the rest of the insert.
- The language on the bottom of the page 3-5 was changed back to “will” from “may” as suggested by Mark.
- Council Member Seleb expressed concern about the map being hard to read. Ted suggested linking the document to the map available on EPD’s website.
- Council Member Rojas requested to change “City of Macon” to “City of Macon Water Authority” on page 3-10. He also asked what the impairment was with Walnut creek to which Ted replied that it was listed for impairments to macroinvertebrates and fish.

5. Section 4 Review

Council Member McMichael expressed concern about Houston County agricultural forecasts in Table 4-2; he thought it was too high since there was no more land and any growth was residential.

6. Section 5 Review

The following comments and changes were discussed while reviewing Section 5:

- For the sake of clarity, the Council recommends the value for Bibb County in Table 5-1 be changed from 66.2 to 3.2. The language on footnote 3 should revert to the original text.
- Council Member Rojas spoke about the DO monitoring that began in summer 2014 for Ocmulgee River. He expressed his concerns because the plan relies on a model, when there may be actual data available. It would be interesting to see how real data might impact the model. Ted said that he will look into it. Council Member Seleb added that she would want to see more information regarding assumptions made in the model and the source of the data. Michelle said that information is available in additional technical documents. Rojas also mentioned that if we are using assumptive modeling, we need to look at all permits impacting numbers at same time for equity issues
- Council Member Rojas asked about whether the permits are done by watershed/basin. Ted replied that some permitting in the state had been done on a rotating watershed basis, but they are not likely being done in that fashion currently, although he would verify.
- While looking at nutrients entering Lake Jackson, Council Member Seleb added that Clayton/Henry is getting worse in the western part of the region. She also stated that the map in the document is difficult to read, and needs to be larger.
- Council Member Seleb asked if EPD can remove excess capacity from one entity to give to another, if there is a need to expand in the sub-watershed but excess capacity county-wide. Ted responded that he did not think that EPD would turn down permits for expansion in favor of shifting that growth to a different part of a service area. Capacity of the receiving waters drives much of the permitting decisions. In further discussion about how the regional water plans are used by EPD in permitting decisions Ted mentioned that EPD changed their anti-degradation policy and if a RWP shows socio-economic need for a new or expanded facility the permittee would not have to complete a separate and in-depth justification of need.
- Mark mentioned that Water Quality trading is a possibility between the two entities, Section 6 – Management Practices Review

The following decisions and comments were made while reviewing each of the management practices

Water Demand

WD1 - Keep. It will be updated with different language from EPD.

WD2 – Keep. It will be updated with different language from EPD.

WD 3 – Keep. Council member Seleb recommended providing education for best practices for full cost system accounting as a way to promote it. Marcie – provide education for best practices for full cost system accounting.

WD4 – Edit. Mark suggested that the better early warning would be 40 psi. The Council discussed and determined that 80-85% of treatment capacity is a more appropriate trigger. .

Water Supply

WS1 – Edit. Council Chairman Richardson asked to change the recommended planning horizon to 15 to 20 years.

WS2 – Edit. “From the Chattahoochee” was removed as requested by the Council. Henry and Rockdale Counties were added to the first bullet.

WS3 – Edit. “By increasing the height of existing dams or dredging to provide additional storage.” was removed

WS4 – Keep.

WS5 – Keep.

WS6 – Keep.

WS7 – Keep

WS8 – Keep. The word “Evaluate” was added at the start of the description

WS9 – Keep.

Water Quality

WQ1 – Keep. Same changes as WD 1 – 15 to 20 years

WQ2 – Keep. Council Member Seleb recommended we include other emerging pollutants and not just Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Dissolved Oxygen.

WQ3 – Keep.

WQ4 – Keep.

WQ5 – Keep. Council Member Seleb expressed concern on how we can ever achieve coordinated environmental planning. Ted also agreed. .

WQ6 – Keep.

WQ7 – Keep. “Tax credits for developers” was removed based on Council Member McMichael’s recommendation.

WQ8 – Keep. Mark asked a question about priority watersheds. Ted redirected him to section 3, 3-8.

WQ9 – Keep.

WQ 10 –Keep.

WQ 11 – Keep.

WQ12 – Delete. The Council decided unanimously based on Mark’s suggestion.

WQ13 – Keep. Council Member Seleb recommended a change from “urban areas” to “densely populated areas”.

WQ14 – Keep.

WQ15 – Keep.

WQ16 – Keep.

WQ17 – Keep.

WQ18 – Keep. There was a typo – “and” in place of “for” which was changed.

WQ19 – Keep. Mark suggested removing “greater than 10,000” since there are utilities in the state that are less than 10,000. Council member Seleb recommended that these funds be used for stormwater management programs “proper operation” and replace it with “funding for stormwater management programs”

WQ20 – Keep. The Council suggested making them bullets.

WQ21 – Keep.

Priority Management Practices

ED1 – The Council recommended adding certain language to include outreach for landscaping

8. Section 7 – Recommendations to the State

The Council discussed Section 7 – Table 7.4: Recommendations to the State

Public Education and Outreach

No changes were made in this section.

Policy

The Council discussed the appropriateness of using 7Q10. It is a low flow statistic as explained by Ted. Mark said that it depends on sample size and years. It could be less for large samples and large for small samples. Other states do median stream flow in place of 7Q10. There were no changes made in this section

Additional Data – Surface Water

1. 1st box- Mark said that there are talks of using Hawkinsville gauge by USGS. Council member Seleb asked a question regarding having a gage on the Towaliga to which Ted answered saying it was because of Water Quality assessment issues. No changes were made in this section
2. 2nd box – No changes were made in this section.

Additional Data - Water Quality

No changes were made in this section.

Funding

No changes were made in this section.

Coordination

No changes were made in this section.

9. Public Comments

Harold West with GA Forestry Commission introduced himself and let the Council know the Forestry Commission is undertaking their survey of BMPs. Past surveys have shown very high compliance rate for implementation of BMPs, said that majority of foresters are following their BMPs and are on top of it.

Michael Abney with Jasper County mentioned that he is happy to help with education efforts.

10. Meeting Attendance

Middle Ocmulgee Regional Water Planning Council Members in attendance:

- Elmo A. Richardson (Chair)
- Ben Copeland, Jr. (Vice Chair)
- Peter Banks
- Charles F. Harris
- Tom McMichael
- Tony Rojas
- Ron Shipman
- Don Cook
- Marcie Seleb

Georgia EPD Representatives in attendance:

- Ted Hendrickx

Reginal Water Council Planning Contractors in attendance:

- Laura Hartt
- Michelle Vincent
- Partiban Raja

Agency attendees:

- Mark Wyzalek (representing MWA)
- Kimberly Lowe (representing MG-RC)
- Michael Abney (representing UGA extension)
- Harold West (representing GA Forestry Commission)
- Trey Gafnea (representing UGA Extension)
- Adriane Wood (representing DCA)

Public attendees:

- Tim Taylor (representing Taylor Serves)
- Chad Thompson (representing Pentair)