

# MARION COUNTY

## MARION WATER QUALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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### MINUTES OF THE MWQAC MEETING

Wednesday, February 12, 2020  
5:30pm – 7:30pm

Willamette Conference Room  
5155 Silverton Rd NE  
Salem, OR 97305

PRESENT:     **Members:** Andrew Schmidt, Brent Stevenson, Mark Grenz, Brenda Sanchez, Rebecca McCoun, Zach Diehl, Rick Massey  
                  **Staff:** Matt Knudsen, Kaileigh Westermann-Lewis, Brian May Stephanie Rosentrater, Danielle Gonzalez

ABSENT:       Richard Walker

#### Action – Approval of Minutes

Zach motioned to approve the October 16, 2019 meeting minutes with appropriate amendments. Brenda seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous. The October 16, 2019 minutes are approved.

#### Introduction of Danielle Gonzalez

Danielle works with Marion County Economic Development. She has been working with Gates, Mill City, Detroit, and Idanha for the last four years to form the North Santiam sewer system. The goal is not only to provide sewer, but to improve the water quality, as well. The project team is looking for assistance from water quality professionals, as none of them are experts in the field.

#### Environmental Specialist Position Update

Matt informed the Committee that since the last meeting, both Environmental Specialist positions have been vacated. Within the next month, both positions should be filled. The County has gone through two rounds of interviews for each position.

Andrew announced that he would be resigning from the Committee, effective after this meeting. Matt thanked him for his service on the Committee for the last ten years. Zach Diehl will now be Chair.

#### NPDES Year Two Update

Matt explained that the County has performed almost all of the Year One tasks. Partially due to the departure of Kaileigh, the County is a behind on some of the outreach and education components. The new person in the position will have to pick up where Kaileigh left off in creating a five year plan for outreach and education.

For Year Two education and outreach, the County plans to conduct a follow-up survey for East Salem residents that complement the one sent out over the summer in partnership with Cherriots. The purpose of this is gauge behavior/knowledge change in East Salem. One of the things noticed in the first survey was that most people thought stormwater was treated with wastewater, which is something that needs to be worked on. The County also needs to continue with Trashy Tuesday, which is a litter clean-up event in East Salem's main ditch channels that fulfills the stewardship requirement. The County will also need to add more to the GIS system, which is a little bit of a lift. Dry weather screening is a priority

in Year Two. This will consist of crew members looking for flow in dry weather and identifying the source if flow is found. The County is hiring a consultant to assist in creating an erosion control and post-construction plan, along with reviewing inspection procedures, low-impact development/green infrastructure barriers, fee structure, and more. Along this process, information will be brought back to the MWQAC for review and input.

Danielle commented that Public Health month is coming up and that the Marion County Public Health division is already planning on focusing on Water Quality, so it may be a good opportunity to get assistance with education and outreach. She added that Economic Development has money budgeted for water assessments in the County, meaning they could definitely help pay for some tasks, if needed.

Matt added that updating the engineering standards will be a significant component. Public Works' Engineering Division doesn't have the capacity to take this on. This, coupled with the lack of clarity in the permit, led to the decision to hire a consultant for this work.

### **TMDL Updates**

In November, the DEQ issued the final mercury TMDL for the Willamette Basin. The EPA did not approve it. They came back with some minor changes and opened it up for public comment. The County submitted public comment to both the DEQ and the EPA. No counties were included in the formation process of the new mercury TMDLs.

Matt handed out the requirements for the County in the new TMDL. He explained the difference between the NPDES permit and the TMDL is the NPDES really only focuses on the East Salem area, where the TMDL is county-wide. The four TMDL requirements are the same as four of the NPDES minimum control measures. The only update for the first (Pollution Prevention) will be documentation. For the second requirement (Education & Outreach), the County will have to rely heavily on their partnerships with other agencies, as a lot of the sediment entering ditches and streams in rural area will be from agricultural or timber practices. The third requirement asks that the County create a prohibition and enforcement plan for pollutants, mainly sediment and erosion, entering a ditch. Currently, the County only has this in the stormwater management area. It will have to be expanded county-wide. The last measurement, construction site runoff control, will require help from the MWQAC to develop a threshold and plan.

Mark G commented that most builders are used to erosion control restrictions/requirements and that it might not be a bad idea to incorporate the same requirements in all building permits. Brent disagreed, specifically regarding farm land. There was some discussion as to what would be the best way to implement restrictions. Matt explained that a lot of work will go into deciding what requirements the County puts in place.

Matt explained that the Department of Ag, the Soil and Water Conservation District, the County, and several other groups have an annual meeting to go over various agricultural items, like the Molalla-Pudding Ag Water Quality Management Plan, which gets everyone together to talk about agricultural issues.

The DEQ issued some example management strategies for helping to meeting the mercury TMDL requirements. Examples include keeping riparian areas as natural as possible and on-site stormwater management. These are just examples and not required.

The last page in the document that Matt provided is the timeline for when these requirements need to be in place.

### **Education/Outreach Direction for Environmental Specialists**

Matt explained that the intent for this activity is to take ideas from past brainstorming activities and turn them into a concrete five-year direction plan for the new environmental specialist.

General Public - Currently, outreach to the general public is done mostly through social media, focused largely on car washing, herbicide application, and that rainwater should be kept clean. There is also the Trashy Tuesday program. Matt opened the discussion up for suggestions and ideas. Andrew mentioned that in his line of work, he sees a lot of problems with ditch-side property owners not understanding that they need to maintain their ditches and keep trash out of them. These property owners could be targeted with outreach by mailings or by community forums where they provide feedback on what is keeping them from maintaining the ditches. Danielle suggested bringing in the Master Gardeners to help consult or even do the work. Incentives via free seeds or trash collection could work. Pet waste in the ditch is a common problem as well. The biggest pollution problem the County sees is sediment, followed by bacteria. The City of Keizer puts out a newsletter that goes to everyone in the City which is a great way to get information out. Zach suggested trying to partner with the garbage companies that occasionally do a county-wide mailer. Danielle stated that Public Health and Economic Development are also talking about water quality and it would be great for all of them to team up and solidify the message.

Construction Site Operators – Matt wanted to know how we see more success on construction sites and how to make our process better. Currently, most of the education takes place during the permitting process. The Home Builder’s Association also has online classes that hit these topics. The County could sponsor these and let interested parties take them for free. Brenda suggested creating a brochure to be handed out during the permitting process. This would also get the message to homeowners who are doing their own work. The Stormwater Summit is a great resource and should continue every year.

Elected Officials & Planners – Matt would like to shift conversations with elected officials and planners away from requirement and regulation and toward what the benefits of the work are. Danielle added that she has found that it’s helpful to get talking points to elected officials because they talk to their constituents about these issues.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm

### **Next Meeting:**

TBD - staff will send out a Doodle Poll to schedule the next meeting.