

MARION WATER QUALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 1, 2014

Marion County Public Works in the North Santiam Room
5155 Silverton Rd. NE, Salem, Oregon

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present: Gene Doll, Dan Goffin, Rick Massey, Bryan Porter, Andrew Schmidt, Brent Stevenson, Richard Walker

Absent: Zach Diehl, Mark Grenz, Jim Heltzel, Doug Krahmer

Staff: Matt Knudsen, Keare Blaylock, Jolene Bray

CALL TO ORDER: 5:24 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES (January 14, 2014):

Gene called the meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Rick made a motion to approve the January 14, 2014 meeting minutes as submitted. Richard seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

UPDATES:

Matt told the committee that Courthouse Square is having its rededication ceremony tomorrow, April 2, at 2:00 p.m. He said it will be nice to once again have all services centralized.

Matt said the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) created an advisory committee six months ago to review the permitting process for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Phase 2 permits. He said we ended our five year permit and submitted a new management plan and permit and were told we would be contacted within a year. Matt said we were then contacted and told DEQ was changing the permit process and were generalizing the permit to the surrounding area for a general framework for MS4 Phase 2 permits. In order to appease stakeholders, local jurisdictions were included in the advisory committee. He said the group is not reaching consensus on the timeline, which was initially set up for 2 years and has now been 2 ½ years. He said the county has heard the head of this group is stepping down. Matt said there were a lot of things in the air so it will be interesting to see what happens. He said people can call in and listen to their meetings and on their website (<http://www.oregon.gov/deq/WQ/Pages/Water%20Quality%20Permits/MS4Advisory.aspx>). Matt said the City of Springfield permit was already issued when the DEQ received complaints from multiple environmental non-profits so the DEQ decided to do a general permit that would cover all jurisdictions. He said DEQ is required to do it by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and if they can't complete, the EPA may take over permitting Phase 2 permits.

Matt said Marion County has Best Management Practices (BMPs) for clean water and submit an annual report on best practices and what we're doing. He showed the group the training activities done with operations crews. He then told them about some major projects, which includes culvert liner inserts and a cold planer machine, which is a new pavement repair technique that treats specific areas in the roadway which reduces air pollutants and lowers the risk of oil contamination of drainage systems.

Brent said the Santiam Water Control District has ditches and canals that run through Stayton and on to Salem. He said the district had an issue that the City of Stayton dumps into their canals and has for years. He said with the growth and development in Stayton, the city added pipes that dumped into the canals. Brent said it got to the point that storm water exceeded the capacity of the canals and even if canals were shut off the water was beyond capacity. He said the district filed a lawsuit against the city and just reached a settlement. He said the city is going through a similar process to Marion County and will implement a storm water fee, update their storm water standards, and go through an effort to expand capacity of the canals that are impacted. He said they are putting a large investment into their system. He said SWCD was not able to accept storm water into their canals because that water is carried and dumped into other waterways and if accepted, they would be subject to a NPDES permit. He said they are glad to get past this and move on. Matt said the city does not need a NPDES permit because of its size. He said other jurisdictions in the county may get pulled into the permit and as a county may need to look at exemption of those rules. Stayton did implement storm water policy and set a \$4.00 storm water fee. He said they also adopted an automatic increase of \$.50 per year per month for residential properties for five years.

STORMWATER FEE EDUCATION / OUTREACH:

Keare said operations crews and engineers within the department went through and cleaned up the crew manual for BMPs, which was due for a five year update. She said they integrated it with the ODOT manual to meet their standard and it is now online. It now goes to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for approval. Matt said if a project is done with the Army Corp of Engineers or Department of State Lands, some of their requirements for Marion County are less because we have BMPs in place. He said we should hear in August if it is approved by NOAA.

Keare said they held the 2014 Erosion Control Summit and there were speakers from ODOT, DEQ, Portland Environmental Services and Clean Water Services. She said approximately 100 people attended, which was the same as last year, and another event, Howlapalooza, will be held this fall.

Keare said we are coordinating with the Straub Learning Center and Oregon education standards to integrate environmental education in classrooms. She said there is a push to put all information on a website so educators can look at what is available in their area. That should come out statewide in the next couple of years.

Keare said she was able to attend Straub's Nature Night at Grant Elementary and made "salmon rolls" with students while educating them about salmon habitat. She also has other education opportunities at local schools coming up.

