

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Workgroup Conference Call
Workgroup: Municipal and Water Loss Work Groups

Date: 26 October 2020
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Location: Remote (Conference Call)

<u>Members</u>	<u>Alternates</u>	<u>Interested Parties</u>	<u>TWDB Staff</u>
Kevin Kluge*	Karen Magid*	Molly Ballesteros	Josh Sendejar*
Anai Padilla*	Jessica Woods	Patrick Shriver*	Shae Luther*
Karen Guz*	Jennifer Walker*	Jennifer Nations*	Travis Brice*
Tim Loftus*		Neil Weems	John Sutton*
Jennifer Allis		Chris Charles*	
Ken Kramer		Perry Fowler*	
Aubrey Spear*		Dan Strub +	

* Attended both meetings; + Present for Water Loss portion only

Municipal:

I. Introduction of Participants

The conference call began at 11:03 a.m.

II. Discussion of Workgroup Initiatives & Activities for 2021

Karen Guz began the meeting by stating the goal for this meeting is to brainstorm ideas for initiatives and activities for the work group to undertake in 2021. Karen then opened the floor to those on the call to bring up topics for consideration.

Ken Kramer brought up the 140 GPCD goal recommended by the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force in 2004. This goal is still currently being used and does not reflect the progress that many municipal water utilities have made in terms of reducing GPCD. K. Kramer stated he believes the WCAC has a duty to revisit targets and update them appropriately in time for the next round of regional water planning.

Further discussion on this topic included the need to move past total GPCD and include other metrics such as for residential and commercial and seasonal use. It was also brought up that conversation and collaboration with the regional water planning groups would be key in understanding what their goals going forward would be.

The next topic up for discussion was technology monitoring, particularly emphasizing AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) in terms of its application in water conservation/efficiency. Aubrey Spear noted that the City of Lubbock is almost complete with their implementation of AMI. It was also noted it would be interesting to see who has undergone the shift, how they did it, and what benefits they may be seeing. It would be

good to compile that information as a resource for others who are considering undertaking the shift.

Additional discussion included AMI's future influence on conservation program implementation, as well as for entities seeking funding from TWDB.

Rainwater Harvesting was the next topic of discussion. K. Guz noted that having a resource on that subject could be helpful for those looking to implement that technology in the future.

Austin Water staff noted that they have existing rainwater harvesting programs as well as a new program that is looking to help customers offset their landscape watering with rainwater catchment and drip irrigation systems. Once the program gains momentum, the hope is to conduct analysis on water savings.

Jennifer Nations stated that the Alternative Water Supplies division with TAWWA could be utilized to help in this area.

K. Guz then asked if there were enough conservation planning resources available to smaller utilities.

Jessica Woods stated that she believes with the BMPs and the TWDB's new Water Conservation Planning Tool, there are sufficient resources for smaller utilities.

Discussion then focused on trends in multi-family use. K. Guz noted leak detection and metrics will be important for this sector. It was also noted that bill allocation can be an issue with many water utilities in terms of collecting data in this area. K. Kramer also noted it can be difficult to undertake analysis in this area, as it does require a lot of digging to get to.

Tim Loftus noted that a first step could be doing an inventory of the Water Use Survey's submitted, and seeing the percentage of utilities who currently break down single vs. multi-family use.

TWDB staff noted that the Water Use Survey should have some multi-family break out in terms of connection count (living units) and perhaps some water-use information.

A. Spear noted that it would be interesting to see how cities distinguish single-family vs. multi-family.

Kevin Kluge suggested the workgroup may consider looking into the intersection between city/urban planning and water use. It was asked what specific questions might be addressed with this topic. Additional discussion brought up questions relating to including water use in development planning, water savings expectations for new development, and how changes to building and land-use codes could be included. Net zero water would also be included in this area.

Jennifer Walker noted that there are stages of these implementation plans and could be included in the conversation.

K. Guz noted that she will be talking with Bill Hoffman re: Commercial & Institutional use within the realm of the Municipal sector, i.e. NAICS coding and emerging tools for calculating water balance for CI facilities.

