

Memorandum

To: Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council

From: Ashley Reid, CDM and Michelle Vincent, Jacobs

Date: June 6, 2023

Subject: Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council Meeting Summary

Welcome, Introductions, and Council Business

Chairman Bruce Azevedo called the meeting to order. Chairman Azevedo called for a motion to approve the prior Savannah-Upper Ogeechee (SUO) Council Meeting Minutes (March 23, 2023). A minor spelling correction was noted, but no additional changes were needed. Minutes were approved by motion, second, and unanimous vote.

Chairman Azevedo called for a motion to approve the draft revised agenda with corrections to the date. Agenda was approved by motion, second, and unanimous vote.

GA EPD Updates

Planning Process Updates

Hadyn Blaize, GA EPD provided a status update on the regional planning process, including deadlines for final plans submissions. Noting that all plans were due to EPD by Friday, June 23, to be adopted by June 30, 2023, Mr. Blaize also discussed a few of the potential surface water supply challenges that have been identified as part of the resource assessment process, including 7 facilities in the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Region. Mr. Blaize will be sending them each an email to let them know what modeling challenges were identified, and how they can start to address the challenges with their future planning. Similarly, 13 facilities have been identified to have wastewater assimilation capacity challenges and will be contacted as well.

Seed Grant Updates

Hadyn Blaize, GA EPD gave the Council a brief update on seed grant status. Savannah-Upper Ogeechee currently has 4 active seed grants. Two will be completed in 2023, and two will be completed in 2024. Mr. Blaize also informed the Council that the Seed grant application season was open. Pre-application meetings are to be held no later than October 15, 2023, and the final applications are due by October 31, 2023. This year, there is a new application system, and the grant application must be completed online. A pre-meeting with the Council leadership is very important to ensure application packages are meeting the goals and vision of the Council. Coordination with the Council should take place before the EPD pre-application meeting.

Review Draft Plan Comments Received and Discuss Drafted Responses to Comments

Ashley Reid, CDM Smith, went through comments received by the Council on the Draft Regional Water Plan.

The first comment reviewed was a comment that was submitted to all ten of the regional planning councils, from Dr. Amy Rosemond, UGA. (For text of comment, see meeting materials). Chairman Azevedo highlighted that a substantial section of the comment has already been addressed in the SUO plan and that much of the monitoring is taking place. Other portions of the comment expressed that the composition of the Council also seems to be at odds with the selection process that is delineated in the State Water Plan. Also, the appointing entities do not always consider the needed skills set for Council Members when making appointments. Ms. Reid presented and reviewed with the Council, the response that EPD had crafted on behalf of all the Councils. Motion and second to accept the response as drafted and motion was carried without dissent. There was also additional discussion on whether the Council would like to craft an additional response specifically from the Council. Motion and that the EPD response alone was sufficient, and motion was also carried without dissent

Break

[brief stretch break]

Review Draft Plan Comments Received and Discuss Drafted Responses to Comments, continued.

A second comment directed at all ten plans was also received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and this was also reviewed. (For text of comment, see meeting materials). Chairman Azevedo asked if the SUO plan already includes references to some endangered species. USFWS comment also expressed the desire for more engagement and invitations to Council meetings. Chairman Azevedo response to the comment is that the Council is interested in having them update us on status of things, but these plans are very high level and are broad and do not necessarily include the level of details the USFWS desires. Ms. Reid explained that the comments are recommendations to be considered and can be included in subject matter for some future meetings and noted that the Council could continue to engage the other agencies so that there is ample opportunity to consider additions for future plan revisions. Ms. Reid read through EPD's proposed response to the comment, which did not commit to revisions in the plan for this round but will agree to keep the agency involved and will keep considerations in mind for future plans. Motion and second, no additional discussion. Motion carried without dissent.

Next Steps, Public Comments, Wrap Up & Adjourn

Chairman Azevedo thanked the speakers and asked if there were any members of the public or elected officials present who wished to provide any comments. No comments were forthcoming.

Next meeting will be tentatively planned for end of August/beginning of September. Ms. Reid will send out a poll to get Council Member's availability. Chairman Azevedo asked the Council members and participants for recommendations for meeting subjects for future meetings.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:08 pm.

Meeting Attendance

Council

- Bruce Azevedo (Chair)
- Tom Jordan
- Lee Vaughn
- Dink NeSmith
- Chris McCorkle
- Scott MacGregor

EPD

- Haydn Blaize
- Clete Barton

Planning Contractors

- Ashley Reid (CDM Smith)
- Autumn McNeil (CDM Smith)
- Michelle Vincent (Jacobs)

Public and Agency Partners

- Tonya Bonitatibus, Savannah Riverkeeper
- Carol Flaute, NEGRC
- Jason Mallard
- Scott Harder
- Heather Nix
- Carly Nielsen, Ogeechee Riverkeeper
- Rob Leverett
- Jennifer Hilburn