



Legislative Water Commission

Barb Huberty, Director

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December 14, 2016
Meeting Minutes

Members Present

Senator Bev Scalze, Chair
Representative Paul Torkelson, Co-chair
Representative David Bly
Representative Clark Johnson
Representative Peter Fischer
Senator Matt Schmit
Senator Charles Wiger
Senator Carrie Ruud
Representative Matt Dean

Members Absent

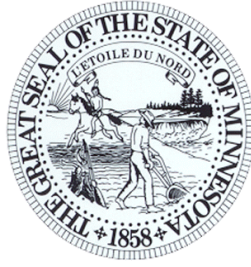
Senator Gary Dahms
Senator Roger Chamberlain
Representative Rod Hamilton

The meeting was called to order at 9:26 am on December 14, 2016.

Representative Fischer moved approval of the minutes from the July 7th, August 17th and Sept 26th meetings. The motion was seconded by Senator Schmit. The motion was approved.

Local perspectives on water supply, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure challenges were shared via several presentations:

1. John Maczko, P.E., St Paul Public Works Department, provided an overview of the MN 2050: State of the Infrastructure Survey and introduced the concept of asset management.
2. Steve Schneider, Gen Manager of the St Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) and his Assistant General Manager, Jim Graupmann, explained infrastructure challenges St Paul and SPRWS's customers are facing are fully urbanized communities. Their Board of Water Commissioners has been functioning since 1885 and their \$500M water treatment facility has been undergoing planned renovations ever since it was built in 1922. In 2014-15, they completed a condition assessment of all assets to set priorities for future capital improvements, which will focus more on buried assets. Age alone is not a predictor of pipe failure; construction material is also key. They have followed a philosophy of balancing rates and investments. They pay as you go financing has been between about \$10M and 16M annually over the last 5 years and plan to reach \$22M by 2025, bringing their replacement cycle to 120 years – down from 360 years. For the last 20 years, they have allocated funds for replacement of public lead service lines and they have a financing and program plan to assist residents with replacing private lead service lines. Disclosing the presence of lead service lines at the time of home sales is needed. SPRWS customers currently pay about \$20/month for 24/7



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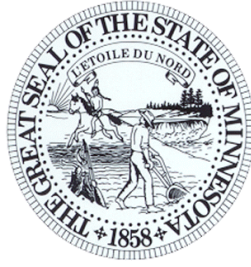
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water service (which includes a water main replacement surcharge).

3. Klayton Eckles, Woodbury Public Works Director described the various water services provided by Woodbury, an urbanizing community. Challenges include: lawn irrigation reduction to improve groundwater sustainability, conflicting water governance structures, over-regulation of stormwater management (from reuse for irrigation to green infrastructure), and flood prevention and response. He compared the extent of the stormwater systems managed by watershed districts, private entities, and the city – graphically demonstrating the maintenance challenge the city faces.
4. Ruth Hubbard, Executive Director of the MN Rural Water Association (MRWA), explained the challenges facing rural MN communities, most of which are smaller than 1,500 people. The MRWA has two main goals: protection of public health and protection of infrastructure investments. The cost of system improvements is the #1 challenge for small communities. They have developed a simplified, spreadsheet-based, asset management tool to help their members better manage their systems and finances by identifying the critical points with a high potential for and impact from failure; it is currently being piloted in a handful of towns. Small towns are also facing operator shortages as their current employees retire.
5. Jim Hafner, Chairperson of the MN Cities Stormwater Coalition Steering Committee and stormwater manager for the City of Blaine, described how stormwater is managed and the infrastructure challenges that presents across the state, including: handling more rainfall from intense storm events, increasing MS4 permit regulations, and the high cost to manage stormwater systems – which is becoming more complex with the use of green infrastructure. Stormwater needs: support flexible and common sense regulations, urban stormwater research, resolution on PAH disposal, removing barriers to stormwater reuse, and clean water funding for cities.

All presenters then responded to questions from LWC members, as follows:

- Fischer: how many people are keeping their private wells? Eckles: Woodbury encourages people to connect to city services and give up their wells over time.
- Scalze: are we depleting the aquifer to contain 3M contamination? Eckles: 3M contains contaminant migration via pumping and the pumped water is used for cooling and then treated before discharge to the Mississippi River. 3M is trying to reduce pumping. There is a pending lawsuit regarding this contamination.
- Schmidt: what techniques, such as liners, are being use to promote repair instead of replacement? Schneider: SPRWS has been experimenting with different rehabilitation techniques, including pipe bursting (a bad choice where there are many service connections) and cured in place liners (expensive). Did and replace is still more cost-effective, but it is also



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more disruptive.

- Torkelson: some people depend on private water supplies (wells) and wastewater treatment systems (septics); is there any way to facilitate restructuring of these? Schneider: They cannot spend public dollars on private property. For example, when SPRWS replaces a public lead service line, it would be ideal to also replace the adjacent private lead service line at the same time. SPRWS estimates there are 28,000 private lead service lines needing replacement at a cost of \$2,500 to \$3,500 each. Torkelson: the lead issue is also within the dwelling in plumbing fixtures so there is a need for homeowner education.
- Torkelson: can street rehabilitation be used to trigger service line replacements? Schneider: Yes, SPRWS does that now, but homeowners are not always willing to act when the City does their work. If a homeowner takes the initiative to replace its service line, the City will also repair their portion. Forthcoming changes to the federal lead and copper rule may force states to do more about service line replacement.
- Scalze: expressed appreciation for this sort of expertise in MN.
- Fischer: should there be subsidies to replace lead service lines by the utility or the state? SPRWS does not do this, but they will provide a loan and assessment schedule. The federal Water Resources Development Act House bill includes \$500M for lead pipe replacement for cities that are out of compliance with lead and copper rules. SPRWS is evaluating ideas, such as a \$1,000 subsidy by SPRWS, while homeowners pay the rest.
- Schmit: Do you follow the “dig once” principle to maximize infrastructure replacement investments. Schneider: yes, they do work with partners, such as Excel Energy. No work is done in the right of way without assessing whether to do water work, but water lines are typically the deepest infrastructure. It is their desire to decrease the amount of disruption for customers and GIS is very helpful in helping them plan and assess work opportunities.

Chair Scalze asked whether any members wanted to provide advice on where the LWC should go in the future. Fischer wanted to push action that would promote water reuse and look at drought planning. Schmit said looking at infrastructure capacity in light of more intense rainfall events is important.

LWC members were recognized for their service from 10/2014 to 12/31/16. In particular, non-returning members Scalze and Schmit were thanked for their efforts.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.