

Maine Water News

A Publication of the Maine Water Utilities Association

March 2013, Number 168

30 Years in 500 Words

Don Gobeil, 2013 President

Prior to my accepting the gavel as the incoming President of the Maine Water Utilities Association at the recent February Trade Show, Jeff suggested that I include mention of the new Operator Proficiency Subcommittee in my luncheon remarks. This subcommittee is a long anticipated initiative of the Association designed to develop strategies to assist in the professional development of entry level personnel through mentoring, networking and training. It is hoped that this proactive undertaking will allow us to stay ahead of our emerging workforce issues, and help give a new generation of professionals the opportunity to grow and prosper in the water supply industry. I encourage anyone who has an interest in becoming involved, either as a subcommittee member or as a mentor, to contact Jeff soon.

In reading through the material on the background and action plan of this subcommittee, I couldn't help reflect upon my own experience as a newbie back in the dark ages. Having come into this industry over 34 years ago, I have distinct recollections about how I was viewed in terms of my potential to grow within my new industry. I was college educated, but not in engineering. I was told to not expect much opportunity to advance to a supervisory or managerial position. There existed at the time a clearly defined slide-rule ceiling. Managers were primarily culled from the ranks of established engineers, with the idea being that mastery in technical undertakings offered the highest likelihood of succeeding in organizational management. But I stuck around because I enjoyed the work that I did, the people I worked with and the community I lived in.

I sought out whatever training opportunities existed, took the initiative to take on volunteer assignments that could have some beneficial connection to my work and generally tried to become more valuable in any way that I could. My personal philosophy has always been that an individual ought to know a little about a lot of different things, and to not be confined to

the expectations contained in a job description. But looking back, of equal importance was working for managers who allowed me to stretch and morph into roles and assignments that motivated me and kept me growing.

The purpose of all this is not to bore you with my autobiography, or second guess any aspect of the industry I encountered 30 plus years ago. It's really to point out how every organization can benefit from encouraging their employees to become involved in their own self development and to assist them in taking advantage of structured programs such as the Operator Proficiency Subcommittee or other training opportunities. The water utility industry is so much more diverse and varied today in terms of the skilled professional disciplines that are drawn to it. GIS professionals, scientists, business managers, operational specialists and a host of other disciplines, must all feel that the water industry is their industry and that there is a pathway for achievement and career fulfillment.

A manager who relies on rigidly applying past templates on organizational effectiveness to the dynamic reality of today's work environment does a disservice to their organization and stymies employee growth.



*2012 President Jon Ziegra and
2013 President Don Gobeil*

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Material of interest to the water supply profession
will be considered for publication. Copy deadline is
the 15th day of month preceding publication.

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2013 Annual February Meeting & Trade Show

We are pleased to report that this year's February Meeting and Trade Show was a great success. We had well over 700 attendees overall, and the booths at the trade show were sold out.

There was a great variety of topics spread over 21 technical sessions, which were highly attended. New England Water Works Association offered valuable and informative training on social media, water quality changes, productive board and operator conversations, asset management and biofilm.

MWUA's Program Committee was able to put together sessions highlighting performance management, pumps and VFDs, GIS and SCADA applications, critical paths to water quality solutions, an office session, fire protection, and also a session on how to deal with change. And of course, due to popular demand, the trustee, day in the life of an operator and product demonstration sessions were offered again this year.

Maine Wastewater Control Association's sessions were well attended due to the relevant topics they offered including DEP method update rules, blue print reading, 7Q10 & monthly stream/river flows, trench safety, and collaborating on construction projects.

Tuesday night's Meet and Greet on the trade show floor allowed plenty of time for attendees to network and interact with other water and wastewater personnel, as well as the exhibitors. The trade show floor was packed, and it was clear that everyone appreciated the opportunity to catch up with colleagues of the same industry.

The luncheon presentation on Wednesday was one of the best, given by Craig Patla, Director of Service Delivery at the Connecticut Water Company. Craig described the challenges the Connecticut Water Company overcame while working to supply water during three once in a lifetime storm events that occurred within a 15 month period in Connecticut. The presentation had many enlightening points concerning emergency preparedness that attendees will most certainly benefit from in preparing for similar future events at their respective utilities.

Overall, this year's conference was a great success. Thank you to our co-sponsors, NEWWA and MWWCA, for once again contributing pertinent and invaluable information at your technical sessions. We would also like to thank the exhibitors for their support of our trade show. It is a great benefit for MWUA to be able to offer such a variety of session topics and exhibitors' products and services at this event.

