

Water Withdrawal Annual Maintenance Fee Workgroup

July 22, 2021

Summary Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Steve Herzog, Hanover County
Robert Underwood, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
Matt Wells, WestRock
Ronald Jefferson (alternate), American Electric Power
Beckam Stanley (alternate), VA Agribusiness Council
Anna Killius, James River Association
Jerry Gouldman, King George County Service Authority

Committee Members Absent:

Pam Kenel, Loudoun County
Robert Bohannon, Golf Course Superintendents Association
Melissa Rollins, Surry County

DEQ Staff:

David Paylor, Director (via phone)
Jeff Steers, Director of Central Operations
Jutta Schneider, Water Planning Division, Director
Scott Kudlas, Office of Water Supply, Director
Brandon Bull, Water Policy Manager
Joseph Grist, Water Withdrawal Permitting and Compliance Program Manager
Cassandra Porter, Water Withdrawal Permit Writer
Shane Balloun, Senior Financial Analyst
Rebecca Taylor, Senior Financial Analyst

Members of the Public:

Chris Pomeroy
Jim Taylor
Sarah Vogelsong

Proceedings:

1) Welcome and Review of SB1210 Charge:

The meeting began at 10:05 AM and was called to order by Mr. Steers, who served as meeting facilitator. Mr. Paylor opened the meeting discussing the General Assembly's focus on increased water supply demand, and the working group's goal of developing an annual maintenance fee schedule for water withdrawal permits to provide funding for a portion of the program's direct costs.

2) Introductions, Process Ground Rules, and Goals for Today's Meeting:

Mr. Steers reviewed DEQ's current meeting policies and outlined the agenda and structure of the meeting.

3) Program Overview

Mr. Kudlas provided an overview of the water withdrawal permitting and compliance program history. Mr. Kudlas began with basic information about each separate program: groundwater and surface water withdrawal, what each was designed to accomplish, and followed with more detailed information about each program. Mr. Kudlas also presented the Office of Water Supply's organizational chart explaining how the programs are organized, specific roles within the permit process, and current staffing levels. Mr. Kudlas provided information about water withdrawal application processing and compliance program actions. Mr. Kudlas then provided examples of cost ranges for each program from simple to complex actions for both compliance and permitting. Mr. Kudlas concluded his presentation with a summary of changes made in the program to improve efficiency. The workgroup members presented questions concerning permits by beneficial user types and total number of permits per year.

4) Program Costs and Revenues

Mr. Balloun provided a breakdown of total projected costs for the program moving forward. This included the currently identified and projected amount collected through the fee program, and the cost of permitting and compliance components within the Office of Water Supply. Workgroup members had several follow-up questions including: what are the direct and indirect costs of the Office of Water Supply in relation to what was presented; are there any other revenue sources for the Office of Water Supply; projections for filling vacancies; and examples of maintenance fee structures for other DEQ programs.

For the next workgroup meeting, members asked to receive initial strawman annual maintenance fee proposals at least one week prior to the next meeting to allow time for review. These proposals should include a range of options by permit type, beneficial use type, and permitted withdrawal amounts. Mr. Steers requested that the workgroup members submit any additional requests for information or strawman proposals to Mr. Grist by August 2, 2021 so that DEQ staff has time to prepare and distribute to the workgroup in a timely manner.

5) Public Comment

There were no public comments provided.

6) Next Steps

The next workgroup meeting will be August 19, 2021 from 10am to 3pm. A poll will be circulated to the workgroup members to determine a date for a third meeting in early September, but no later than September 10, 2021, to provide DEQ enough time to develop the workgroup report to be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2021. Mr. Bull briefly reviewed the requirements for communications for members of a public body, and

Mr. Steers directed that all correspondence be submitted directly to Mr. Grist to maintain the record and for dissemination of information to the entire workgroup.

Mr. Steers adjourned the meeting at 2:20 PM.