The final topic was issues relating to COVID. It was brought up there may be prolonged impacts on the economy and water use patterns going forward. K. Guz noted that there have been changes in water use patterns for CI customers in San Antonio, and a dip in participation for conservation programs relating to CI customers as a result.

The following topics were considered potential topics for the workgroup to address in the upcoming year: AMI, Rainwater Harvesting, GPCD targets and goals, a big-picture look at Multi-Family users, Commercial opportunities with the Municipal sector, and the intersection of water and urban/land-use planning.

III. Adjourn

The conference call was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Water Loss:

I. Introduction of Participants

The conference call began at 11:51 a.m.

II. Discussion of Workgroup Initiatives & Activities for 2021

Jennifer Walker noted that this will be a brainstorming session re workgroup initiatives for the upcoming year and opened the floor up to those to submit their ideas.

The first topic discussed was metrics in water loss. Karen Guz noted there is a need to translate the verbiage used for some metrics to have meaningful conversations to those outside the professionals in the space. This would give utility staff a 'primer' for conversation should the utility have water loss concerns.

Dan Strub recommended putting emphasis on normalized water losses (apparent/real losses). Patrick Shriver noted that authorized uses would also be important as well as the context of how utilities use and categorize non-revenue water. It was also noted that AWWA is no longer using percentages related to water loss, as they can be misleading. Infrastructure Leakage Index (ILI) was also brought up as good indicators but does take some time to explain them. TWDB Staff mentioned that ILI would only be good for about 20% of utilities submitting reports to TWDB.

Patrick Shriver commented there is an issue with authorized uses for nonrevenue water. There is also a lack of discussion in the differences between utility approaches/practices and how to account for this use in reporting.

J. Walker stated that the discussion on water loss metrics seems to be a key point of discussion. Perhaps a goal would need to be developed going forward.

J. Walker asked for an update on TWDB's pilot study for Level 1 Water Loss validations.

TWDB Staff noted the contract is nearing final approval. Once work begins, the contractor will have six months to provide a report on recommendations, lessons learned, and further areas of study.

Kevin Kluge that noted one possibility that has been brought up by TWDB staff is to fund a Level 1 study out of the SRF. The agency is still exploring this option for potential implementation in FY 22 – 23. J. Walker commented that these are very encouraging developments and that the Water Loss workgroup looks forward to hearing the results of the study that will begin soon and how the next study may be developed. This will likely be included in future efforts and workplan for the workgroup.

Tim Loftus brought up the topic of how to communicate with the general public. He specifically mentioned communicating the importance of the issue and focusing on the value of water. It was noted that the National Wildlife Federation and the Sierra Club are currently engaging in communication on the issue, although they do use percentages in their communication. It was noted that perhaps the natural audience for water loss messaging is the water utilities themselves, rather than the general public. Others felt that while it is a utility issue, an informed public can direct support for needed improvements within the utility.

K. Guz noted that there seems to be enough interest in the topic of how best to communicate water loss, especially with the general public. How to communicate about water loss is strongly tied to the previous topic of the appropriate metrics to use to communicate water loss.

The final topic discussed was tracking differences between TWDB's online reporting application and AWWA's reporting form. Patrick Shriver noted that the TWDB form is good for taking a bottom-up approach to auditing.

Dan Strub noted that there is significant improvement to the validation score section in newest version of the AWWA form, which should be released soon. The validation scoring section asks several questions to determine a validation score, rather than having a user self-select a score. This will mean greater differences between AWWA's and TWDB's reporting forms, but overall, should be a step forward for water loss reporting.

D. Strub noted he would like to see a recommendation for the state to adopt the AWWA form.

TWDB Staff noted that the current online form came from a recommendation of the WCAC and provides a flow of data which allows for consistency of data for several reports for the submitting utilities.

J. Walker concluded the call by stating further discussion is still needed, but a good foundation for work group initiatives have been developed within this call.

III. Adjourn

The conference was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.