April Bi-monthly Meeting to be Held in Bangor

The upcoming April Meeting is scheduled for April 11th, and it will be held in Bangor at Hollywood Casino. The program will start out with an overview of the Bangor water system, and will then provide a regulatory and legislative update.

The technical program will focus on UV and Ozone applications. Representatives from CDM Smith will discuss the design and operations of these two treatment technologies, and will also highlight case studies. In addition, there will be a panel discussion that will include affiliates from water districts throughout the state that are utilizing these types of applications.

For more info and to register, please see the registration form on page 7 of this newsletter, or visit our website at www.mwua.org.

EPA Issues Revised Total Coliform Rule

On February 13th, EPA published in the Federal Register the revisions to the 1989 Total Coliform Rule. The effective date of the Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR), which applies to all public water systems, is April 15, 2013. States must be in compliance by April 1, 2016.

Under the RTCR there is no longer a monthly maximum contaminant level (MCL) violation for multiple total coliform detections. Instead, the revisions require systems that have an indication of coliform contamination in the distribution system to assess the problem and take corrective action that may reduce cases of illnesses and deaths due to potential fecal contamination and waterborne pathogen exposure.

The present Total Coliform Rule is in effect until Maine adopts the RTCR.

Maine Legislature Off to an Interesting Start

Legislative cloture, the deadline for submittal of legislation, was late this year. As a result, it took a while for the wheels to start turning but the legislative public



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hearing process is well underway. The association has testified on a number of bills; the outcome of some of them has been decided.

LD 4, a resolve to adopt PUC Chapter 675: Infrastructure Surcharge and Capital Reserve Accounts, was heard by the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee. MWUA supported the final adoption of Chapter 675. Revisions that were made to the proposed rule will allow systems to use the surcharge or reserves for the replacement of infrastructure that has not reached the end of its useful life, such as work required to accommodate MDOT projects and other similar situations.

LD 68 proposed to prohibit the use of a handheld mobile telephone while operating a motor vehicle. The bill listed exceptions to the prohibition, including municipal public works personnel operating a motor vehicle within the scope of their employment. Water and wastewater utility personnel were not listed as exceptions and we asked to be included. It appears that LD 68 will receive an Ought Not to Pass report from the committee.

LD 114 sought to amend the charter of the Portland Water District and require PWD to charge the same rates for its Standish customers as it

charges its customers that reside in towns that are part of the territory supplied by the district and members of the district.

The association opposed LD 114, stating that the rate setting process that is currently administered by the Public Utilities Commission is the appropriate mechanism for establishing water rates. That bill was reported out of committee as Ought Not to Pass.

LD 127, An Act to Amend the Definition of "Public Way" To Include Streets and Highways Owned by Quasi-municipal Corporations or Districts, would have changed the status of water districts' driveways, access roads and other ways.

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They would no longer be private ways on private property; rather they would be public ways over which the public would have a right to pass.

The association opposed LD 127, citing the need to prohibit access to sources of supply, treatment plants and other critical infrastructure.

The bill was replaced with an amendment that addresses the issue that resulted in submittal of the legislation, i.e. the inability of the Brunswick Police Department to patrol the roads at the former naval air station.

LD 315 would ban the purchase of bottled water by any political subdivision, governmental agency or public benefit corporation of the State. The ban would apply to water districts.

The point was made that, while it is not unusual for water utilities to weather disaster situations and for customers to not experience any disruption of safe water service, there could be times when the ability to provide an assured supply of safe water is uncertain, or even compromised. During those times water utilities need the ability to rely on other means to accomplish that. Providing bottled water is one way to do that.

Because LD 315 could prevent water utilities from meeting their mission of providing safe water and protecting public health, the association opposed the bill.

Liquor Contract Key to Acquiring SRF Match

LD 239 An Act To Improve the Return to the State on the Sale of Spirits and To Provide a Source of Payment for Maine's Hospitals is a bill put forth by the Governor that seeks to pay off the debt owed to Maine's health care providers. The sponsor of the legislation is Senator Patrick Flood of Winthrop.

The bill "takes back" the State's wholesale liquor business, which was privatized 10 years ago.

The concept is for the state to use the annual liquor business revenue to purchase a revenue bond that would match federal funds. Combined, the revenue bond and the federal funds would be adequate to pay off the health care providers. A Liquor Operation Revenue Fund would be established to pay amounts owed to holders of liquor operation revenue bonds.

LD 239 also contains a provision which specifies that, to the extent there is money in the fund not needed in accordance with terms of the bonds, the State Controller would annually withdraw an amount not to exceed \$7,000,000 to be used for federal matching funds purposes for revolving loan funds for drinking water systems and wastewater treatment. The remainder, if any, would flow to an account within the Department of Transportation to be used for the construction of highways and bridges.

