

**Water North Coalition (WNC) – Minutes
June 30, 2021
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting**

Attendees

Advanced Technology Applications (ATAP) – Grant Dixon
Associated Engineering – Kristen Andersen
Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) – Tom Burton
Alberta Water & Wastewater Operators Association – Dan Rites
Aquatera – Sarah Ball
Aquatera – Tamara Wuttunee-Campbell
Aspen Regional Water Services – Jamie Giberson
Athabasca County – Travais Johnson
Birch Hills County – Terry Carbone
City of Cold Lake – Bob Buckle
County of Grande Prairie – Bob Marshall
Lesser Slave Lake Watershed Council – Meghan Payne
M.D. of Greenview – Shawn Acton
M.D. of Smoky River No.130 – Andre Trudeau
Mackenzie County – Byron Peters
Mackenzie County – Eric Jorgensen
Mackenzie County – Josh Knelsen
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo – Kwaku Agyare-Manu
Town of Grimshaw – Colleen Sklapsky
Town of High Level – Keith Straub
Town of Peace River – Dana Langer
Town of Valleyview – Vern Lymburner
Village of Rycroft – Diahann Potrebenko

Administration

Megan Beson, Legislative Services Officer – County of Grande Prairie

Welcome and Attendance

Chair Bob Marshall called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and confirmed attendees.

Review and Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes and Agenda

Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Keith Straub of the Town of High Level to accept the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Adoption of Minutes of the March 4, 2021 Virtual Meeting

Moved by Keith Straub of the Town of High Level that the minutes of the March 4, 2021 WNC Virtual Meeting be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Overview of WNC History and Value Add to Members

Chair Bob Marshall provided a brief overview of the WNC history, purpose and value to members. The Water North Coalition exists to help water and wastewater operators in our member communities and deal with important issues as they arise. Highlights include training and education opportunities, work on the database for water and wastewater operators and advocacy to the province in conjunction with AWWOA, success working with Alberta Health Services on bacteria sampling for water systems and streamlining access to information related to results. Although this work has been on hold during COVID-19 Water North Coalition is hopeful to re-engage with them in the near future.

Updates – Alberta Environment and Parks

Due to a shift in staffing a representative of Alberta Environment and Parks was unable to attend the meeting. The northwest and northeast regions have been amalgamated and there will be a new Alberta Environment and Parks representative.

Updates – Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Advisory Committee (CAC)

Alberta Environment and Parks was unavailable for the last CAC meeting. The Committee continues to process basic applications and is working on keeping the system running. CAC is creating a better evaluation system for online learning to implement CUs for webinars as many of the standard educational opportunities have shifted to webinars.

For the future, WNC and CAC can focus on advocating strongly for the certification branch to ensure they have adequate funding and staff to keep the program running. The operator portal has been a good asset and give operators access to their information and programs.

Updates – Strategic Plan Priorities

Due to the structure of WNC going forward and semi-annual meetings, the primary focus will continue to be bacteria sampling and funding for development of an enhanced dashboard for municipalities to access the information more quickly from the lab and Alberta Health Services.

Additional priorities that were brought forward by members include:

- a. Clarity surrounding inner-basin and/or water diversion licenses and the guidelines under which these are allowed. The criteria is not clear and decisions can seem arbitrary. Red tape involved creates confusion and inefficiencies, particularly for regional partnerships. If a municipality diverts water and connects an outside community both are required to receive a diversion license which reduces the annual allowance from the water source twice. Additional information is required to move forward with a resolution at a district meeting. Bob Buckle of the City of Cold Lake to bring more information forward at the next Leadership Committee Meeting.
- b. Advocacy for training specific assistant from the province. WNC to advocate that the AEP Certification Branch maintains or improves their funding level to ensure that members do not lose the support of this branch.

- c. Advocate to the province to evaluate their funding models through Water for Life and Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership to account for the elevated costs associated with providing water in northern communities.

Due to the limited resources available to Water North Coalition, it is recommended to choose the top priority to focus the group's work and move to the next priority as each is completed. If there is an emergent issue it can be brought forward by the group to be addressed.

Moved by Keith Straub that the bacteriological sampling and dashboard through Alberta Health Services be the priority of the Water North Coalition.

MOTION CARRIED

The additional items discussed will be included on the list of future priorities for WNC. There was discussion surrounding the opportunity to advocate for some of the other priorities with Rural Municipalities of Alberta and Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. Bob Marshall to provide an update on behalf of Water North Coalition at the next RMA Zone meeting.

Affirm the Chair and Vice Chair

Megan Beson assumed the Chair to call for nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair.

For the position of Chair, Bob Marshall was nominated and accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations and Bob Marshall was acclaimed as the Chair.

For the position of Vice Chair, Bob Buckle was nominated and accepted the nomination. There were no further nominations and Bob Buckle was acclaimed as Vice Chair.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be in conjunction with Aquatera's Water Week North scheduled for October 5th to 7th. It is planned for this to be a virtual event. If there are any suggestions for speakers please provide the information to Aquatera.

Roundtable

Aquatera has taken over the WNC social media and website – if any municipalities have anything they would like to share on either of these platforms email communications@aquatera.ca to have it included. The website hosted by Aquatera is now live and available at <https://www.aquatera.ca/transparency-growth/water-north-coalition>

Alberta Water and Wastewater Operators Association has received correspondence from Scott Milligan, Executive Director of Regulatory Programs for the Regulatory Assurance Division of AEP that the Certification Program is experiencing unexpected staffing capacity challenges that will impact the program until October 1, 2021. This information will be shared with the WNC members.

Adjournment

Moved by Diahann Potrebenko of the Village of Rycroft that the meeting be adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

MOTION CARRIED