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Minutes of Meeting #155 November 17, 2021

The Maine Public Drinking Water Commission (DWC) held its 155th Meeting on November 17, 2021, via Zoom and in person meeting in Augusta.

Present Were:

Members: Kathy Moriarty, Rebecca Laliberte, Jeff LaCasse, Carol White, Brian Richardson, Amy Lachance (DWP Director) and Jim Willis (Board Clerk).

Non-members: David Welch, DWP, and Matt Reynolds

Members Not Present Were: Lee Worcester

Time: Kathy called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

A. DISCUSSION/VOTE ON REMOTE MEETING POLICY

There was discussion on adopting a new remote meeting policy, which will officially allow DWC members to participate in the DWC meetings remotely under certain circumstances. A vote by roll call was taken by the quorum of members who were attending in person, prior to opening the meeting up to those participating remotely. The remote meeting policy passed unanimously and will be placed on the [DWC webpage](#).

B. RECURRING BUSINESS:

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the September 2, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

2. SFY 2022 AFM FEE COLLECTION STATUS

David Welch from the Drinking Water Program (DWP) updated the Commission on the collection status of the Alternate Funding Mechanism (AFM). To date, the DWP has a 96.8 percent collection rate, which is on par with previous years. David stated that we are in the beginning stages of setting up credit cards as a future payment option.

3. DWP FINANCIAL REPORT

David Welch discussed the DWP Financial Report. David stated that we are currently staying within budget.

There was continued discussion about increasing the AFM fee for fiscal year 2023 to \$70.00 for the base fee, and 65 cents for each additional person for population over 100. David did state that if the rule making process is not completed by fiscal year 2023, the DWP would still be solvent until fiscal year 2025.

4. DWP GENERAL UPDATES (DWSRF, STAFFING, PFAS, LEAD TESTING IN SCHOOLS)

Amy discussed the proposed new federal drinking water infrastructure funding. Amy also updated the DWC on the lead testing in schools program.

Amy also stated that the new PFAS testing for all community water systems and non-transient, noncommunity schools and childcare facilities needs to be completed by the end of 2022. Amy indicated that there is no funding currently available to help pay for PFAS testing, and that the DWP would like to hire additional positions to help with the extra workload.

Amy updated the DWP on recent staff changes. The DWP has hired Elizabeth Pellegrino, who is from NEIWPC. She is working in the Subsurface Wastewater Unit, processing plumbing permits. The DWP has also hired Hillary Whitcomb, a new rule specialist in our Data Management team.

5. REVIEW/DISCUSSION OF PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF DWC

There was discussion on the purpose and role of the Drinking Water Commission (DWC). The state statute that authorized the DWC discussed the statute was reviewed. One of the major DWC responsibilities is to oversee the AFM and recommend fee increases to cover expenses within the DWP. Amy stated that the DWC has an important role in advocating for the DWP. The DWC can testify or send written communications when needed.

6. PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION (OPEN FORUM)

After discussion, the DWC decided to write a letter to the DHHS Commissioner and Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control to advocate for additional positions for the DWP in order to complete the additional workload being placed on the DWP. Kathy will draft a letter and send it out for DWC member review.

7. DWC MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Jim has reached out to Governor's office and had no new updates to report at this time.

8. SUGGESTED ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

None.

9. 2022 DWC MEETING LOCATIONS

Jim will send out dates of 2022 DWC meetings. All meetings will be held in Augusta except for the May or September meeting. It was discussed that meeting sites need to have video conferencing capabilities.

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully Submitted

Jim Willis (Board Clerk)