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After the bond is retired up to 15% of the fund could be used to provide the annual match for the Drinking Water and Clean Water SRF capitalization grants. Thirty-five percent would go to an account within the Department of Transportation for construction of highways and bridges; and the remainder to the Maine Budget Stabilization Fund.


It is anticipated that the revenue bond would be paid off within a 7 – 10 year time frame. The Governor has indicated that, once the nearly \$500 million hospital debt is paid off, the state will be in a position to assume appropriate new debt. It is generally believed that he is referring to bonds that have been approved by the voters but which he has not issued.

LD 644 An Act to Strengthen the State's Wholesale Liquor Business is competing legislation being put forth by Senator Goodall of Richmond. This bill would continue the privatization of the State's wholesale liquor business. It establishes new bidding criteria. It does not provide a source of funding for the SRF capitalization grant matches.


As has been the case for the past several years, the association will partner with the Maine Wastewater Control Association in order to advocate for a reliable ongoing source of funding for the capitalization grant matches.

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Dig Safe Bill Back from Reviser's Office

Those who read this newsletter regularly are well aware of the frustrations presented by the last two Dig Safe workgroups that were created by the Maine Legislature. In anticipation of the report to be delivered by the most recent workgroup, the association contemplated submitting legislation to counter any proposals that could be adverse to water utilities.

The workgroup's proposal to hold non Dig Safe system members liable for any damage that occurs to

their underground facilities, as well as any costs that may result from the damage to their underground facilities, was the proverbial straw.

Legislation, sponsored by Representative Beaulieu of Auburn, has been submitted which does two things.

The bill would establish a Dig Safe Advisory Board that is more representative of owners of underground facilities than were the workgroups. The Board would collaborate with the Public Utilities Commission for the purpose of improving the protection of underground facilities.

The bill would also direct the PUC to maintain a database and website of contact information for persons who own underground facilities and who are not members of the underground facility damage system. It would require those persons to register their facilities with the PUC and provide the PUC with current contact information for purposes of notification regarding excavations.

The association recently conducted a survey of its members, asking them for input relative to the concept of a one-call system. The responses did not present a compelling case for advocating for a one-call system. A number of comments will be very useful, however, in advancing the case for improvements to the current system.

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PROGRAM

- 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM **Registration & Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30 AM – 8:45 AM **Introduction/Welcome to Bangor**
Cathy Conlow, Bangor City Manager
- 8:45 AM – 9:00 AM **System Overview**
Kathy Moriarty, General Manager, Bangor Water District
- 9:15 AM – 9:30 AM **Regulatory Update**
Maine Drinking Water Program Representative
- 9:30AM – 9:45 AM **Legislative Update**
Jeffrey McNelly, Executive Director, Maine Water Utilities Association
- 9:45 AM – 10:00 AM **Break**

TECHNICAL PROGRAM

- 10:00AM – 10:45 AM **Ozone in Drinking Water Treatment – a Present-Day and Maine-Focused Overview**
Alan LeBlanc, PE, BCEE, Associate, CDM Smith
Ozone systems in drinking water treatment have advanced in recent years. Present and future regulations suggest ozone will continue to be a prominent, powerful tool available to water systems. This presentation will review ozone’s evolution, its ability to address a host of treatment challenges, and energy efficiency considerations. A brief overview of ozone use in Maine will also be provided as part of this presentation.
- 10:45 AM – 11:30 AM **Let There be Light: UV Treatment**
Jennifer Osgood, PE, BCEE, Senior Project Manager, CDM Smith
This presentation will focus on the benefits of UV water treatment and engineering design decisions. Case studies for a range of small and large utilities where UV disinfection has been implemented will be highlighted.
- 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM **Disinfection Panel Discussion: Lessons Learned from Ozonation; Preparing for UV Projects**
Rick Pershken, District Engineer, Bangor Water District
Joel Anderson, Chief Operator, Portland Water District
Paul Slack, Manager, Mount Desert Water District
Scott Abbotoni, Water Division Manager, Great Salt Bay Sanitary District

12:15PM **Buffet Luncheon**
Don Gobeil Scott Abbotoni, Nicki Pellenz, Erin Smith
President *Program Coordinators*

2.0 Training Contact Training Hours will be granted for this session.

PLEASE RETURN RESERVATIONS BY April 4, 2013

Registration for MWUA April 11, 2013 Membership Meeting

Name(s): _____

Affiliation _____

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Total enclosed: _____

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