Keare said she and Matt have done a lot of outreach for the storm water fee. She said they mailed out 900 letters to commercial properties and received over 40 phone calls, which was not inordinately high. Matt said they had under 10 that were not going to be happy with any type of storm water fee, but the other 30+ usually had a couple of questions that were usually easily answered. He said it was quite a bit of work but mostly positive. Matt said there was a letter to the editor in today's Statesman Journal but didn't think it said anything specific about the fee. Keare said having a credit system was suggested by many property owners. Matt said it could alleviate some of the cost of the fee. He said he doesn't think staff will move for a quick adoption by the Board of Commissioners (BOC) so there won't be an approval anytime in the coming weeks. He said there is still time to get information to the public who receive utility bills through Salem.

STORMWATER FEE UPDATES:

Matt said the City of Salem already sends utility bills to 80% of storm water fee property owners. He said the city bowed out of participating in these billings so Marion County must now develop a new system for these billings. He said they are working with a private billing company but some county leaders are again reaching out to the city for assistance. Matt said this would be great to include in the utility bill. Mark asked how the City of Salem would bill if only reaching 80% of the properties. Matt said we would either ask them to do and pay additional or hire a private company to do the other 20%. Matt said we could possibly have something ready to approve but with billing and budget items still up in the air the feeling is it won't happen quickly. Brent said he could see the city's dilemma since they may receive partial payments and would need to determine whether to apply to city utility or county storm water fee. Matt said a private company's initial quotes are around \$20,000 to do billing which is very reasonable. He said doing the billing internally is not an option due to needed accounting upgrades. He said another issue is because this is a storm water fee, state law doesn't allow us to put a lien on the property, so this would unpaid fees would go to collection and add another process for the city.

Matt said they met with board twice in last month and everything is going pretty smooth. He said staff met with the BOC yesterday on the budget and they had sticker shock with one commissioner noting they were looking at a Volkswagen not a Cadillac budget. Matt said the only increase from what we're currently doing is the two medium equipment operators we currently have budgeted to the solid waste fund. He said it's a case that we're spending the money but subsidizing with East Salem Service District (ESSD), road operations, engineering, and environmental services funds. He said when staff created the budget they pulled from different division funds and staff need to show that to the board. He said the question is do we want to keep subsidizing from other funds and if yes, this cost will go up by however much DEQ tells us to and how much infrastructure we have in place. He said there is a meeting on April 15 and staff will take numbers out of other funds to show what work the department is already doing and creating a new program.

Matt reviewed the storm water management area projected 5-year CIP projects. He said it won't be until 2015-16 until we can begin spending on capital projects. He showed the group a table highlighting a standard budget and asked if this group wants to take on recommending how to proceed. Matt said an economic study takes time and that our socio-economic base may be different than the City of Salem. He said staff has heard through public feedback that low income home owners in the storm

water fee area could be affected by raising the base rate. Mark said he was interested in having that conversation about having a base rate and supported that idea. Matt said this group is appointed to advise the BOC so this committee can recommend anything and take to the board, although they may not follow that recommendation. Keare said this group doesn't need to choose a number, they can say they want a base rate chosen to cover part of the administration of the program which would offset some of the cost. Matt said many jurisdictions have some sort of base rate and asked if this group wants to review a base rate so all are the same. Brent said he was also interested in a base rate. Matt said for the long term viability of the fund, it makes sense to have a base rate because most of the property surrounds Silverton Road and Lancaster Drive, and some of those properties will be annexed by the City of Salem in the coming years. Gene asked if we could work backwards, looking at the city's rates. Matt said staff received a lot of feedback because Salem is ramping up their fee over a five year period and many people are unaware that this increase is coming. Andrew asked if any property owners have suggested a base rate. Matt said they have not specifically but want to see their bill lowered.

Brent asked if staff knew or calculated that a lot of environmental services staff are performing duties for other divisions. Matt said that we are working towards that now. He said 50% of their time is consulting to other groups and that time was not tracked and reimbursed but that is now changing. He said staff wants to present a clear picture to the BOC of exactly what is spent on tasks such as catch basin cleaning.

He said he would send the committee everything he is sending the BOC. He said the difference in the standard budget and higher standard budget is an environmental services truck and \$100,000 capital improvement budget are not in the standard budget. He said staff is meeting with the BOC on 4/15 and it will be a critical work session. He said we could move forward with the fee afterwards but doesn't think we will move forward quickly. He said staff will give the BOC the full packet so if they want to approve it is ready and we can be done with fee project.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Matt said Rick is having a conflict with this meeting day due to another committee and asked if this group would consider another day of the week or month. Matt said until we have a larger quorum to discuss, he would set meetings with the doodle poll.

Matt asked the committee if there are any discussion topics they would like to cover at the next meeting. Andrew asked if there are any projects done using the updated engineering standards. Matt said they were adopted a year ago and a couple of projects have been done using them including the new fire station on Cordon Road.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 6:31 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

Matt said he would send out a doodle poll to set the next meeting.